

Our Opinion

Changes to UI nothing but a smokescreen

The changes to the unemployment insurance legislation proposed by the federal government are just another example of the loss of forethought the Tories are suffering in the twilight of their years in power.

The idea to cut off UI cheats is noble, to be sure.

But the fundamental flaw in the idea is that we put money into the insurance scheme, and by God, we should be able to get our money back if and when the need arises.

The changes sent down from Employment Minister Bernard Valcourt last week are designed to soften the edges of a law that will ultimately stifle the job market. (If such an animal ever returns.)



Viewpoint

Andrew Mair

UI is designed to be a bridge between employers; but abuses, as with any government program, are rampant.

The new law is meant to look good for a doubting and government-weary public, but it will be impossible to enforce, and a nightmare to disentangle the true cases of wrongful dismissal from the dole-riders.

Those aiming to take early retirement will be greatly dis-

couraged if they cannot tap the public system they have been paying into for years.

And once again those accusing sexual harassment will be made the victim trying to prove they had the right to quit their job.

The new legislation contains amendments that are already recognized by the courts.

This is a public relations campaign, ladies and gentlemen. Canadians will not abide a thief, and everyone knows someone who is on the take by working "under the table." The government believes this lesson in humility for people quitting their jobs will improve their image in the eyes of hard-working and honest Canadians.

But the simple fact is that for many, the social safety net is fast becoming more appealing than earning a wage.

When your health care needs are looked after by the state, why work for a company that pays half your benefits?

The loopholes have to be closed.

However, as many pundits have pointed out, the sieve that is our UI and welfare programs is airtight compared with the waste in government spending.

Good Samaritan sought to thank

Dear Editor,

I just wanted to express my sincere thanks to a nice man in Balantrae who helped me out on Jan. 7. I lost control of my car on a flooded road west of Saintfield and ended up in two feet of water and ice on the side of the road.

Unable to move my car, I had to walk to the closest farmhouse so I could call my husband. After several long hikes to empty houses I was beginning to get very cold and discouraged. No cars had passed since I had started walking and I was quickly losing hope that any would. Finally, as I was walking down another unsuccessful laneway, I saw a yellow truck coming down the road. I ran to the middle of the road and started waving my arms in hopes that this person would stop to help me. I was oblivious to the potential danger that I may have been facing as this man stopped his truck. After listening to my story through my teary eyes, he offered me a ride and even tried to find me a tow truck. He said he was on his way to Bobcageon and since my house was on his route he could drop me off. Arriving safely to my house, I offered him some money for his trouble but he refused to take any. I was so upset and preoccupied by this time that I forgot to get his name and I didn't really thank him properly. All I know is that he lives by Ted's Towing in Balantrae.

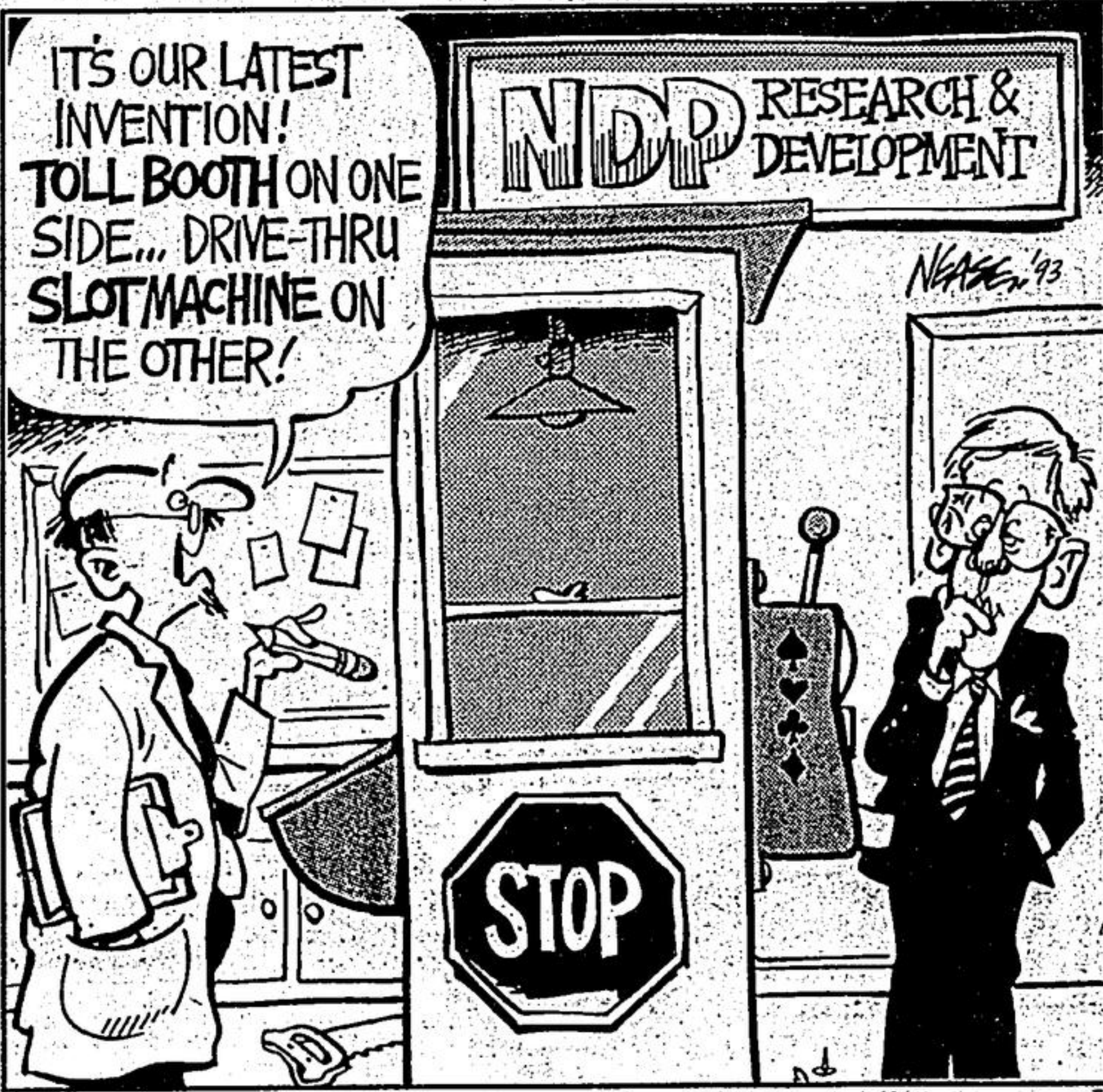
It is my hope that he will read this paper and know how much I appreciated his help. We finally

Editor's Mail

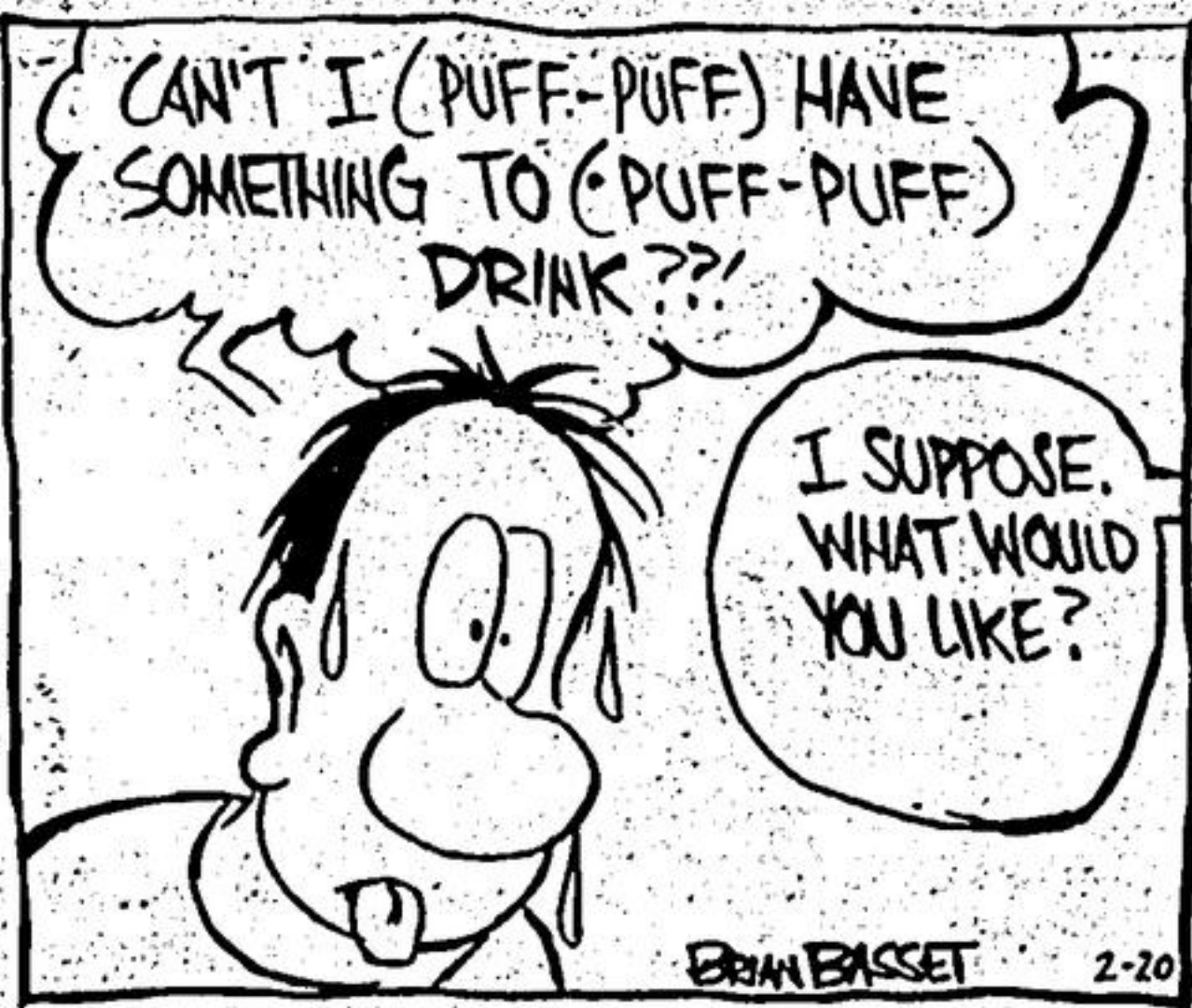
got the car out with the help of another kind person from Scugog Township who had come to grate this dangerous road. He pulled my car out with his grater and checked the engine for damage as my husband and I bailed the water out of the car!

With all of the 'unsafe' people in this world these days, it's really nice to know that you can still trust some people. I'm just extremely thankful that the man who stopped to help me was a 'safe' person. We hear so many frightening stories these days and I must admit that I was foolish to have risked my safety; I took a chance and I was lucky. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to show my appreciation to this man and for reminding others that there still are some good Samaritans around.

Gloria Morrison
Sunderland



ADAM



by Brian Basset

Jurisprudential jerks know no boundary

The worse the society, the more law there will be. In Hell, there will be nothing but law, and due process will be meticulously observed.

Grant Gilmore

The law is a ass, a idiot.

Charles Dickens

You have to wonder about our legal system sometimes. Such as when it pops a repeat sexual psychopath and convicted child molester like Joseph Fredericks back on the street, just in time for him to abduct, rape, torture and strangle a 12-year old boy.

Such as when it wastes several days of court time and who knows how many thousands of dollars examining a beer spitting spat between an oafish 19-year-old hockey player and a bar waitress.

Not that Canadian courts of law have a corner on jurisprudential jerkiness. Just cast your eyes on courtrooms south of the border, where an arch thief like Michael Milken can bilk the American people of billions of dollars by peddling junk bonds. He gets 10 years, but escapes with a 22-month sentence and a few hundred hours of 'community work.'

The American legal system put televangelical fraud Jimmy Bakker away for 45 years four years ago. Last month, Bakker's lawyers said that he might be eligible for parole next year.

Go figure. And while you're at it, go figure the treatment Terry Anderson's getting from the U.S. legal system. You remember Terry Anderson — the sad-eyed, bearded pawn in the Middle East war, captured by Hezbollah fanatics, beaten, chained to radiators, threatened, held hostage for longer than Mike Milken and Jimmy Bakker put together?

Well Anderson's free now, trying to put his life back together. He intends to write a book about his experience as a hostage, so he wrote to the U.S. government for background information on the thugs who'd held him captive.

No dice. So far, Anderson's request has been turned down by eight different U.S. federal agencies — on the recommendation of their legal advisors.



Basic Black

Arthur Black

Why can't Terry Anderson get access to information on the criminals who so grossly and publicly violated his civil rights for so long? Well, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, that would be violating the privacy rights of the terrorists.

Not that the Justice Department slams the door entirely. Anderson's been informed that they'll gladly provide the information he seeks.

Just as soon as he supplies notarized personal privacy waivers signed by each of the terrorists who held him prisoner, including their full names and present addresses.

Said Anderson: "I just find it kind of strange that the U.S. Department of Justice wants to protect the privacy of members of the Hezbollah."

On the other side of the ledger, there is the story of Dejon Dickson, an auto thief in Palm Springs, California. Dickson was out looking for work (i.e. parked cars with a key in the ignition) when police officer Greg Jackson cruised by. Jackson saw Dickson, Dickson saw Jackson. Dickson took off through a park on foot.

Small problem: Dejon Dickson was young, lean and fast. Officer Jackson? Well, after 16 years of squad cars and donuts he was ... less lean and fast. He knew he'd never catch the fleet-footed Dickson by running after him.

So he thought fast instead. Officer Jackson reached for the patrol car speaker, flipped it on and boomed "STOP — OR I'LL SEND THE DOG!"

And after a tasteful pause, Officer Jackson added in his best basso-profundo: "WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!"

Dejon Dickson skidded to a stop with his hands in the air.

Ah, me. It's a good job they're still making dumb crooks.

It helps to make up for all the smart ones who are laughing all the way to the Half Way House.

MARKHAM ECONOMIST AND SUN STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE UXBRIDGE TRIBUNE
Weekender edition
A Metroland Community Newspaper
PATRICIA PAPPAS, PUBLISHER
JO ANN STEVENSON, Editor-in-Chief
PAULA CROWELL, Editor
ANDREW MAIR, Editor
DEBRA WELER, Director of Advertising
JENNIFER HUTT, Director of Distribution
VIVIAN O'NEIL, Business Manager
PAM NICHOLS, Operations Manager
Markham 294-2200 (sales 798-7624, classified 294-4331), Stouffville 640-2100, Uxbridge 852-9741
294-8244 distribution and administration
9 Heritage Rd. Markham L3P 1M2
FAX: Markham 294-1538, Stouffville 640-5477, Uxbridge 852-4355
The Markham Economist and Sun, Stouffville Tribune and Uxbridge Tribune, published every Wednesday and Saturday is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: Ajax Pickering News Advertiser, Barrie Advance, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Collingwood Connection, Etobicoke Guardian, The Liberal, Georgetown Independent/Action Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Milton Canadian Champion, Mississauga News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Orillia Today, Oshawa-Whitby This Week, Peterborough This Week, Scarborough Mirror, The Era Banner.
Contents not to be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.