

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Caucus process explained by area MP

To the editor of The Herald: One of the least understood, and most misunderstood, parts of the democratic government still seems to be the party caucus process.

Caucus is a key area of Government function and yet by its very nature one that has to remain an article of faith in our system. On any issue, a consensus must be reached by any party or organization, public or private. As with boards of directors, union meetings or other planning groups, the political caucus is the place to grind out that position, soundly, and without restriction. The public has a right to expect any group to think out its position thoroughly, take a stand, and speak with one clear consistent voice.

Consensus cannot precede caucus and any member who presumes to speak for his party on an important issue beforehand is not a very useful member. He may and certainly should speak for himself on the appropriate occasion but has a very strict obligation to make the difference clear. Realistically, the caucus function has an important practical difference as well for the government and opposition members. A government member can debate with the cabinet in his own caucus and try to influence government business on behalf of his constituents; he can do this in House of Commons debates too, as long as he does not confuse the caucus position in the eyes of the public, but he has much less opportunity to question his own government in question-and-answer period. The opposition member not only has more opportunity to take issue with the government in The House but must be given that opportunity since he obviously cannot attend government caucus.

Government and opposition MP's also work with cabinet ministers directly on your behalf but both would hesitate to discuss caucus matters with you, at least on current subjects until consensus has been reached. Another important problem for the elected representative

is the business of trying to identify a consensus from his own riding; only a small number of his constituents express their views, usually in disagreement with each other. Often the MP hears from people on only one side of an issue, i.e. the input is weighted. Polls and questionnaires have well-known limitations. Most people look to their elected officials for leadership on today's complex issues. Last but not least, most MP's are members of a party and while not agreeing with the party position in each and every case, have an obligation to advance their party's broad philosophical objectives.

At any rate, where an MP feels that he must occasionally hold a position in the face of strong public opinion, he should do his best to make the reasons for that clear, both before and between elections. From time to time, we hear people ask sincerely, "Why doesn't a government backbencher speak out more publicly against his own leaders and his own party?" The reasons are several, especially on current issues. The clear factual position in the issue may not be finally settled, for the public, for himself, for his party. He is trying to resolve that issue with his own party in the arena of caucus. Once the issue is resolved, it is often a matter of "on to other business", the previous issue no longer a matter of public interest.

However, there is a time later when it may be worthwhile for a member, especially on the government side, to review the position he has taken, successfully or otherwise, with his own party, on issues. In my opinion he has a right to do so, and very proudly.

Some of the positions I have as follows:

- MP's and Senator's compensation should be decided by an independent commission (won) and announced before elections (lost for now)
- taxes should be lowered as much as possible and the taxation process should be simplified as much as possible taken strongly and debated vigorously on your behalf in caucus, and in The House, are

- (still being waged)
- the business community should be assisted as much as possible and the economy stimulated as much as possible, compatible with the control of inflation (being won)
- special help and consideration should be provided to small businesses (won)
- government spending and the size of the civil service must be tightly controlled, including federal influence on the provincial and local levels in such areas as open-ended, cost-shared programmes

- between the various levels of Government (being won)
- all levels of government should take public responsibility for the taxes they collect and the decisions they take to spend (being won)
- interest rates should be kept as low as possible, and with it the money supply restricted, compatible with investment and growth (being won)
- price and income controls should be employed only as a temporary stop-gap measure, while making other essential changes to our economic and

- financial system (being won)
- full employment should be our goal, as much as possible through the private sector i.e. minimize government jobs (being won)
- work as much as possible through the free-enterprise system (a "mixed-economy" in our present situation), intervening only where there is a breach of that system, eg. monopolies, cartels, price-fixing, misleading advertising, eliminating competition and so on (being won)
- abuses and disincentives in

- our social benefit programmes such as U.I.C., medicare and foreign aid must be eliminated (being won)
- export and trade must be promoted (being won)
- civil servants plans such as indexed pensioning must be investigated thoroughly, not proceeded with until proven sound financially and equally compatible with the private sector (the Minister has determinedly assured this commitment)
- research and industry (especially in energy) to be promoted vigorously, but with due regard for the environment, conservation of resources and human rights particularly those of our native peoples (being won)
- the first rule of law and order must be protection of the public but again with due regard for basic human rights (being won)
- agriculture must remain one of our top priorities and the public must be given the information to permit it to understand why necessary measures are taken to protect and preserve it (being won)
- crown corporations should compete equitably with private companies, or be returned to the private sector, including the Post-office Department (being considered)
- the charity approach of foreign aid must be largely replaced by the mutual pride and strength of international development (accepted in principle)
- Canadian businesses and jobs must be protected while free trade negotiations are going on (difficult but under sympathetic study)
- Canadian artists and cultural pursuits must be given at least an equal opportunity to thrive in their own country (under study)
- immigration must be geared mainly to the needs of Canada (being won)
- more emphasis must be placed on staying healthy rather than being treated for illness (being won)
- more effective labour-management relations must be developed (being studied)
- Canadian unity must not be negotiable and a strong federal

government must be maintained (basic Federal Government position)

These are major positions I have taken on your behalf since 1974, in the overall give-and-take process. Effective communication is at least half the challenge these days, and it is not to be underestimated. Our valuable party system makes the caucus necessary. The popular media must remain independent of outside influence, whatever its nature. Public education is probably the ultimate answer.

Hopefully in future, if we all try our best in good faith, Canadians will have an increasingly better, understanding of how their governments, caucus and MP's function on their behalf in a difficult job.

Dr. Frank A. Phllbrook  
Member of Parliament,  
Halton

## Ontario not getting benefit from federal manpower program

To the editor of The Herald: Are we in Ontario getting full value for our contribution to the Federal Manpower Programme? I think that most of Ontario's taxpayers would agree that we are not. Job finding by Manpower is a national joke. Unemployment insurance is not insurance by the generally recognized term. An applicant is judged guilty until proven innocent, but to me the biggest farce is Manpower Re-training and I am of the opinion that the time is long overdue for Ontario taking over and starting its own re-training programmes.

Such a programme should start in the schools, with highly motivated Job Counsellors who will advise students as to which Trades or Professions are at saturation point. Such Counsellors should have the ability to read the trends. We have many good examples. Last year due to government shortsightedness, we had the Nurses situation. As a result, we the tax-payers of Ontario, footed the bill to supply nurses for the U.S. market or for the un-employment queues.

This year one thousand open visas were granted to allow Ontario to import tradesmen, mainly from America. Some of these tradesmen (pipe-fitters) will be taking jobs in Sarnia. Another example is that apprentice trained skilled tradesmen, tool and die makers, etc. have little trouble getting landed immigrant status, even though our un-employment situation is catastrophic and that is what an Ontario Manpower Training Programme should be all about.

A real apprenticeship scheme to train highly skilled tradesmen and technicians to fill a need in the work force, not the schemes we have now to simply get people off the un-employment rolls to lower the statistics. I recall Manpower running Journalism courses just after the Telegram folded when journalists couldn't even buy a job. The method of training "Instant Tradesmen" only dilutes required skills, and the "Instant Tradesmen" joins the un-employed. Expensive vocational training equipment in High Schools is useless, and a

burden on the tax-payer unless a student, after learning the rudiments at High School can follow up his education on this equipment, as an apprentice in industry.

What would the benefits be to Ontario?

- 1) Educators would not see the fruits of their efforts standing in the un-employment queues.
- 2) The business of importing skilled tradesmen would cease and our tradesmen would have the much emphasised "Canadian experience".
- 3) The end of "Instant Tradesmen" would mean a higher standard of workmanship.

Yours Sincerely,  
William A. Johnson.

## Thank you from Good Neighbour Service

To the editor of The Herald

Another year is over for the Good Neighbour Service and with bills paid to Chris's I.G.A. and Prestons Lucky Dollar totalling \$1,458.38 only three small bills are left to be paid. We will have a small surplus in our account to begin the 1977 campaign with cheques still coming in.

Our busy Georgetown detachment of Regional Police are heartily thanked for their part in picking up donations from the 13 local and area schools plus their concerted effort of policing the headquarters of the "Service" during the time it was filled with food.

Our thanks to the Herald for their pictures and story and their interest in our "Service" for the community of Georgetown.

Roma Timpon  
Chairman  
Georgetown and District  
Good Neighbour Service.

## Reader shocked at uncaring attitude

To the editor of The Herald: On Thursday, January 13th at approximately 5:45 p.m., during a snowstorm, my car skidded into a ditch. This happened about one mile south of Acton on Highway 25. Fortunately, neither my wife nor I were injured.

I'm shocked and somewhat dismayed that not one of the 8-10 cars, especially the one directly behind us, stopped to see if we needed any kind of assistance.

We are relative newcomers to this area and we hope that this uncaring attitude is not a typical one. If so, we are both sorely disappointed.

Yours sincerely,  
Trevor Frost  
Acton



## DECEMBER BRIDE

Rev. Stewart B. East of Etobicoke joined in marriage Lynn Gilson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Myles Gilson of Georgetown, and Rodney Pegg, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Pegg of Ritz, Norval, on Dec. 30th 1976. The newlyweds settled into their Brampton home upon return from a honeymoon in Niagara Falls. Photo by Fishback Studio.

## Make work suggested

Town works committee recommended to council Monday that the Area 2 (Georgetown) Fire Department conduct a "make work" program as suggested by Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed.

Under the terms of the program, the town will pay a number of unemployed residents a total of \$400 to map out areas of Halton Hills where information necessary for adequate fire protection is found to be lacking.

Fire Chief Ken Bulkema admitted to the committee that he has no knowledge of the exact location of each of the community's fire hydrants and would like to see a comprehensive map drafted to pinpoint the hydrant's locations for his men.

Such a map, he said, would eliminate the need for the volunteer firemen to clear away lengthy stretches of snow in order to uncover a buried hydrant. The department currently knows only of

the hydrants approximate positions on a given street, Chief Bulkema said.

The program would also include the mapping out of rural ponds from which the firemen could draw water.

Mayor Tom Hill and Coun. Pat McKenzie expressed amazement that Chief Bulkema did not know the hydrants exact locations. Area 1 (Acton) Fire Chief Mick Holmes stated that he too knows the approximate locations of his district's 169 hydrants.

In a separate recommendation, the committee endorsed Chief Bulkema's report that all hydrants installed in new subdivisions must be equipped with the larger discharge valves known as steamer ports, according to regional specifications.

Through a process of standardization, Chief Bulkema said, all existing town hydrants will eventually be updated to meet the same requirements.

# Norvalnews

By DOROTHY McLEAN  
Herald correspondent

Unit 2 of Norval United Church Women held their first meeting of the new year at the home of Mrs. Margaret Ridley, the manse, Norval, on Wednesday evening, Jan. 12, with Mrs. Phyllis Moffatt presiding.

Mrs. Moffatt and Mrs. Gwen Laidlaw read New Year's poems followed by a discussion on money projects such as a bazaar or bake sale. Lunch for the church annual meeting and a bridal shower were planned. Mrs. Moffatt gave a report of the church executive committee meeting held recently.

Meetings were planned until May which include a visit to Grand Valley U.C.W. in April and the annual bus trip.

Doug Laidlaw, son of Mr. and Mrs. Garnet Laidlaw, showed slides of trips he has taken. One was through the eastern provinces on his motorcycle and one was out west. He also showed pictures of local places and scenes which were excellent and of interest to all.

Lunch and a social time ended the enjoyable evening. There will be a Norval 4H Club again this year. Norval girls have been meeting with the Brampton West 4H Club because of lack of leaders.

Mrs. Ina Terry and Mrs. Ruth Hyatt will be the leaders for the course "Clothes for Leisure" and hope to start next week. They plan on having an evening to teach the girls how to sew on a machine before starting the course. Some of the items the girls will make are pyjamas, nightgown, housecoat or kaftan.

Any girl in the Norval area who will be 12 years old by

March 1st is welcome to join the club. For further information call Mrs. Terry or Mrs. Hyatt.

Most girls find the 4H meetings very interesting and informative. The clubs are sponsored by the Women's Institutes and teach the girls many ways of being a good homemaker and citizen of the community.

Brampton West 4H Club leaders are Mrs. Phyllis Moffatt and Mrs. Marlene Chard. They will start their meetings on Wednesday evening, Feb. 2.

The Nominating Committee of Norval Community Association are busy getting a slate of officers ready for the annual meeting to be held in Norval School Community Centre on Thursday evening, Jan. 27th.

It is hoped that there will be an excellent turnout of people from the community to this meeting.

Several members of Halton Hills council have been invited to attend including the new Chairman of Halton Regional government, Ric Morrow. Pat Patterson will be resigning from the executive as he is now a Halton Hills councillor. Some have already replied that they plan to attend the meeting. MP Julian Reed will be the guest speaker.

Norval Neighbours Club will serve lunch following the meeting and a social time is planned where everyone can get to know others in the community.

We are pleased to report that Mrs. Carrie Graham is home from Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital. Also David Dunlop is home after a few days there.

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We want to say "howdy" and to welcome you to Georgetown. And to show you what Georgetown hospitality is all about, we want you and your wife to have dinner in our restaurant.

You're going to take a liking to Georgetown and (we hope) to Georgetown's most friendliest and "best" restaurant: Shangri-La Garden ----- the Home of the choicest Western & Oriental Cuisine.

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In case you don't feel like going out and would rather stay home with your wife and kid(s) or friends, watching your favourite TV program or games. Just give us a call (877-0151) and the Delicious Piping Hot meals will be right at your door. You'll never have to lose a minute in your relaxing time.

Also we are claimed to have the most comfortable price and the best food in Georgetown. Some customers told us that they find it cheaper to have meals from us than making their own. Honestly it is quite a pleasant experience to deal with us.

Your support, your comments and suggestions will be an asset of our business, a Service for you.

Sincerely Yours

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