

# The Poor Man's Guide to becoming poorer

—Ray Baker—

When my tax money is involved I note with interest (no pun intended) that Finance Minister Michael Wilson is not going to introduce the dreaded VAT at this time.

VAT, or Value Added Tax, is possibly the last remaining method of taking our last penny, short of extortion.

The two examples that spring to mind are similar in many respects. The one case, in the Middle Ages, required that you pay a daylight tax, a tax on every window you had.

The other simply required a mask, a horse, a blunderbuss and a forest. On sighting a group of happy care free travellers, you donned the mask, rode to them and shouted, "Stand and deliver! Your money or your life!"

This gave a new meaning to the phrase daylight robbery, or was that the window tax? Anyway it was a hanging offence. The VAT system should also be a hanging offence.

The basic difference between the systems is that you don't need a mask nowadays. Just enabling legislation.

## WHAT IS VAT?

I thought you would never ask. It's such a sophisticated way of milking the consumer that no fewer than 53 countries around the

world have jumped on the bandwagon or gravy train.

And how does it work? It's so simple, you don't know it has hit you until you look in your empty wallet.

Let's take an item like a double paned window with a wood surround and a mesh screen.

The lumber mill charges tax on the pre-built frame, the mesh manufacturer charges tax on the mesh, the glass maker charges on the glass. That's three bites at the apples.

The manufacturer of the finished item taxes the retailer and finally the customer pays VAT on the total value of all the bits put together. Confused? Try this one.

Silk is taxed, a zipper is taxed, same with a piece of cloth and buttons. Finally the entire suit or jacket and skirt is taxed at the value of all the added bits and taxes.

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

There is some big coin involved here, in the sliding scale. An announcement is made eliminating the 7 percent sales tax on

everything, hurray! We cry.

In its place comes VAT, only a three percent on unfinished furniture. Hey that's good. But it's three percent of all the value added components again so we pay more.

On finished furniture it's eight percent so we go and buy unfinished, only to find that brushes and varnish are in the luxury class at nine percent. Oh dear!

Lots and lots of thought have gone into this system, just as it did with the original window or daylight tax. Every product known to mankind is broken down to component parts and classified as necessity or luxury. Necessity could be a loaf of bread at two percent VAT, luxury could be a sliced loaf of bread at four percent.

In Europe I gave up, simply picked out the items, waited in line, and paid. I assumed that the sales desk knew what it was doing.

If you like Russian Roulette, it's a great way to shop. Take a huge outlet. You go in, say, next year, and find that each item ap-

peared to be reasonable. But with a tiny mark that said, plus VAT.

Shoes are at one rate, ladies' cosmetics (luxury or necessity?) are at another. Hardware is yet another level and some items, like maybe bread and water, are exempt.

It's not going to go away. The concept has been mentioned as "not being introduced at this time." What it really means is, "Well we're throwing the idea to the public. If there is little or no reaction it's gonna go next time".

The water is being tested. The \$36 billion deficit could be wiped out within a week. Get ready for the smoke and mirrors. The bells and whistles, the new improved Canadian VAT.

**THIS WEEK'S QUOTE.** "Voting for a political party is like getting married. You hope for better, richer and health. You sometimes get worse, poorer and sickness." Me.

Ray Baker is a freelance writer. He and his family live in Penetanguishene. The only VAT they like is full of Maple sap bubbling away in Elmvalle each spring.

# Tories have been Real People for nearly nine months

by CAREY NIEUWHOF

The perils of power can get to even the best of us. Charles De Gaulle once remarked, "How can anyone govern a country with 246 different kinds of cheeses?" Good question, but it's one that would never plague the provincial Tories. They've been out of power for (gasp) almost nine months. The first babies born in Liberaldom will be taking their first steps and uttering their first words within a few months.

Where are our Tories now? What are they doing? And why haven't we heard much from them of late? The horrid truth is that they have slipped into that black void known as the Ontario Opposition.

Ontario's Opposition is a scary place. Mothers begin to worry that their sons and daughters have slipped into political unconsciousness when they enter that void. No longer do they see their offspring on the front pages. The only word they receive from them is the odd letter or phonecall.

The horde of people that used to surround their sons and daughters, a horde known as aides and assistants, has boosted Ontario's unemployment rate. Mom, your children are now alone in the dark corridors of a building illuminated only by 48 red ties. It's lonely at the bottom.

The last time most people heard from Lively Larry Grossman, the new leader of the

## Viewpoint

people who populate those dark benches across from David Peterson, was his victory speech at the last leadership convention. Since then, the little soldier has been trying to re-inspire his downtrodden troops. It's a tough job.

Most of his time has been spent hitting the partisan trail, talking to people in small halls around the province. This is where we learn what the new opposition Tories are really like. Just over a week ago, your scribbler had the chance to visit one of these places in Toronto. Over 300 Tories were there. The masks came off, and then the real face of a party in repair shone through. It was there that one discovered what being out of power was really like.

A former MPP relayed the tale of how Dennis Timbrell ran into trouble a while back. In the old days, he went on to tell the group, Tory ministers used to run around in government gas guzzlers. Their cars were serviced and replaced by the government. Out of power now, Timbrell went out a few weeks ago to do something he had never done before — buy his own car. One night he parked it outside of a restaurant on College Street in

Toronto. When he came out, his pride and joy had been taken for a joy ride. Gone with it were his government papers and all. Had it been the old days, a bureaucrat would have come to pick him up and would have got him a new car lickety split. Now, like the rest of us, he has to deal with something called an insurance company, something called the police department, and the prospect of being without for a week or two. This is the reality of the fall from power.

Then there was Phil Gillies, another former minister. He has enjoyed but one or two mentions from the press in the last six months or so. Before, he would open his mouth and see himself on the front page the next day. No longer. Now he opens his mouth and someone tells him to get a new mouthwash.

Phil, however, has always been a snazzy dresser. He invented paisley ties and the double breasted suit. I mentioned before that he has had but a paltry few headlines of late. One of them came from Flair magazine, which named him one of Canada's Top YUMMIES, Young Unmarried Men. With the lack of headlines, Gillies realized he will have to carry that article with him on the next

election trail, looking yummier than ever. In opposition, this is how you win re-election. This, too, is now reality for our beleaguered Tories.

Then there is Ken Zeise, head of the provincial Tory Youth. Elections for this position are usually held every two years. Ken began his first term as Youth President four years ago. When in power, you can serve longer than your term and blame postponed elections on the problems associated with scheduling this kind of thing while in power. When Zeise was introduced at the meeting, the youth began chanting "Four more years, four more years." Embarrassed by his own tyranny, Zeise sat and began scribbling in his pocket calendar, planning the next election for his position. This, too, is the reality of being in that Opposition void.

Mothers, we could go on about the crimes your sons and daughters are suffering in Opposition, but we won't prolong the agony. When you feel distraught about your child's plight, call the mother of one of those boys in red ties, for they watched their offspring go through 42 years of this.

It really is lonely at the Bottom.

Carey Nieuwhof is the President of the Glendon College PC Association and has worked on the past two Conservative leadership conventions. He is a Midland native.

## 4.5 percent pay raise for SCBE's custodians

Simcoe County Board of Education and members of CUPE Local 1310 have ratified a new one-year collective agreement which gives the county school board's 385 maintenance and custodial staff a 4.5 percent pay hike along with other benefits.

The new pact runs from Jan. 1, 1986 to Dec. 31, 1986.

## Total of five permits were issued

Last month, Midland Building Department issued a total of five permits for construction valued at a total of \$260,000.

During January of '85, it issued eight permits for a total value of \$78,600.

## Motor-vehicle accidents galore

Midland police force probed 32 reportable and 17 non-reportable motor-vehicle accidents on town streets last month.

The information is contained in a report tabled last night at a town council meeting.

## Society will see wild flowers

David Hawke, wild life photographer and Ministry of the Environment employee, will show his wild flower slides during the Feb. 24 meeting of the Midland Horticultural Society. A coffee hour will follow.

The Society meets at 8 p.m. in Calvary Baptist Church.

Nineteen eighty-six year books and memberships are available.

## Parking tags tell story

Tags issued for parking violations in Midland last month were 285.

During January of '85, a total of 368 tags were issued for parking infractions in the municipality.

## Explosion shocks

### Ont. Street residents, Sat.

An explosion on the road in front of 767 Ontario St., Midland, Saturday night had neighbours rushing to their windows as a car and a

snowmobile erupted in a ball of flame, after a high speed collision.

The official Midland Fire Department report explains that Terry Elarie lost control of his 1971 Yamaha snow machine, at about 9:30 p.m., after the throttle jammed and the brake failed. Elarie managed to jump from the snowmobile, which then sped riderless over a snowbank, and rolled over twice, before slamming into a parked car on Ontario Street.

Although there were no injuries, both the snowmobile and Chris Chapman's 1978 Pontiac were totally destroyed in the resulting fireball.

Town of Midland police were on the scene, immediately after the accident, but no charges were laid.

## Millions spent on education in the County of Simcoe

Simcoe County Board of Education's 1985 budget was \$146,481,800 an increase of 4.4 percent over '84.

## North Simcoe

### News briefs

#### And the snow keeps on falling

So far this winter a total of 473.6 centimetres of snow (186.45 inches) has blanketed North Simcoe.

Thirteen centimetres of snow fell on the district last Thursday, 11 centimetres on Friday, two centimetres on Saturday and four on Sunday.

#### Church members take part in weekend retreat

Nearly 30 members of the Midland Corps of the Salvation Army attended a weekend retreat at Jackson's Point.

Meanwhile, Lt. Karen Wilson took charge of the Sunday morning service of worship at the Midland Citadel.

#### Snowmobile operators charged

Over the weekend, Midland OPP cracked down on snowmobile operators in North Simcoe laying a total of 19 charges under the Snow Vehicles Act.

## Providing education for thousands of pupils

SCBE schools provide education for 24,086 elementary, 15,227 secondary, 163 trainable retarded and 969 summer school students.

The county school board operates 76 elementary and 15 secondary schools.

## When it comes to snow removal they are tops

It takes Midland Public Works Department crews just four to six hours to normally mop up after a winter snow storm.

Crews are responsible for plowing and sanding an estimated 42 miles of streets in the municipality.

## Club holding rummage sale

The Mothers Club of St. Mark's Church, Third Street, Midland, will hold a rummage sale in the church basement, on Feb. 28, at 1 p.m. Visitors to the rummage sale should use the rear door.

## Weekend break-ins bring call for help

Midland OPP are seeking the assistance of the general public in helping to track down leads that will lead to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for two weekend cottage break-ins at Balm Beach and another on Conc. 16, Tiny.

TV's, stereo equipment and chain saws were snatched.

## Fire truck at HDH for false alarm

Hugel Avenue residents were concerned at the sight of a Town of Midland fire truck rushing to Huronia District Hospital, at 8:30 Wednesday morning.

However, firefighters were relieved to discover only an automatic alarm system malfunction as the cause of the emergency.

At 9 p.m. Tuesday, another accidentally triggered alarm resulted in a call to the Shulman Apartment building on King Street.

## YBC raffle winners

Ladies Auxiliary for Penetanguishene's YBC held their quilt draw at the Poyntz Plaza Mall, on Sunday, Feb. 15.

Kyle Lizotte of Penetanguishene, was the lucky winner of the grand prize Quilt. While second prize winner, Tina Caston of Midland, won a Baby Bed Quilt and Pillow set. B. Forget of Penetanguishene, became the new owner of a Cabbage Patch Doll. Mrs. Aileen Stephens of Penetanguishene won fourth prize, a set of handmade Place Mats.

The Ladies Auxiliary wishes to thank everyone who participated in the draw for their support.

## Pledge will be fulfilled

Huron District Hospital Board Chairman Hilda Sibthorpe will receive the balance of the current pledge of the hospital's Auxiliary, during the Auxiliary's next regular meeting, Feb. 24.

Members are asked to bring completed volunteer information sheets. Orientation is Feb. 17 and 28.