

# Editorial J. Albert Belanger Reports

How much longer do we have to be ashamed of being honest, afraid of being excellent, horrified at being unique? How much longer must we submit to the tyranny of the lowest common denominator? When can we stop pretending we like what we tolerate and tolerate what we abhor?

What kind of red-necked reactionism is that, you ask? It isn't — I'm not a red-neck, but even if I did work out in the sun, wind and rain and had a red neck to show for it, why should I be ashamed? (What's wrong with not working in an office?)

Let's just take trying to be honest. Next time a clerk makes a mistake in your favour, point it out. Chances are you'll be treated like some kindly old nut. (Maybe you are one). Don't press your point, though, or you'll be suspected of trying to pull a fast one and out will come the house detective. Don't laugh, it happens — honesty is suspicious.

I know modesty is a virtue and crowing is a sin, but is there anything wrong with doing the best darned job you can? How many of us pull back from excellence in a task because we're afraid of standing out? I know of one rural fair that stopped giving prizes to children because competition, they say, is damaging. For that matter, we don't give kids marks in school, nor do we fail slackers. We just let everyone progress at his own rate. Like your Pet Rock does.

Why does square have to be "square"? A square meal, a square foundation, a square deal — don't round the peg, change the hole. And "straight" . . . Why does "straight" have to be the opposite of adventurous, exciting and forward looking? Why should I have to admit humbly that I don't pop pills and have boyfriends? "Gay and proud", they say and yet if I were to say I'm proud of being straight, I'd be a red-necked bigot. I didn't like the movie where love was defined by strangulation. I'm narrow-minded.

Now, already some people are lining the Russell Review up with that paper in Carleton Place that gets off on "Stomping the Frogs". They see us as some sort of John Birch tract.

I'm getting sick of Christianity and the Church being equated with duplicity, avarice and reaction. I'm tired of the implication that a conservative is de facto crotchety, crooked and cruel while a liberal is enlightened, dedicated and beautiful. I'm bored with the equation of liberty and license. I don't understand why the past is all a mistake. Open up with both barrels of your cliché machine and put me down, if you will, but really, shouldn't you be more tolerant? I'm just part of a misunderstood minority.

The people of Ontario are faced with the problem of deciding just what, in these inflationary times, can a society afford. What are our priorities? Where can we cut costs?

For the past several years, municipal governments have been increasing their spending to meet the constant demands put upon municipal and school boards to provide services. We have built hospitals, homes for the aged, schools, colleges, universities as modern and efficient as any in the world.

The fact that local governments were able to spend more and more money, year after year without increasing property taxes was due to the province of Ontario constantly making substantial increases in the funds it pays to local governments. In 1975 provincial payments were double what they were in 1971.

A commitment to restraint however, must be carried out by all citizens. But above all, it must be carried out by government. The growth of government spending over the past several years has been one of the causes of inflation. The Ontario government is engaged in a three-pronged attack on those causes. First, we have introduced restraint measures of our own. These include cutting back some internal budgets and freezing others; cancelling some non-essential projects; freezing salaries for senior civil servants; and limiting other public servants to

an 8 percent increase in keeping with the federal guidelines.

Secondly, we are co-operating with the federal government in a nation-wide anti-inflation program. We feel inflation is a national problem and finding solutions to this problem requires team work, an effort on the part of all Canadians to work together. For this reason, there will be no provincial boards in our province to undermine the strength of federal initiatives.

Third, and most important of all, because it involves all of us. We must all be prepared not only to support the initiatives of the provincial, federal and local governments, but also to exercise restraint in our daily lives. This brings me back to the point about municipal spending. As part of the government's cutting back process, we must limit the growth of our payments to local governments. Now is the time for municipalities to take a hard look at non-essential items — the extras that can be trimmed from every budget. The Premier puts it this way, "In the past we have been talking of our wants as well as our needs. The time has come to concentrate on our needs".

Thus elected officials and school boards will have to interpret what is essential and what is a frill.

We must all realize a greater responsibility for solving our own problems and meeting our own wants.

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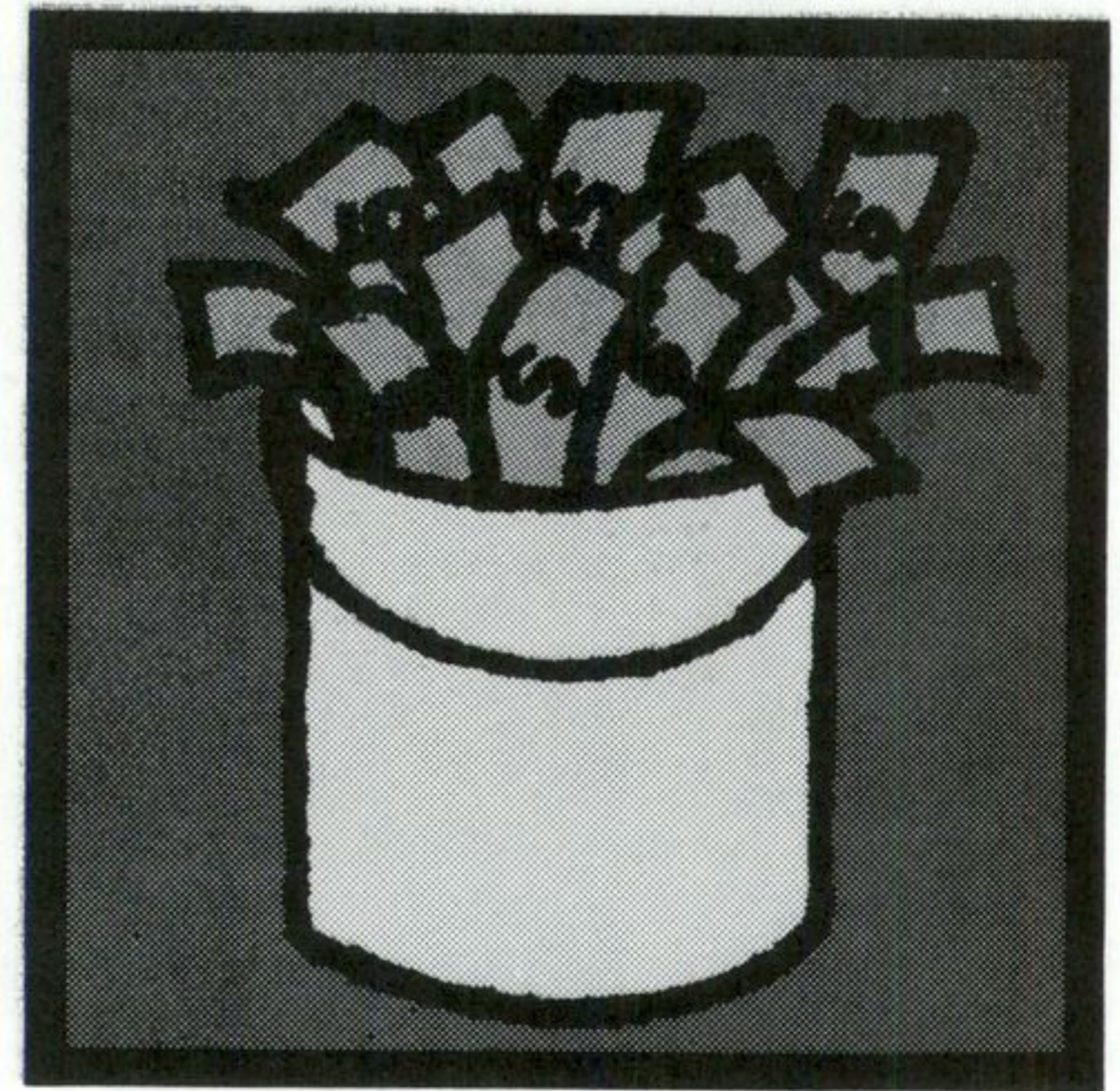
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## Dairymen protest change in Federal dairy agreement

Eastern Ontario dairymen have become so upset by the federal government's plans to reduce milk subsidies and increase cheese imports that 40 to 50 of them bussed to Toronto, January 21 to seek support and guidance from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture Board of Directors' meeting, being held in Toronto at the Ontario Credit Union League Building.

Focus of the debate at the Board of Directors' meeting were two resolutions, from Prescott and Russell counties, east of Ottawa.

The main reasons for the farmers' complaints were, first, that the federal government has announced that it plans to increase cheese imports from five to not less than 10 percent of domestic dairy requirements, despite the fact that the Canadian Dairy industry can easily supply all of Canada's dairy requirements. Furthermore, this is being done without any explanation of why, which leads the farmers to believe that the reason is to obtain GATT benefits for manufactured goods.

Such a move strikes the

dairymen as particularly perverse and unwarranted in view of provincial programs to encourage farmers to increase production. The Ontario IMPIP program, designed to increase dairy production, persuaded many farmers to increase production or to switch into dairy. But this program is such that the government loans are only interest-free if production is increased. With federal policies designed to decrease production, where is the dairyman to get the funds to pay back the principal let alone the interest payments he will now be liable for.

While agreeing that there has been an over-supply of dairy production this year, the farmers feel the federal government is over-reacting. The large production was due to production was due to a particularly good forage crop situation and a slackening of demand because of the increase in the price of milk products in the period from April to June of 1975. But there is no reason to suppose that such a good forage crop will occur this year and there is every reason to believe that the consumer will soon adjust to higher prices.

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