

Welfare cases drop

The Minister of Community and Social Services, Janet Ecker, announced this week that 209,600 people have stopped relying on welfare during this government's first two years in office.

This represents an unprecedented 15.6 per cent decrease in the number of people on welfare in just two years, said the minister. "This is the lowest number of people on assistance in Ontario since January 1992. We are encouraged that more people are breaking free from depending on welfare as Ontario's economy improves."

More than 12,000 people left Ontario's welfare system in July alone. The minister said the decline in July reflects an increase in seasonal employment and that the government's welfare reforms are continuing to produce results.

Reforms include anti-fraud measures, tighter eligibility criteria, and the Ontario Works program. Some 36,000 people in 30 communities have participated in one or more of the mandatory activities under Ontario Works.

"We are pleased by this progress," said Ecker. "But we recognize we have to do more to assist people to become self-sufficient."

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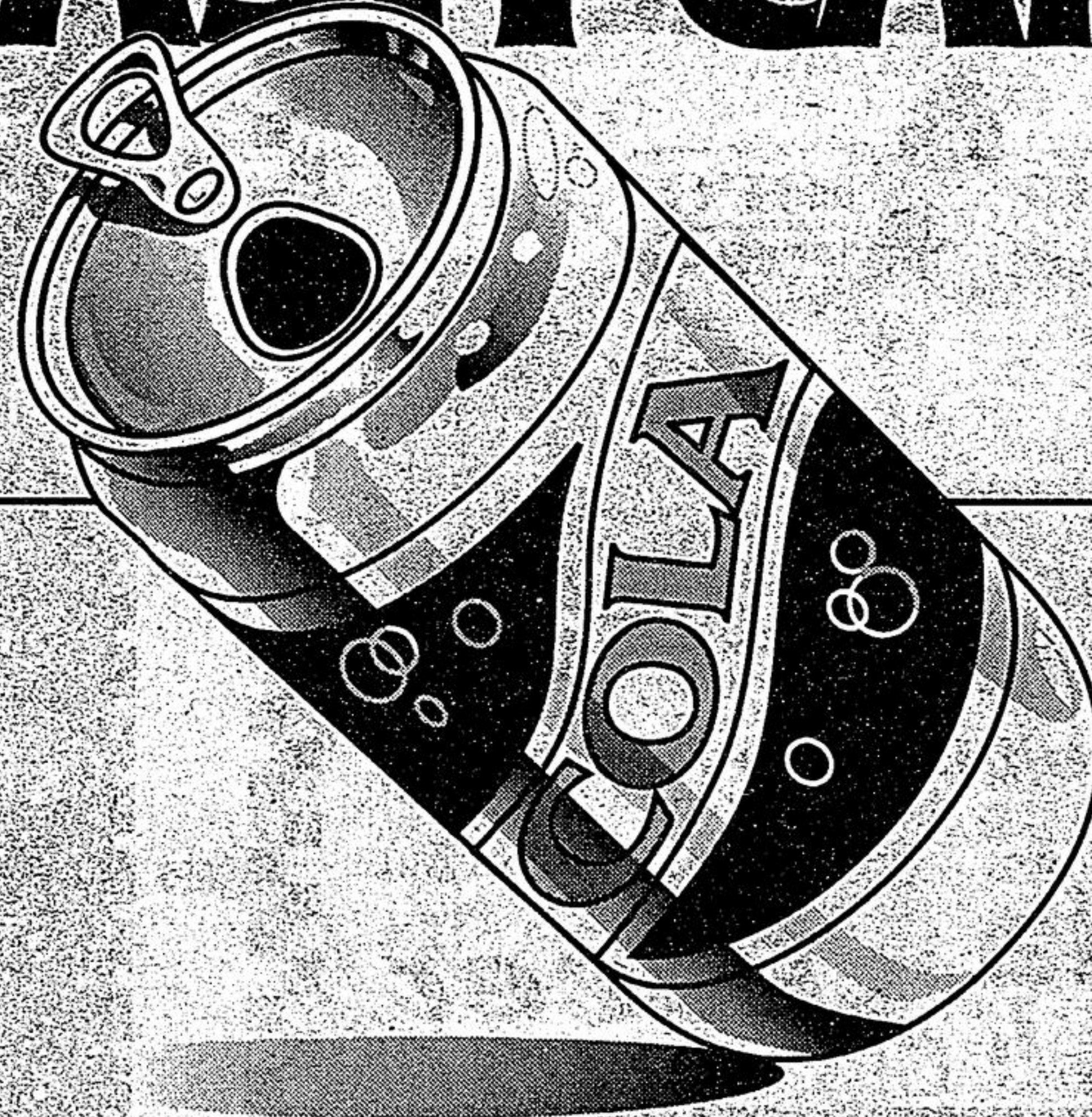
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