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Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Tories at least sticking to guns

The Ontario government promised a "kinder and gentler" province in its Speech from the Throne at Queen's Park on Thursday.

Let's hope so.

While full of the appropriate pomp and circumstance, the problem with Throne speeches is that they are simply one long commercial for the government in power.

Having the speech delivered by Lieutenant Governor Hilary Weston helps make the government's promise to implement its policies "carefully and well" and that it is "listening" more believable.

The proof, however, will be in the actions of the government.

On the surface, Thursday's speech seems to have the government headed in the right direction.

The Tories have promised to spend \$100 million on long-term health care, to increase funding to the classroom while continuing to attack educational bureaucracy, to get tough on health care and welfare fraud, and to provide more support for victims of crime. Who could be against such policies?

On the other hand, the government is not backing down from its controversial workfare program - rather it's expanding the program. It's taking the same approach with its boot camps for young offenders. The Tories are not backing away from the Common Sense Revolution. Love them or hate them, you have to at least give them credit for sticking to their guns.



Pepsi rebel stands out at Coca Cola school

The power of movies to make us want almost any product is a life-style development that says something about us.

New York Times

I know I must be the last one on my block, but I've just seen a movie called *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

Correction: I've just seen a video advertising catalogue called *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

It stars Hollywood Pretty Boy Pierce Brosnan as James Bond — and more brand name products than you'd find in the West Edmonton Mall.

As Bond, Brosnan drives a hyper-gadged BMW. His martinis (shaken, not stirred) are made with Smirnoff vodka.

He tells the time by looking at his

Omega wristwatch.

And so on. As a matter of fact, the most enjoyable way to watch this otherwise forgettable spool of celluloid fluff is to play "Spot the Tie-in."

See how many brand names you can spot and speculate with your date about how many millions they paid to have their products appear in a Bond movie.

But it's not just movies.

I read in a New York magazine that Kurt Vonnegut, one of my favourite authors, is now in the beer business.

He's putting out a vanity brew with his mug pasted on the label and called "Kurt's Mile-High Malt."

What next — Farley Mowat opens a bakery to market his new line of stone-ground bread — Farley's Barley?



Basic Black

Arthur Black

Advertising is everywhere you look, and it's there whether you like it or not.

There was a time when you could choose to avoid ads by closing the magazine, switching off the television or throwing a book at the radio, but alas, not anymore.

In New York, advertisers are using light beams to cast images of logos and ads onto Manhattan sidewalks. Advertisers love it because it's cheap and inescapable.

Critics hate it for the same reasons. "This is colonizing your cornea for advertising," says author James Twitchell. "What's the advantage you're getting from somebody mucking up your public space?"

Would that it were only sidewalks. I read also that there are plans afoot — though not approved, so far — to have NASA launch what amounts to huge discs into orbit around the earth.

Discs which would, for those who could afford the rates, become giant floating billboards exhorting us to Wear Nikes! or Drink Sprite!

24 hours a day.

"Isn't that a beautiful full moon tonight darling?"

"Yeah, and that Windows '95 ad's pretty nice too."

You have to wonder when, if ever, human beings are going to turn on these relentless, money-grubbing eroders of peace and quiet and snarl "Get the @%* & outta my face!"

Perhaps it's already happening. Recently, Mike Cameron, a 19-year-

old high school senior in Evans, Georgia, was suspended from school by the principal.

His crime? Living in Evans, Georgia. Really, Evans, you see, is only an hour or so east of Atlanta, Georgia — and Atlanta is the world headquarters of Coca Cola.

The staff of Greenbrier High School — good corporate forelock-tuggers that they are — decided to have a (I am not making this up) Coke In Education Day, in which they would honour Coca Cola executives by, among other things, having the entire student body wear shirts with the Coca Cola emblem emblazoned on them.

At the conclusion of the celebrations the student body was to swarm en masse on the school football field in such a way as to spell out C O K E for the visiting Atlanta poobahs.

Which is where Mike Cameron threw a bottle cap in the works. He showed up in a shirt that featured — gasp! — the Pepsi logo.

Cameron was immediately hauled off to the principal's office, told by the principal that he "might have cost the school ten grand" and sent home under suspension.

Mike Cameron may be persona non grata with the principal of Greenbrier high school, but he's a hero to me.

A trailblazer for the faceless flocks of consumer sheep that seldom utter a bleat. "A guy with the gonads to stand up and say, 'I've had enough'."

Stephen Leacock, once defined advertising as "the science of arresting human intelligence long enough to get money from it."

Perhaps we're seeing the first signs that human intelligence is getting sick and tired of being under arrest.

Premier continues efforts to criminalize the poor, says reader

Dear Editor,

Re: Your editorial, Premier caught by silly comment, on April 18.

Yes, indeed, citizens have good reason to be outraged by Premier Mike Harris' boorish comments about expecting mothers on social assistance, wasting their pre-natal allowance on beer.

I find his attitude abhorrent, and whether it is "expected" or not, does nothing to redeem Mr. Harris' consistent efforts to criminalize the

LETTERS

poor. Mr. Harris' slash and burn tactics are well known. He has simply found a new group to penalize — the unborn.

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Child Poverty
Action Network

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