

# Opinion

## Legislation is first step to fairness

The move to give homosexuals recognition in the Human Rights Act has sparked controversy among right wing Canadians.

Parliament passed a second reading of the bill this week. After it goes to a committee for study it will return to the Commons for final passage. Prime Minister Jean Chretien permitted Liberal MPs a free vote declaring it as a morality issue.

The prime minister is right. It would be immoral to deny any Canadians their rights based on their sexual orientation.

Critics argue that the bill will offer homosexuals a back



**Viewpoint**

*Paula Crowell*

door into legal rights for gay marriages and adoption.

No one wants to see the deterioration of the family unit. It is what makes our society what it is.

But there is no proof that by legally prohibiting discrimination against gays, society as we know it will crumble.

When women fought for the vote after the turn of the cen-

tury, their critics said it would lead to the downfall of society.

Eighty years later Canada continues to be a country which, at its core, represents family values. Canada has its imperfections but we are a nation of people which recognizes the value of human beings of all ages and which celebrates family life.

To offer a measure of security to a small part of the population will neither make nor break this country.

The passing of this legislation will not see all sorts of previously considered heterosexuals turning on the straight population to join

the newly liberated ranks of the gays.

This law will not cause the corruption of children adopted by gay couples eager to teach them their ways.

Nor will it make single men and women reconsider their decision to marry.

People who are gay didn't choose to be that way any more than women choose to be female or blacks choose to be dark-skinned.

The first step toward ending discrimination toward any of these groups is legislation. Society will come around to accept this in due time.



## Where are the squid hid?

*There is no new thing under the sun*

Ecclesiastes 1:9

Well, perhaps not new, but there are some uncommonly strange and unlikely critters out there that, despite our scientific sophistication, we still haven't laid eyes on.

Never mind the sasquatch and the abominable snowman. Forget about UFO's and quirks and quarks. How about architeuthis?

His common name is "giant squid" and the simple fact is, even though marine biologists and fishermen know he's down there somewhere, no one has ever seen a giant squid in his natural habitat.

Oh, we've seen squid, alright. All kinds of squid. Newfoundlanders jig for them. I can go down to a favorite Spanish restaurant and order up a dish of calamars any time I want. But neither Newfoundlanders nor I will be tucking into a dish of giant squid.

Squid of any size are never going to win a beauty contest. They are, at least to the conventional human eye, an apparition right out of your worst nightmare. There is, for starters, those huge unblinking eyes and a corolla of undulating sucker-pocked tentacles surrounding a parrot-like beak.

Giant squid are something else again. They spend their lives in the dark depths of the ocean. They never get within a half mile of the surface unless they're sick or dying.

And they're big. More than 2,000 years ago the Roman naturalist Pliny described one with arms "knotted like clubs" with a head as big as a wine cask. A medieval Swedish observer wrote of "monstrous fish" of "horrible forms with huge eyes."

Several famous novelists have used the giant squid to great dramatic advantage. In *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville waxed apocalyptic about a "vast pulpy mass, furlongs in length... long arms radiating from its center and curling and twisting like a nest of anacondas." In *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, author Jules Verne invented a squid so huge it wrapped the submarine *Nautilus* in its embrace. Even as I speak, there's a movie making the rounds called *Beast*, the main character of which is a 100-foot-long architeuthis.

Literary flights of imagination? No doubt. But there have been bits and pieces of giant squid washed up, snagged in deep sea fishing nets and found in the guts of sperm whales to make it clear there's something mighty big swimming around down there.

The largest specimen ever measured was found



**Basic Black**

*Arthur Black*

on a beach in New Zealand in the late 1800's. It weighed about a ton and was just slightly longer than your average Greyhound bus.

So, is there any chance that there are really, really giant squid down there—bigger than anything we've ever seen?

Doctor Clyde Roper thinks so. He's a marine biologist and curator of an exhibit called *In Search of Giant Squid*, currently on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington. This fall, Dr. Roper hopes to head for the squid jiggling grounds off New Zealand, fold himself into a deep-diving submersible and become the first human being in history to observe and film the giant squid in its natural habitat. Roper believes there's a very good chance he'll find "massive, unbelievable animals" up to 75 feet long.

Fictional flights of fancy aside, is Dr. Roper likely to be in any danger down there, surrounded by squid? Well, there was that photographer taking shots of squid underwater off the California coast a few years back who was attacked by a "hive" of swarming squid.

They actually began to pull him down until he had the presence of mind to use air bubbles from his regulator to "hose" them off his body. The diver came out of it with what Roper describes as "giant hickeys" all over his skin.

And those were just little squid, no more than a hundredth the size of architeuthis.

Good luck down there, Dr. Roper.

## Province short-sighted on schools

Dear Editor,

The Minister of Education's recent assertion that the government's cut of \$400 million only represents a 3.4 per cent in education expenditures is a huge distortion of the actual impact such a move has.

First, the government, on average, only provides about 35 per cent of the costs of education. Yet, their 3.4 per cent figure is based upon total expenditures.

This means their reduction represents a much larger percentage of what they provide—closer to 10 per cent.

Second, the Ontario government has been decreasing its share of education funding for the past 25 years.

While I have yet to

## Editor's Mail

understand how laying off thousands of workers can help the economy, local communities must begin to ask themselves what impact this will have upon their schools and the students which attend them.

The argument that fewer teachers or less time for preparation of lessons and assessment will not affect programming exhibits a profound ignorance of how classroom education works.

Governments argue

we need to get our fiscal house in order for the sake of future generations, but it would appear that it is the future generations, in the form of current and future students, that will have to pay the price.

Considering that the government's destruction of the education system through massive transfer payment reductions has only just begun, students will soon suffer from an impotent education system and society will feel the negative repercussions of these short-sighted decisions for many years to come.

**Steve Bull**  
Stouffville

