

# Galt dealt with fairly: agriculture minister

By Bill Eekhof

The province pressured Doug Galt to resign as Northumberland County warden because he was perceived to be lobbying his employer, Ontario's minister of agriculture says.

In an interview Tuesday, Elmer Buchanan said Galt had to follow guidelines set out in the Public Service Act which prohibit provincial employees from activities that conflict with government policy.

Galt works for the Agriculture Ministry as head of its veterinary lab in Brighton. He received a letter on April 26 from Buchanan's deputy minister, Rita Burak, stating that he would have to resign as warden by last Monday of this week because of a "perceived conflict of interest."

Facing a choice between his ministry job and politics, Galt stepped down as warden on Tuesday.

He also resigned the night before as reeve of Cramahe Township because he believed he would be ineffective in the position.

Burak put constraints on Galt, saying that if he continued as Cramahe reeve he shouldn't participate in any meetings or activities that would lobby the province on issues such as roads or municipal funding, sign correspondence opposing provincial policy, or vote on land severances and zoning changes opposed by government ministries.

Cramahe council members refused to accept Galt's resignation, pending a full explanation from the province.

The agriculture minister told the press last Tuesday he feels Galt has been treated fairly.

"Galt was not centred out," he said.

"We all feel badly about it, but to be fair to all (staff), we had to do this."

He pointed to an incident last fall in Northern Ontario in which an Agriculture Ministry employee was reprimanded for espousing political views after having won the nomination for a federal party.

That policy must apply to all government employees, Buchanan said.

He singled out a letter signed by Galt which ministry lawyers maintain constitutes lobbying.

It was written on Jan. 18, 1993. Galt signed on behalf of county council, requesting that Northumberland farmers who were hard hit by poor growing conditions the previous summer be allowed to qualify for welfare and unemployment insurance. It also supported the maintenance of a provincial land tax rebate program.

The letter was circulated to area counties, the federal government and Buchanan's office.

Buchanan said Burak made the correct decision to ask for Galt's resignation as warden on this basis, because his action contravened conflict of interest guidelines for provincial employees.

The letter stated the circumstances under which the motion was passed at the Dec. 9, 1992, county council meeting, following a

presentation about the plight of corn and soy farmers in Northumberland. The subsequent motion passed by council appears in the letter above Galt's signature.

Galt said he didn't perceive the letter as lobbying.

He said the signed letter is the only case pointed out to him by the ministry as being the source of a conflict with his government job.

Burak said she also advised Galt to resign because the amount of time he was spending on the wardenship was detracting from his duties at the lab.

Galt requested a leave of absence from work to complete his term as warden, but this was rejected.

Galt said the government's ruling came as a surprise. He said he made numerous efforts to keep ministry officials informed about his decision to seek elected office as far back as October 1991.

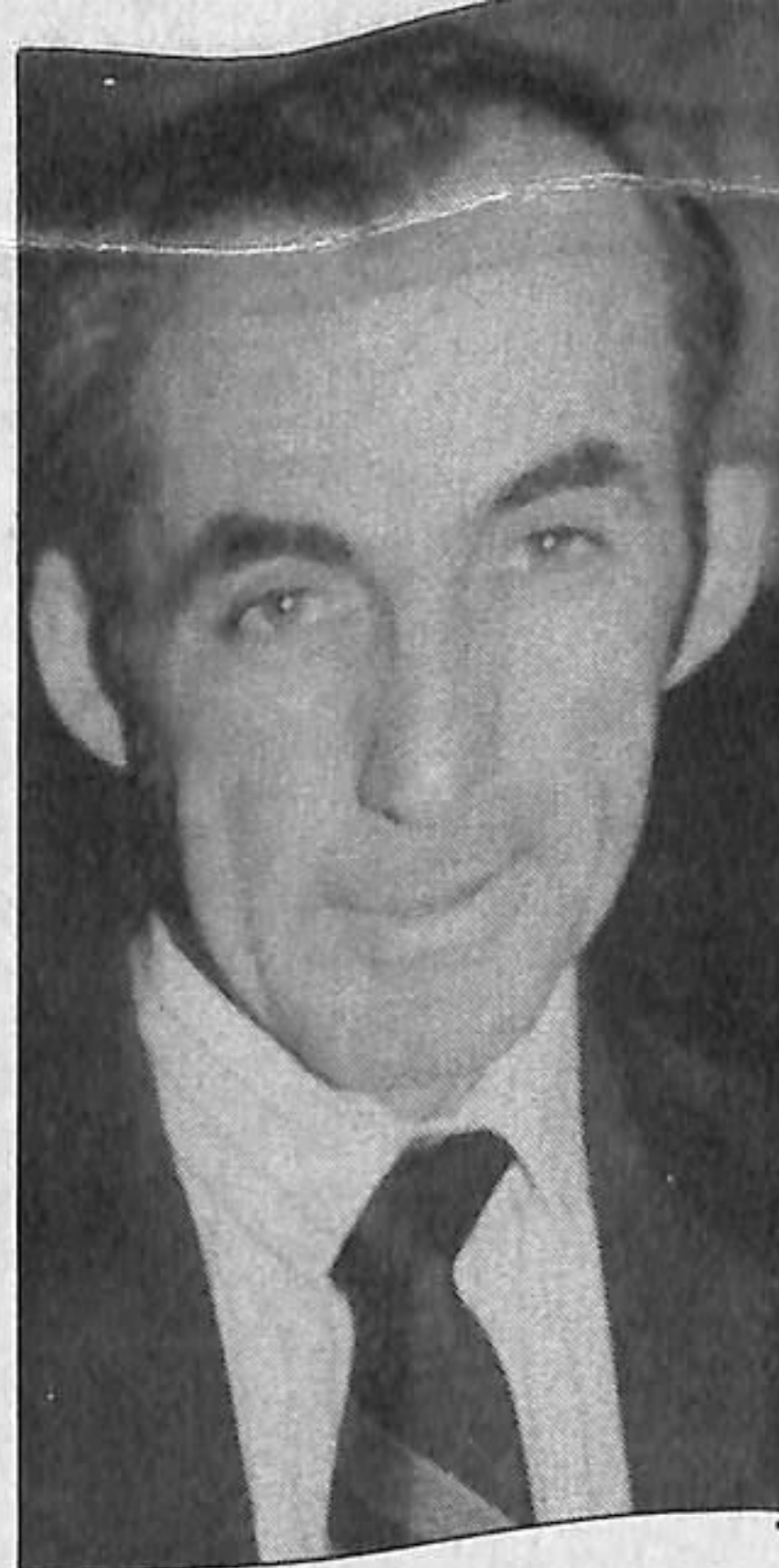
Ministry officials seemed comfortable with his decision, he said, and never advised him not to proceed.

He acknowledges that Burak did point out to him in December 1991 — a month after his election as Cramahe reeve — that he should be aware of conflict-of-interest guidelines for provincial employees, specifically Section 11 of the Public Service Act which states an employee

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Warden Doug Galt's letter seen as lobbying



Oliver: Cramahe's acting reeve

## Celebrate Police Week May 9-16 with Open House

May 9-16 is Police Week in Ontario and in recognition of that, the *Colborne Chronicle* presents a feature on the Brighton detachment of the OPP, which serves Colborne and Cramahe Township as well as Brighton, Brighton Township and Murray Township.

On page 3 of this week's *Chronicle*, you will find photographs and names of all the staff of the Brighton OPP detachment, along with an interview with Staff Sergeant Ron LeClair, the detachment commander.

To involve the public in Police Week, there will be an open house at the community policing office in the Colborne Medical Centre on King Street East on Thursday, May 13 from 1 to 5 p.m. Community officer Doug Phelan and Constable Scott Roe will be there to welcome you. Coffee and doughnuts will be served and there will be a display with a police theme. Staff Sergeant Ron LeClair is also expected to make an appearance.

Everyone is encouraged to attend.

## 'It's not over yet,' says acting reeve

By Eileen Argyris

Stuart Oliver is acting reeve of Cramahe Township in the wake of the tendered resignation of Reeve Doug Galt last Monday, May 3. But Oliver says, the issue of the resignation is "not over yet."

Council refused to accept Galt's resignation, after he explained that he was being forced by his employer, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, to resign as Warden of Northumberland County and was voluntarily giving up his post as reeve due to "real or perceived conflict of interest."

Oliver says the ministry's explanation, that Galt's duties as reeve and Warden brought him into perceived conflict of interest with the agriculture ministry and the Ontario government, has left council incredulous.

"It's politicking, and I don't like politicking," said Oliver this week. Galt also told council in an emotional address last Monday night, that the time he takes for his municipal

duties was a problem for his employers. However, he added he had made every attempt to avoid such a situation by keeping his employers informed at every step — when he was thinking for running for reeve, when he was elected, when he was nominated and then elected to the Warden's chair.

At each step, he said, he received only encouragement and no hint that time or conflict of interest would be a problem.

Oliver and all other members of the council told Galt last week they were "shocked," at this development. All of them spoke of their "respect" for him and over and over they referred to his "leadership."

Coun. George Blyth even offered to resign his seat on council to make room for Galt's re-entry to municipal politics, should he decide in future to retire from his job as head of the veterinary laboratory at the OMAF offices in Brighton.

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## Salem Farms fights back

By Eileen Argyris

Salem Farms Ltd. is not taking 'no' for an answer.

The developer, which is hoping to create a 69-lot estate residential subdivision in Cramahe Township, just east of the boundary of the village of Colborne, will meet with Cramahe council on May 17, it was revealed at last week's regular meeting of Cramahe council.

Planners for Salem Farms, bousfield, Dale-Harris, Cutler and Smith, have sent correspondence to Cramahe indicating that, in the developers' view, the township's requirement of a communal water system for the planned subdivision, in effect, "negates Council's adoption of (the official plan amendment or OPA)."

Salem Farms' plan of subdivision failed to win the necessary approval of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs because, the ministry stated, the township's

approval of an official plan amendment to turn the currently rural zoning into estate residential hinged on the installation of a communal water supply. The water service, the ministry said, was not provided for in the plans from the developer.

In addition, the ministry cited concerns with the establishment of a "privately serviced development adjacent to a serviced urban municipality (namely Colborne)."

The ministry is encouraging development in built-up areas where land is still available in preference to development on previously rural or agricultural land.

Last June, when the official plan amendment came before council for a vote, two members of council, Howard Whaley and George Blyth, voted against approval, while Deputy-Reeve Stu Oliver and

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