

# stouffville comment

## Tremendous support for Canada

Canadians are apathetic. Canadians are meek, mild and generally not concerned with the welfare of their nation.

Not so, say Whitchurch-Stouffville residents.

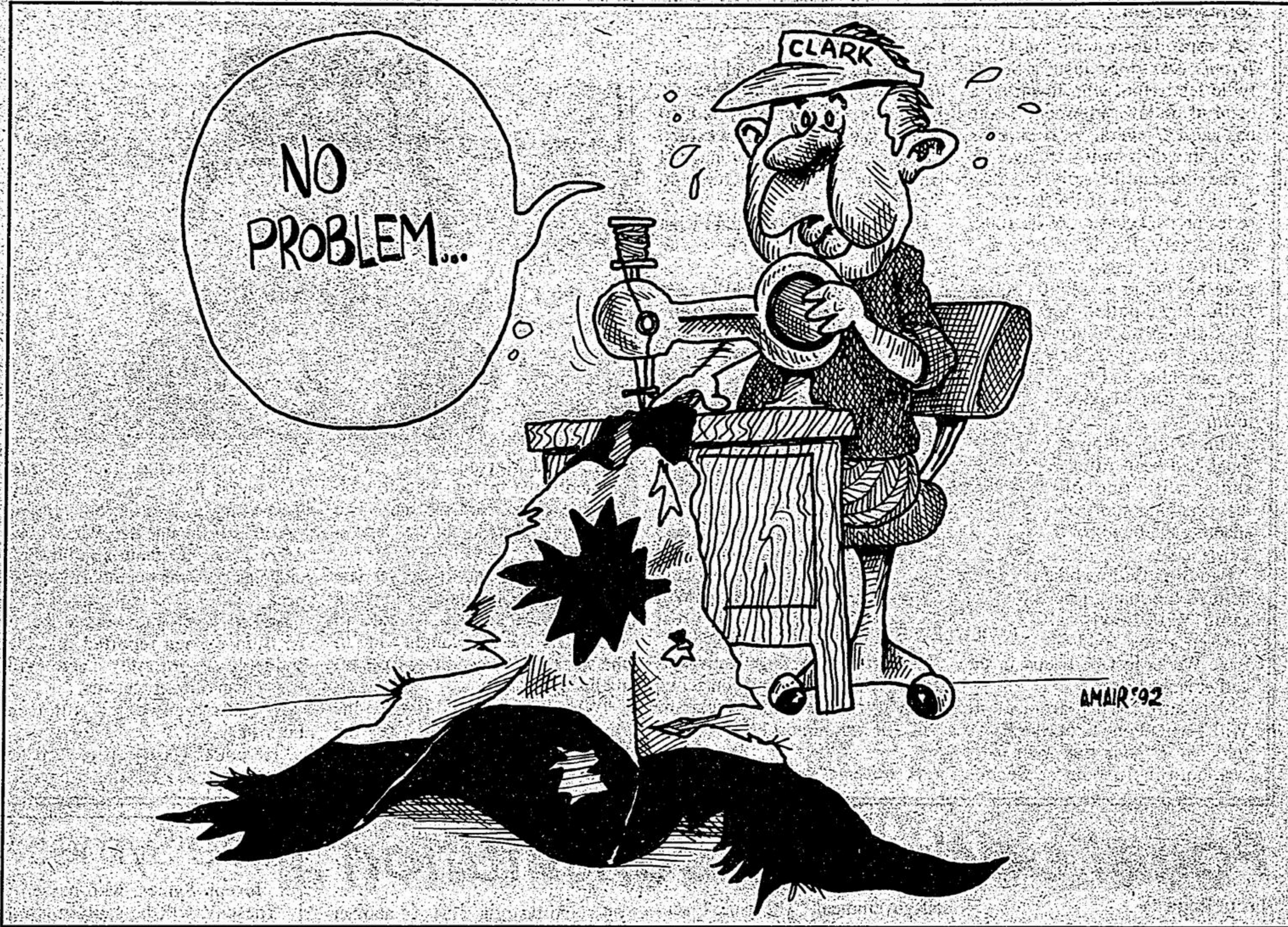
This was evident at Saturday's constitutional reform meeting sponsored by MP Bill Attewell at Parkview Village.

The turn-out alone would be enough to signify that Stouffville is a veritable heartbeat of national vitality and pride.

The residents who offered views and comments on the constitution, its reforms and the future of Canada should give politicians inspiration that yes, in fact, there are still some Canadians who care what becomes of this land.

The suggestions put forward by the large crowd Saturday will definitely add grist to the constitutional mill.

These are historic times for Canada, and it is encouraging that Whitchurch-Stouffville residents want to play such an important role in that history.



## Residents attempt to unravel constitution reform

As the government's constitutional road show sweeps through the country, ordinary Canadians are getting a feeling of what elected officials are up against as they attempt to unravel the web which is "constitutional reform".

But more importantly, the politicians are getting some very constructive and imaginative feedback from the large numbers of individuals who are flocking to these "town hall" constitutional meetings to express their feelings about what's right and wrong with our country.

Whatever the outcome of these meetings, which will ultimately culminate with a first ministers

conference on the constitution, we can all take heart that public opinion is alive and well in this country.

No other issue gets the juices of Canadians flowing like constitutional reform.

Especially when you consider the alternatives to reform are separatism, along with economic and political chaos.

By and large the tone of these meetings has been a conciliatory one. This hasn't gone unnoticed by Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark, who has been given the unenviable task of putting the many pieces of the country back together again. As illustrated in some of his comments recently, Clark is hoping compromise will



be the glue that holds the pieces together.

Clark was buoyant following a weekend constitutional conference in Halifax where the ideas of delegates who attended seemed to mesh well with proposals put forth by the government — one of which would allow Quebec to flex its political

muscle without federal interference.

"I'm surprised by what we've seen here," Clark said later. "If this attitude reflects the country — or has a chance of reflecting the country — then I see no reason in principle not to take a look at an asymmetrical (political science jargon for giving special powers to Quebec) approach," he said.

But Clark is an astute enough politician to realize the message coming from the people is twofold.

Firstly, if the government gives special powers to Quebec, don't weaken the role of the central gov-

ernment. Secondly, whatever happens, ensure that all Canadians are treated equally during the process and in the final analysis.

Clark is working hard not to repeat his government's Meech Lake blunder, when some of the provinces rebelled against Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's blatant attempt to push through an agreement.

In light of the Meech Lake fiasco, and the very real issues the government has to deal with during this constitutional process, it will take nothing short of a miracle to pound out a solution everyone can live with.

## Snow sent us back to stone age

Last Tuesday, we awaited what CBC-AM gleefully predicted would be the worst snowstorm of the year.

With January a scant 14 days old and one of the mildest in the province's history, I felt that panic was premature. A friend remarked dryly that the threatened snowstorm was probably just media hype — a necessary relief from the constitution, the economy and the tense moral debate surrounding Barenaked Ladies.

Real snowstorms, as we all know, are a thing of the past, when men were men and snow buried telegraph poles and stranded hapless commuters in the city for a week. For this cosseted immigrant, however, last Tuesday's effort was quite impressive enough.

Watching the storm-lashed scene from the safety of Chateau Gilderdale, I was able to enjoy the spectacle of nature's wrath in the



warmth and comfort of my own home. Until the heating expired.

It was my son who alerted me to the problem by pointing out that the house was more than usually frigid. Hunched over my computer, deep in thought, I hadn't noticed. "Put another sweater on," I said automatically, getting up to check the thermostat.

This computerized gadget is as much a mystery to me as our pre-programmable VCR, but I could tell from the blank readout that it wasn't working. I turned it briefly to "cool", whereupon it obligingly displayed a bracing 14 degrees. My friendly serviceman suggest-

ed pushing the re-set button on the furnace. There followed an encouraging whoosh, and blissful draughts of warm air surged through the vents.

The hydro, meanwhile, was going on and off at frequent, though irregular, intervals as though controlled by a deranged technocrat.

The next major blackout caused the furnace to cease functioning altogether. And whenever the lights came on, we were surrounded by an arcade of flashing electronic clocks and a terse message which read "RESET" on the microwave.

Despite the excitement of cooking spaghetti sauce by flashlight on the gas stove and almost crushing the cat underfoot during a dark journey to the basement, my sense of adventure was soon exhausted.

Now the heat is back on, the lights don't flicker and everything is perfect. If I could just open my mailbox...

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