

Losing touch with people

Most of his Quebec ministers spend weeks in their ridings, but most of the time they are in Ottawa, away from the nitty-gritty of local politics. They may be well informed about what Ottawans think about Quebec.

In any event the Liberal government, despite the intellectual resources of 60 Quebec MPs, is hopelessly bogged down in its mismatch with that upstart, Jacques Parizeau, the Quebec finance minister.

Through deft applications of incompetence, the federal government has managed to isolate itself from every recognizable group in the country as it battles Quebec over the controversial sales tax rebate.

First of all, it was obviously naive of Finance Minister Jean Chretien to announce the scheme in the hope that Parizeau, who had held off his approval prior to the budget, would later embrace the federal plan to subsidize a reduction in provincial sales taxes. The rest of us are well aware that Parizeau, as a member of a separatist government, obviously has no interest in co-operating with Ottawa. One of his overriding priorities is to prove that federalism doesn't work.

Having rejected the federal plan, the Quebec government then goes ahead with its own form of tax reductions — which clearly fail to qualify for federal assistance — and then asks for the \$75 million in federal monies it would have received had it complied with the guidelines. And Ottawa, afraid of depriving Quebecers of the cash needed to issue rebates to income tax payers in the province, instead of handing over the money to the provincial government.

Naturally the Parti Quebecois government cried "rape." This came as no surprise. But what did surprise the federal Liberals was the massive support directed at the PQ. All opposition parties in Quebec damned Ottawa's approach, and so did all opposition parties in Parliament.

To make matters worse, both Trudeau and Chretien stumbled over each other trying to explain the unexplainable.

REAL SHOCKER
It came as a shock because I think most of us had the feeling that the government, apart from any other shortcomings, at least was close to the heartbeat of Quebec and knew exactly what the people of the province wanted. It was inconceivable that, with so much Quebec talent to draw from, Trudeau would stomp into a no-win situation with the Parti Quebecois.

But perhaps we have to face the possibility as improbable as it sounds — that Trudeau and his colleagues have not been keeping in close touch with present-day Quebec.

Look at what the newspaper *Montreal Matin* said about the dispute: "It is high time that the 'French Power' in Ottawa sent an observer to the Quebec National Assembly to find out what the Quebec of 1978 is all about." The newspaper *La Presse* says the federal position "gives credence to all those who denounce the Canadian federal system, who accuse the federal government of being paternalistic, authoritarian and inflexible."

And *Le Journal de Montreal* said that, just because a separatist government has been elected, the federal government has no cause to back all Quebecers in the teeth.

It does seem passing strange that this

type of criticism should be directed at a government that, for the last decade, has been dedicated to giving Quebecers a real voice in federal affairs.

Without being unduly cynical, perhaps Quebec cabinet ministers, including the prime minister, should follow the government's own advice and spend more vacations at home.



Irony in comment

There's a certain amount of irony in the disclosure last week that the RCMP and Revenue Canada had a secret agreement allowing access by police to the confidential records of the income tax agency.

Remember the hoopla a few years back about declaring ALL income even if it came from illegal sources? We were naive enough at the time to be convinced of the credibility of the government that such information wouldn't find its way into the hands of the police.

Seems many thousands of Canadians were wrong. At least 400 income tax files have been made available to the federal police force in its bid to attack organized crime. And the corollary is that at least 90 of those files didn't have anything to do with organized crime, but were used in other investigations with information passed onto other police forces during investigations.

There's a very real danger for media people to become cynical as this and other information reveals what we would consider unfair, if not unethical, moves by the government in power. We hope the media hasn't reached that point, but certainly it remains skeptical of the government's denials that this and other RCMP revelations are legal.

With the McDonald Commission now investigating actions of the RCMP, it's difficult to accept the continual stonewalling by the government in deferring questions of

responsibility. It should be revealed, and openly debated, where responsibility for these actions lie.

Despite the government's protests that answers to questions raised in the House of Commons will likely come out of the federal commission on the RCMP, there's a real possibility that this may not happen given the confidential nature of much of the evidence now before the commission.

But probably the most frustrating aspect of this whole affair is the House of Commons ruling that disallows questions to former ministers of any portfolio. If any area residents have watched the federal question period on television, you can see readily the evasive manner in which government ministers appear to deflect opposition questioning on any subject which is likely to show the government in a bad light, or might reflect ministerial responsibility for actions carried out within their departments.

Maybe it's time Canadians took a serious look at the congressional committee system where witnesses could be subpoenaed.

In all fairness to members of parliament, Canadians must gain some respect for the institution which governs this country. As it now stands the credibility of all politicians is tarnishing rapidly as more and more revelations of RCMP wrong doing and heavy-handed use of the Official Secrets Act is revealed.

Maybe it's time for a change for change's sake. Let's hope that come election time, this mess will be in the forefront of the campaign.

How has Halton changed

How has life in rural Halton County changed? How is it likely to change in the years ahead? These questions will be central to a workshop which is likely to show the importance of the rural Halton Centennial National Day.

The meeting will give people from rural Halton an opportunity to tell the University of Guelph's Rural Development Outreach Project what they think of the changes taking place in Halton and what they would like for the future in rural development.

The workshop will include videotape presentations and small discussion groups. Indeed, the whole program will be planned to afford the people of Halton opportunity to identify and comment on Halton's unique development concerns.

The Rural Development Outreach Project of the University of Guelph first established contact in Halton County, an area of growth unchanged by recent urban expansion. Several projects have already begun in that area, including a dynamic survey, a study of the planning process as it affects a rural community, and other cultural and social projects.

The RDOP has also indicated in the changes taking place in an area such as Halton that a "boom" in the province of urban expansion is over. The challenges facing the people of Halton, and which the RDOP has a role in meeting, will likely be quite different from those of the future.

It is hoped that the workshop in June will help identify the social, economic, and cultural changes that are taking place in Halton and that the RDOP can help to meet a wide range of people from Halton that they, local people and senior citizens, full time farmers, and so on.

The Rural Development Outreach Project of the University of Guelph is supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation which puts emphasis on projects intended to "help people help themselves."

Prof. Fuller says that rural development represents an integrated process of change that affects all groups living in a rural setting. The process involves human development, economic development, environmental improvement, and preservation, and community building. The focus must be set by the people of the area themselves, he says, and the objective of the RDOP is to assist in taking the first steps towards that end.

Fuller says that the RDOP, in part, has a long history of involvement with the rural community, and possesses many resources that can be brought to bear on long term community development. These include: the Ontario Agricultural College, the College of Family and Consumer Studies, the College of Social Science, the Centre for Resources, Development and the Office of Continuing Education.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop, or who would like more information, should call collect to Valerie Gilman at the University of Guelph, 416-824-4200, ext. 343.

Looking through our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO
Council increased the salary of the clerk-treasurer-tax collector from \$2,000 to \$2,500 a year, effective May 1. The clerk must himself pay for any extra help needed for his duties. Council also voted to give a retiring allowance of \$40 a month to Henry Marchant for faithful service rendered as a town employee.

The Ontario election was called to stop untruthful propaganda which might have weakened the hydro change-over to 60-cycle power, said Stan Hall, Progressive Conservative candidate for Halton and candidate for re-election next Monday, speaking to a rally of local Conservatives in the library. Mr. Hall said that after every member in the House voted for the measure, criticism had been expressed by the CCF and Liberal Parties, and the government felt that the people should be consulted because of the large expenditure involved. He attacked both opposition parties as catering to Communism. It is Communism we have to fight in this election," he said.

Goalie Jack Rhodes, chosen by his team, mates as the most valuable player on Georgetown's Ontario Championship Intermediate "A" hockey team, was presented with an OHA cup by Tony Gregg, of the Hockey Dinner in the Rose Room last Friday.

TWENTY YEARS AGO
Proponents of a full-time engineer for Georgetown, Coun. Fred Harrison and Alfred Skyles, got no support at council meeting Monday when for the second time in recent months they moved to engage a man. Previously their motions suggested a salary of \$10,000 and on Monday an \$8,000 salary was indicated in the motion which, on a recorded vote, was defeated 7-2. Both councillors explained that they had no dissatisfaction with the work of William H. Carr, who has served Georgetown in a part-time capacity for a year.

Georgetown may have a new labor union

this year. On Monday, council was informed by the Ontario Labor Relations Board that a hearing would be held in Toronto on June 4 for certification of the National Union of Public Service Employees as bargaining agent for men employed in outside work and in the water pump station eligible to join the union.

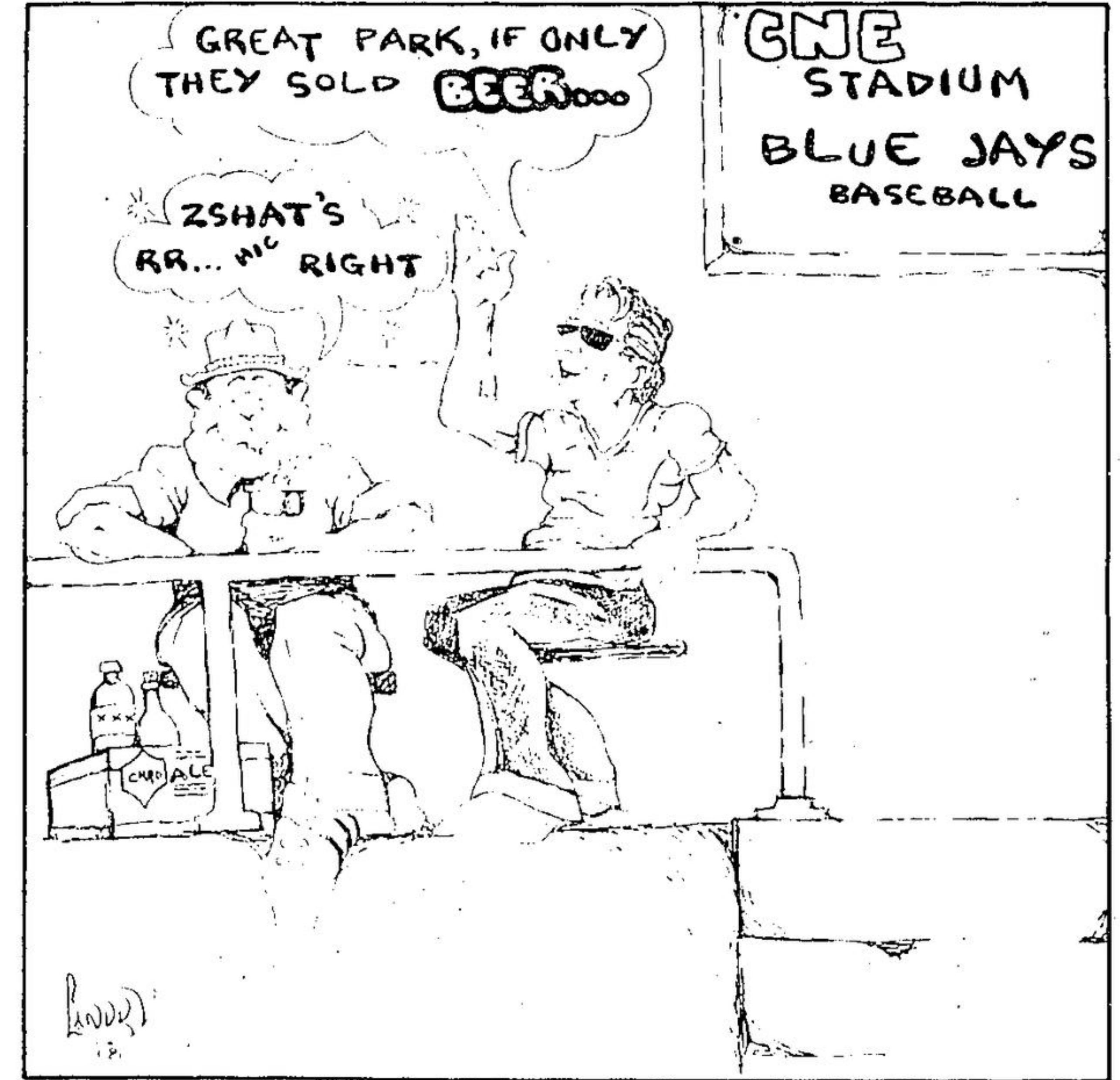
An industry which was looking over Georgetown has decided to go to Pickering Township. Reeve Doug Saragat told council Monday. Decision was made because the town could not supply a three-million daily water gallonage, he said.

Early Sunday morning, one minute past midnight, Direct Distance Dialing came into Toronto and nearby communities. The event was a telephone milestone comparable to the introduction of the dial system in the twenties.

TEN YEARS AGO
It was raining sparks on streets in the neighbourhood of Meadowdale Grover's mushroom plant for a couple of hours Friday night when a fire of unknown origin levelled a large building in the centre of the complex on the town's northern limits. The spectacular blaze, punctuated by explosions, was battled by firefighters from four Halton communities until the small hours of Saturday morning. Manager Ernie Skrow has estimated the loss at over \$40,000.

Georgetown residents owing more than one car will have to watch their PS and Q's from now on, if a zoning bylaw amendment voted last week by council is enforced. Aimed at residents who, councilors claim, mar the scenery with old automobiles on their property, the bylaw now requires that no portion of a front lawn can be used for parking unless it has a paved surface.

Newest member of the Georgetown Police Department is Cadet Brian Farrell who started pounding the beat two weeks ago. The 19-year-old cadet, who succeeded Bill Cummins in becoming the department's second cadet, is a resident of Acton. He is the son of the late Port. Elgin chief of police.



Conflict by NEC and Working Party

There are major conflicts between the plans and policies of the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) and the recommendations of the Ontario Mineral Aggregate Working Party. They concern very different concepts in the extent to which mineral resources should be exploited on the Escarpment and the role of both the Commission and the 55 local municipalities in licensing pits and quarries there.

While the Ontario Cabinet is expected to act shortly on draft legislation to implement the Working Party recommendations, the Niagara Escarpment Plan will not be in draft stage before late this year nor ready for government consideration before 1980. In these circumstances, local governments and residents must act promptly to assure that the Commission's long-term aims to protect the Escarpment are neither frustrated nor blocked from the outset, by mineral aggregate resource legislation that makes these aims redundant.

In February, the NEC Chairman Ivor McMullin detailed the Commission's five-year study for representatives from the 55 municipalities concerned. Public meetings are now underway so that residents and officials of these municipalities of the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area can consider the proposals. The Commission has already met with the Regional Municipality of Niagara and with ratepayers' associations in Caledon and Mono Townships.

"The public will be given full opportunity to respond," says Senior Planner Doug Armstrong. "Municipalities wishing to have separate meetings with the Commission can request them. In the meantime we are meeting with groups of municipalities, some times five at a time."

"COMPATIBLE WITH ENVIRONMENT"
The Commission was established in 1973, under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, "to provide for the maintenance of the Escarpment and land in its

vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment and to ensure that only such development occurs as is compatible with the natural environment." The Commission was empowered to prepare an Escarpment Plan to implement policies (one such policy (Section 9) is, "The control of all forms of pollution of the natural environment.")

On the basis of the public response to its three year study, the Commission will prepare a Draft Plan later this year. The Plan will be subject to formal public hearings. Hearing Officers will then report back to the Commission. The NEC will then forward their plan to the Hon. Rene Brunelle who as Secretary for Resources Development, will present it for Cabinet consideration. When Government policy is set, it will be implemented by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

The Natural Resources Ministry is also the sponsor of the Ontario Mineral Aggregate Working Party whose report of 1977 is now up for Cabinet consideration. That report, "A Policy for Mineral Aggregate Resource Management in Ontario" includes specific provisions within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area.

The Niagara Escarpment Commission, in its preliminary proposals, has designated 39,100 acres as "Mineral Resource Areas". This would quadruple the 12,397 acres now licensed for pits and quarries in the escarpment region. The Natural Resources Ministry however, has identified some 300,000 acres of aggregates in the region, of which they consider 216,000 acres a high priority resource for long-term planning purposes. (See Table I.)

CONFLICTING AIMS
The Niagara Escarpment Commission having already designated four times the licensed acreage as future Mineral Resource Areas, expressed concern that the Aggregate Working Party would earmark an effective reserve area 50 per cent greater. NEC

Chairman McMullin noted that such a reserve in the Escarpment region was inconsistent with the Working Party's aim of relieving pressure on existing sources of supply. Moreover, he said it conflicted with the planning and environmental aims provided for under Section 9 of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act.

Subsequently, the Commission has had a change of heart. Its preliminary proposals, now being discussed with municipalities, endorse some expansion of existing acreage in the Niagara Escarpment Area while taking a contrary position in regard to Caledon and Mono Townships where it calls for the phasing out of the majority of open pit mining within a year after the Plan is approved.

The NEC has proposed a licensing procedure that stresses municipal control. Pit and quarry or mine operators would submit applications for licensing to a municipal or county council, who would have first opportunity to approve, reject or defer the license. While an applicant could appeal a local decision to the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister would not normally issue new licenses without the approval of the local municipal council.

Under the Ministry's Aggregate Working Party plan, the municipal councils could be forced to earmark adequate acreage for pits and quarries, but the licensing control would be put directly into the Ministry's hands. The responsibility for determining the location of

the mining area would be left with the regional or county council.

NEC VANTAGE
In outlining its plans and policies, the Niagara Escarpment Commission is explicit that they should take precedence over any revised pits and quarries legislation. "Where there is a conflict between any provisions of the Pits and Quarries Control Act as may be amended from time to time, and any provisions of these (NEC) policies, the provisions of these policies shall prevail."

These conflicting approaches are particularly significant because the Ministry's Working Party Report specifically notes "that the Niagara Escarpment Commission is being treated throughout this report as if it were equivalent to a regional or county council. If the Government decides to maintain the NEC, after its plan has been approved, then authority would be delegated to the Commission to decide on whether a license should be issued or not... if it incorporates mineral aggregate extraction areas with supporting policies in plan. This would mean that regions or counties lying partly within the Escarpment Planning Area would only be responsible for non-NEC aggregates outside this (Escarpment) area."

Throughout Ontario under the proposed Pits and Quarries Control Act amendments, an application to open a new pit or quarry would be submitted directly to the Ministry of Natural Resources who, in turn, would advise

the regional or county council, or in the Niagara Escarpment Area, the NEC.

The Working Party recommends "In the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area, an application for a license under the new Act would not be accepted until the applicant has received a development control permit from the NEC. When the Ministry has received the application with all details, information and reports, it would be submitted to the regional or county council or the Niagara Escarpment Commission."

There are townships within the Escarpment planning area with approved Official Plans that have not incorporated mineral extractive areas. They must ask themselves the question which the Resources Working Party has raised: what if the government decides not to maintain the Niagara Escarpment Commission once its plan has been approved?

IF NEC PHASED OUT?

If the NEC has phased out after its plan was accepted, there is no assurance that the NEC's stringent licensing of pit and quarry rehabilitation proposals would necessarily be implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Niagara planning area municipalities would be stuck with much enlarged extractive areas without authority to either control or license the pits and quarries. This is certainly one matter that should be clarified during the current discussions of the NEC report and satisfactorily resolved before the public hearings on the NEC draft plan are concluded.

Frank Miller told the annual meeting of the Aggregate Producers Association of Ontario in March: "I expect to be able to present this (draft) legislation to the Cabinet Committee for Resources Development very soon." That draft legislation incorporates the provisions that specifically rely on a Niagara Escarpment Commission and its plans and policies for the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area.

How can Cabinet Resources Development Committee inconspicuously consider the Pits and Quarries legislation as it relates to the sensitive Niagara Escarpment and the 50 municipalities within that planning area when the Niagara Escarpment Commission's draft plan will not be a reality this year?

The Niagara Escarpment Commission, while accepting the need for aggregate materials from its planning region, has shown that it understands the problems of mineral aggregate extraction, that it appreciates the impact of pits, quarries and mining on so ecologically sensitive a region, that it is sympathetic to the problems of many small municipalities within this planning area. The NEC has proposed explicit licensing procedures and valid rehabilitation plans that would allow local planning and land use control by the local governments concerned.

What happens if the Niagara Escarpment Commission is disbanded when its Plan has been approved and implemented? The Working Party has, itself, raised this question. Vulnerable local municipalities within the Escarpment region must, indeed, demand answers.

The Ontario Government has said that "aggregate production is by its very nature disruptive to the natural environment." The Niagara Escarpment Commission has found the Escarpment region particularly sensitive to disruption. The Mineral Aggregate Working Party reports that billions of tons of environmentally and socially sensitive areas. Under these circumstances the Commission may well consider whether all aggregate operations should be phased out within the Niagara Escarpment region except for way-side pits and quarries for local needs.

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