

## Ottawa paper's story gets MP in 'hot water'



I got into hot water on Parliament Hill last week when a few MPs took exception to statements I made in an Ottawa newspaper.

The paper's called "Hill Times" and is published just for those who work in or around this place. The big headline in this week's issue was "Junk the junkets, MF says," and it was on a story urging the feds to scarp the \$2 million or so a year which is given to Parliamentary associations. Most of that money goes to finance trips abroad by MPs so they can foster better relations with politicians in other countries.

Well, I said that should end for now.

I also said real spending cuts have to be made in Ottawa and on Parliament Hill - because if they are not, Canadians will not accept cuts in their own lives.

People back home in Georgetown and Bolton and Burlington, I think, know my stand on government spending. It has to be dropped further. Recently in Ottawa I turned in a report identifying several hundred million dollars in cuts which I felt the government can make immediately. Many of those involved money spent here in Ottawa.

Now I'm stepping up the pressure, and I'm sure it will result in more of the kinds of comments I ran into last week. We all know that the country has a big debt-problem, but we'd all like somebody else to fix it. Unfortunately, it's not going to work that way. The way I see it, if MPs are going to be leaders, then they have to take the leading edge of pains as well as gain.

Over the past year in this job I've been asking regularly for suggestions on areas of government spending which we can attack. The response has been encouraging - so I've decided to address the issue in a big way.

Within a few weeks every home in the riding will receive from me a fold-out brochure which lists every dollar the feds spend - and where. There's an explanation of government revenues and expenditures, debt and deficit. Most importantly, there's room for you to devise your own federal budget.

This brochure will give you the opportunity of letting me know directly which spending should be chopped. All the responses I receive will be tabulated, and then given directly to Mike Wilson, the finance minister. Right now Wilson is figuring out his next budget, so suggestions on cuts couldn't come at a better time.

Now, this will take you a bit of time to complete, but I sincerely

hope you do so. Many other MPs have asked me if they can use the brochure to send to their own constituents and, of course, I've agreed. If we can get the thoughts of scores of Canadians across the country on spending cuts, then the odds of getting government action are that much greater.

As I've said before - there have to be alternatives to just raising taxes. Cutting spending is definitely one of them.

I agree with L.R. Nordby, who writes me from Burlington: "We are a rich country, in both natural and human resources and there is no reason we should not be the envy of the world. To get there we must get back on a solid financial footing. To do this we must all make some sacrifices, but if we all do our fair share, it should not be too painful."

But there are a lot of people who simply do not agree. And they say using the proposed GST to lower the deficit is wrong.

Constituent Jack Thomson writes to tell me he won't vote for me again. "We thought we could count on you to fight the erosion by taxes which we are constantly facing. It is obvious you have changed as one must in politics in your preaching of the party line."

"When are we going to have true democracy where members speak from their hearts and minds and are not bound by caucus rules?"

It may be tempting to think that getting elected wipes out a person's capacity for independent thought, but it's also wrong. Nobody has told me what to say, or not to say, and I am guided by my heart and mind rather than Brian Mulroney.

Right now, Jack, my heart and mind tell me the country's too damn good to go bankrupt. They tell me that old spending habits have to end, that levels of government services must fall and that no country can go another \$30 billion into debt every year.

The holiday season is coming, with all its joy - and all its garbage! The Acton-based environmental group POWER offers up these suggestions for a "greener" Christmas:

- Use reusable wrappings, such as towels, pillowcases, fabric or sheets;
- Save wrapping paper and bows on gifts that you receive for next year;
- Look for durable and long-lasting gifts when you shop;
- Use natural materials when decorating the tree;
- Wrap presents in comics or newspapers that you've colored;
- Recycle the turkey - the carcass makes good soup;
- Use gift boxes which can be used from year to year.

And why not think about giving an environmentally-friendly gift this year. Donate in the name of a loved one to save an acre of rain forest, an endangered animal or a Third World foster child.



The Georgetown Ministerial Association met with Georgetown hospital officials at the Ravine Restaurant last week. Pictured here are, front row, left to right, hospital executive director Mark Rochon, Rev. Tom Kingston (St. George's Anglican Church and chairman of the association), Graeme Goebelle (hospital board chairman), and Rev. Tom Bandy (St. Andrew's United Church). Back row, Rev. Nancy Knox (St. John's United Church), Rev. Bert

Slofstra (Christian Reformed Church), Rev. Rick Ruggie (St. Paul's Anglican Church), Rev. Margaret Murray (St. John's Anglican Church in Stewarttown and St. Stephen's Anglican Church in Hornby), Rev. Paul Stadt (Christian Reformed Church), Rev. Fritz Schmitt (Immanuel Lutheran), Mr. Winston Robinson (Holy Cross Church), and Father Joe Durkacz (Holy Cross Church). (Herald photo)

## Hospital hopes to increase ties with ministerial association

The Georgetown District Memorial Hospital is looking to increase ties between its administration and the Georgetown Ministerial Association.

The clergy in Halton Hills is an important "part of the team," hospital executive director Mark Rochon said at a meeting with the ministerial association last week.

The hospital is looking to improve what it perceives as a public relations problem in the community, according to hospital board chairman Graeme Goebelle.

In recent years the ministerial association has had no formal regular contacts with the hospital. Rev. Tom Bandy of St. Andrew's United Church said.

The association plans to appoint a spokesman to meet with hospital officials regularly to ensure closer ties.

"We have a relatively young

(hospital) board," said Mr. Goebelle. "We have a new board and a caring board and a thinking board."

The relationship between doctors at the hospital and the clergy may have suffered during the Ontario doctors' strike three years ago, said Rev. Bandy. "I think doctors would welcome us to talk with them more. I think there's a great deal of frustration about which we and the public don't know."

The clergy in Georgetown were "very unsympathetic to the doctors' strike," he said.

The clergy must continue to play an important part in the hospital despite proposed provincial legislation which worries many ministers, said Mr. Rochon.

The legislation may limit the role the clergy plays in counselling, said Rev. Bandy.

However, Mr. Rochon said: "I

don't see any real impediment to what you would do."

Emotions can, run high because "we often end up seeing people at their worst," said Mr. Rochon. "We're often dealing with people that are going through probably the worst family experience they could ever imagine."

"I see the association as a very important part of hospital life," he said of such situations.

And the hospital has seen only "the tip of the iceberg" when it comes to cases of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), said Mr. Rochon replying to Rev. Bandy's concerns.

The hospital will treat AIDS like any other disease, he said. "If you take the position that AIDS doesn't have a place in your community you might as well close the hospital doors because where do you stop? Where do you draw the line?"

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