

# Comment & Opinions

## EDITORIAL

### Job plan a godsend

Local school boards should watch a planned job creation program for high-school dropouts very closely. It could be a godsend for the huge number of unemployed youths in Canada, many of them languishing in York and Durham Regions.

A pilot project suggested by federal Liberal MPs in Metro and the Toronto separate school board would target firms doing business with the schools and ask them to hire unemployed students.

Each catering, computer, paper and transportation firm doing business with the Toronto board would be each asked to hire one student between the ages of 16 and 29. If they did, roughly 9,000 jobless youths could see their lives turned around.

If the federal government approves the project, funding could be in place by the end of February, and if successful, the youth job plan could be expanded across the country.

Canada's youth employment is the worst in the country, at about 16 per cent. High-school dropouts have the toughest time finding jobs of all segments of society.

The aim of the program is to get the young people off employment insurance, get them into the workforce, evaluate them and try placing them permanently. The average work term would be six months, and the \$15,000-a-year salaries would be shared by Ottawa and individual private companies.

Imagine if York's two school boards, and Durham's as well, got involved in this kind of job-creation project. They spend millions on supplies and services for schools, and could use this economic muscle to encourage supplier firms to hire dropouts. It's an idea worth considering — and for those caught in the youth unemployment crisis — the perfect time to do it.



## English a 'lazy' language, says critic Culp

I haven't heard a peep from Ted Culp for a few years. Hope he's all right.

Mister Culp is — or was — president of the Simplified Spelling Society of Canada.

Sorry, that should read: Simplified-spelling Society of Canada.

Ted hates the way the English language works. "It's a very lazy and careless language," he once told me. "We need to chop out stuff all down the line."

He's dead serious (or serious). Mister Culp has written a 30,000-word-simplified dictionary and even published a newspaper printed in what he calls "reformed English."

Much as I love the variety of English, I have to admit it doesn't make

a lot of sense. How can words like through, threw, you and glue be spelled so differently and yet all end with the same sound?

Why is there an "l" in 'could'? A "p" in 'pneumonia'? A "k" in 'knife'? A "u" in 'valour' and one too many "a"s in 'aardvark'?

How come the letter "c" gets pronounced two different ways in the word 'cicada'?

And then there's "ough", which can be pronounced six different ways — as in tough, through, thorough, cough, hiccough and bough.

Some hard-once wrote these words about the idiosyncrasies of English: 'Billet does not sound like ballet, Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet, Viscous, viscount, load and broad,



**Basic Black**  
Arthur Black

Rounded, wounded, grieve and sieve, Friend and fiend; alive and live; Worm and storm; chaise, chaos, chair, Senator, spectator, mayor.

Yup, English is a bizarre language alright.

If Ted Culp had his way, it would be stripped down and freed from all its inconsistencies. Cleansed, as he put it, of all its "extraneous, redundant, superfluous, silent symbols."

Alas, nobody ever paid much attention to Ted Culp. Language reformers seldom get much respect. A couple of hundred years ago, an American tried to interest his fellow countrymen in reforming the language. They ignored him too.

And his name was Benjamin Franklin.

Back at the turn of this century, the great critic and playwright George Bernard Shaw unveiled a whole new spelling system plus a new alphabet. The world yawned mightily.

Perhaps the world instinctively knew better than the reformers ever will. This week I received this in the mail:

**DATELINE BRUSSELS**  
The European Union commissioners have announced that agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, the British government conceded

that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year-phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish ("Euro" for short).

In the first year, "s" will be used instead of the soft "c". Certainly, civil servants will reserve this news with joy. Also, the hard "c" will be replaced with "k". Not only will this clear up confusion, but typewriter and word processor keyboards can have one less letter.

Experts predict there will be growing public enthusiasm in the second year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced by "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20 per cent shorter.

In the third year, public acceptance of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more complicated changes are possible. Governments will encourage the removal of double letters, which have always been a deterrent to accurate spelling. Also, all wilksagre that the horrible mes of silent "e"s in the language is disgraceful, and they would disappear.

By the fourth year, people will be resseptiv to steps such as replacing "th" with "t" and "w" by "v".

During ze sifz year, ze uneserary "o" kan be dropd from words containing "ou" and similar changes vid of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of letters. After ziz sifz yer, ze vil hava a reli sensibl riten styl. Zervil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evryun vil find it eziz tu understand ech ozer. Ze drem vil finaliz kam, tru.

I should hasten to tell you that the above came to me as an e-mail from a reader who, thought I would get a kick out of it.

ltz purly, lung-in-cheke, I m shur

## Please do right thing

Dear Editor,

How wonderful it is to open the paper and read letters reporting acts of good citizenship! This, regretably, is not one of them.

On the afternoon of Sun, Jan. 18, our daughter, a high school student, left our car parked in the parking lot at Angie's Eatery plaza in Stouffville.

Sometime between 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. someone hit the car (perhaps by accident, backing into it) on the right front bumper. The bumper broke (a section about a foot long was punched right out) and the support arm was bent down. In addition, the turn indicator was broken from its mount, and is now loose.

Our daughter first noticed the damage at 12:30 p.m., but — as you

**LETTERS**

may have guessed by now — no note was left to indicate who was responsible.

We try to instill good citizenship in our children by word and example. This is not the example we wish our daughter to remember.

If you saw our car being damaged, please call (905) 294-3963.

If the person who caused the damage is the first to call, our faith in humanity will be restored — and that person will be able to sleep with a clear conscience, and the inner pride that goes with doing the right thing.

J.A. Harper, Markham

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The Tribune welcomes your letters to the editor. Please keep letters to no more than 300 words. Note that letters may be edited for space, libel, spelling, grammar.

While we endeavor to print as many letters as possible, we regret that not all letters may be printed.