

# Toughest budget, says Miller You can look for it on May 13

After months of discussing and investigating the Ontario economy, Treasurer Frank Miller still can't be sure that his May 13 Budget will meet everyone's needs. "It's like waiting for your first child," says the father of four youngsters and four budgets. "After all the meetings and debating, delivery of a Budget seems to get worse every time rather than easier, as they tell me child-birth does." The last few weeks in particular, Mr. Miller says, "my staff has learned to approach me some days with a little more care than others because I get to a point of frustration."

He admits that formal meetings with the farm community, Small Business groups, bankers, manufacturers and views of others, including his constituents in Muskoka, have influenced his thinking.

Other politicians influenced timing. His Budget planned for mid-April was delayed "to see if (federal finance minister Allan) MacEachen was going to reverse what I thought was the most disastrous budget that Canada has seen for years."

Mr. Miller has received surprising advice from "fiscal conservatives" who believe Government shouldn't borrow money for any reason. Normally, businessmen demand that Treasurers cut spending, taxes and a provincial deficit that is \$1.5 billion for 1981/82. But this year, highest priorities are job creation and "survival of many industries" so that, "a good many people have said it's not a good year to raise taxes or to worry about the deficit."

Assistant deputy minister, 39-year-old Brock Smith from Copper Cliff has shared

the long hours. "My children keep asking me why I'm not home in the evenings or how come I'm working this weekend."

Mr. Smith points out that work goes on year-round and intensifies each spring "when the Treasurer tries to summarize in the Budget any spending plans, changes in tax policy and new spending programs thought to be appropriate." Before Christmas, decisions were made on how much money ministries would need to finance essential programs in health, education, or social assistance.

Assistant deputy minister Smith (who worked on 1979 and 1980 Budgets) says, civil servants provide information needed before a Treasurer can raise more money, cut spending in certain areas, pay off debts, or invest in improvements. "The Treasurer lays out what his priorities are,

reviews the staff work and then decides whether he wants to go ahead. After all, he knows what should be done for an economic as well as financial, point of view."

There is always more advice. "People write a lot more letters than they used to," says Midland-born Tom Sweeting. At 32, he has provided Ontario Treasurers with expert opinion on provincial budgeting for ten years during which time, Treasury has received 1,000 letters a year, more if people become upset about a key measure. "We got 1,000 letters more last year after we announced a 7 per cent tax on hotel and other accommodation."

On May 14, Frank Miller will be reading the reviews.



## A play about a legend

Parents were invited to the gymnasium of Penetanguishene's St. Joseph School Wednesday morning to witness a performance of The Legend of Kitchikwana, which was part of Education Week. The play will be televised on Channel 12 some time in June.

## Midland small business

A program that is offering free professional advice to owner-operated businesses in Midland, courtesy of the provincial government, is already oversubscribed.

Following an information meeting Wednesday, 40 Midland owner-operators of small businesses applied to be visited by a private consulting team this summer.

Local businessmen who are accepted into the program will be visited at their place of business and given advice on the basis of their particular business on how to be more efficient.

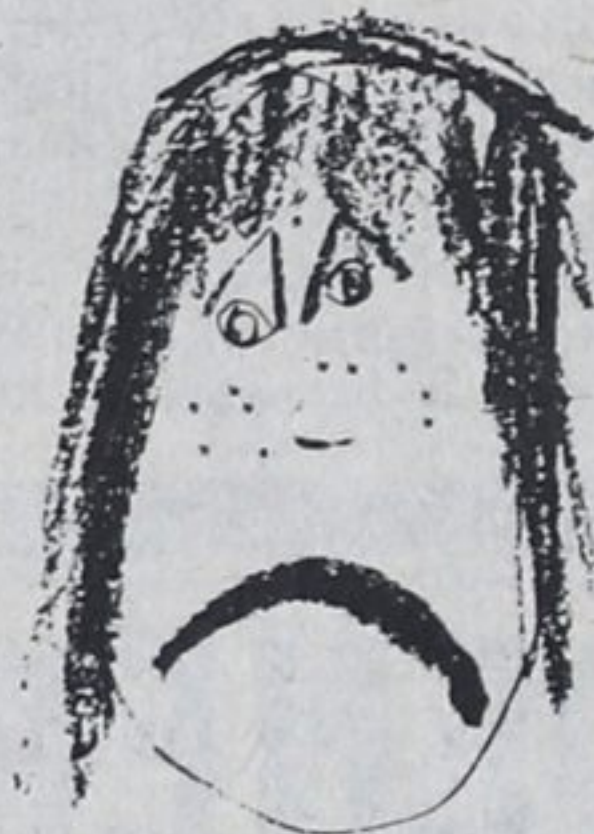
A maximum of 25 businesses can take part in the program. The deadline for applying is next Wednesday. The local co-ordinating committee, Liz Downer, Fred Hacker, Dan Herbert, Bill Moss, Bill Metz, and Ken Douglas, will pick out the 25 businesses that will benefit from the program.

John Whelan, a business consultant with the Small Business Development Branch of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, told the meeting Wednesday that this program has been offered in 70 or 75 communities in the last six years.

Liz Downer said yesterday that she is pleased that so many people by attending the meeting "really showed an interest in doing something for their businesses."

The consulting teams relationship with each business is confidential. The provincial government's only part in the program is as paymaster to the independent consultants who do the work, Whelan said.

Dear Mommy ... Sometimes



I'm unhappy



get scared



or mad.



I'm devilish



I cry



or feel surprised



I can be happy or really sad.



But I know that you love me. I see it in your eyes.

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