

## Opinion

## Blame the province for Planning Act defects

If there is one subject that has dominated the pages of the local press during the past few weeks, it's the public's apparent dissatisfaction with how development projects in Halton Hills are evaluated.

People don't have to look any further than the recent controversy surrounding the Beechbrook development proposal just outside Ballinafad to see that this is true.

Regarding the development application process that Beechbrook has been subjected to, I wrote an article that appeared in the Aug. 29 issue of the Herald in which a resident's group opposing the development argued the town's planning process is unfair to the public.

If it was fair, argues Nancy Mulholland, a spokesperson for the group, the town's planning department would have submitted the letters of concern, it received from the residents, to the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), when asking the commission to

comment on whether the application conformed to the commission's plan.

She points out that the NEC voted against the application only after the residents had given the NEC their letters. Six months earlier it (the NEC) voted 12 to 1 in favor of the Beechbrook development. At that time all the commission had was a report from its staff supporting the application in principle. Ms. Mulholland argued the letters gave the commission a truer picture of the development's impact on the surrounding area. The town therefore should have submitted the letters to the NEC and in this way the commission wouldn't have appeared to be contracting itself.

First of all, the commission was acting as a commenting agency and under the province's planning act which governs municipal planning departments, the town was not supposed to submit the letters to the NEC or any other commen-



Ben's Banter  
By Ben Dummett

ting agency.

If the town disregarded this rule for the residents it would only be reasonable for the town to disregard another rule for the developer. This line of argument begs the question, why then have any rules?

If the residents or any other member of the public has a problem with the town's planning

department as it pertains to the province's Planning Act they should attack the provincial and not the local government.

That aside, I think Ms. Mulholland and the residents have a legitimate concern. It seems reasonable that a commenting agency can only assess the appropriateness of a development application if it first considers all concerns. It's on this principle that the town evaluates a development application. In my opinion the planning department is required to ask for comments from outside agencies and the public before making a final decision on whether to support a development proposal, to ensure it bases its opinion on all the relevant facts. If this argument holds true, the NEC's decision based on the residents' letters is valid if the commission was assured the issues raised in the letters were valid.

As I understand it, the commission held a 10 minute recess to read

the letters when it considered the application for the second time. On the basis of reading the letters for 10 minutes, and a presentation by one of the residents, the commission overturned its original decision and voted to oppose the development application.

The letters highlight such issues as the availability of water and the destruction of farmland. In dealing with such serious and possibly controversial claims I think it would have been more appropriate if the commission had deferred making a decision until its staff had investigated the claims.

Instead the NEC's action now leaves the commission open to a criticism made by town Mayor Russ Miller that the commission was bowing to a special interest group and not representing the public at large.

In my opinion, the commission, if anything, voided any of the concerns of the residents that may have been valid.

## Surprise selections could highlight NDP cabinet

By PAULINE JOHNSON  
Queen's Park Bureau  
Thomson Newspapers

TORONTO - When premier-elect Bob Rae names his new cabinet on Oct. 1 there are bound to be a few surprises.

For a start if Rae follows in the footsteps of Premier David Peterson with a cabinet of 27 members then about half of the contingent will have to be brand new MPPs who won office in the Sept. 6 election.

Fifty-seven of the 74 NDP members elected have never held provincial office before. Three - Evelyn Gigantes (Ottawa Centre), Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent) and David Warner (Scarborough-Ellesmere) - were MPPS until their defeat in 1987. And 14, including Rae, sat in the last legislature.

It is expected that the new ministers will be representative of the five areas of the province - the North, east, west and central Ontario and the Metro Toronto belt.

Many area already touting Floyd

Laughren (Nickel Belt) as the next treasurer. Laughren, a Queen's Park veteran of 19 year's standing, was the NDP treasury and finance critic in the last government and generally gave former Treasurer Bob Nixon a tough time of it. But the former economics teacher also has a strong interest in labor and health issues.

Other northern members expected to get the nod include Bud Wilkman (Algoma), Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon), Howard Hampton (Rainy River) and Shelley Martel (Sudbury East).

Queen's Park insiders are saying that Wildman, another former teacher, may get the education portfolio but he was strong as the party's critic for natural resources and agriculture.

Pouliot, a passionate and emphatic former mine worker, seems a natural choice for Minister of Northern Development and Native Affairs or, alternatively, Minister of Mines.

Hampton, who came into office in the 1987 election, is a former

lawyer and as such has been touted for the Attorney General's job. But he would do equally well in the Solicitor General's post, or as Minister of Labor or Health.

Martel, until this election the youngest MPP in the Ontario legislature, was a fiery critic of the Workers' Compensation Board in the last legislature as well as being outspoken on culture and communication policies and taking the government to task on behalf of the disabled.

Some say she would make a good colleges and universities minister but she would do equally as well as Minister of Tourism and Recreation, Communications or even Transportation.

Of the other NDP members who were with Rae in the last government, Ruth Grier (Etobicoke-Lakeshore) seems almost a shoo-in for Minister of the Environment, Richard Allen (Hamilton West) for Minister of Community and Social Services and Dave Cooke (Windsor-Riverside) for Minister of Health or, alternatively, com-

munity and social services.

Brian Chariton (Hamilton Mountain), a former property tax assessor, could get Ministry of Municipal Affairs or Energy and Natural Resources.

Bob Mackenzie (Hamilton East) is the favourite for Minister of Labour and Ed Philip (Etobicoke-Rexdale) as Chairman of the Management Board of Cabinet.

Cambridge MPP Mike Farnan would make an excellent Minister of either Consumer and Commercial Relations or Education.

Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold) is best known for his fight against the no-fault auto insurance legislation. A lawyer, Kormos has been very critical of former Solicitor General Steven Offer, over the new Police Act, and former Attorney General Ian Scott on just about everything but court security in particular.

It's possible he could be made Solicitor General to make use of his legal experience. It would be innovative if he was made Minister of Citizenship, responsible for race

relations and the Human Rights Commission, or Minister of Correctional Services.

but even after these veteran members are placed Rae still has to fill another dozen or so jobs.

Bright prospects look like Zanana Akande (St. Andrew-St. Patrick), Pat Hayes (Essex-Kent), Elaine Ziemba (High Park-Swansea), Evelyn Gigantes (Ottawa Centre), David Warner (Scarborough-Ellesmere), Dennis Drainville (Victoria-Haliburton), Marion Boyd (London Centre), Alan Pilkey (Oshawa), Elmer Buchanan (Hastings-Peterborough), Gary Wilson (Kingston), Gary Malkowski (York East) and either of the two Niagara members Margaret Harrington or Shirley Coppen.

Rae, whose party won the election with 74 of the legislature's 130 seats, compared to the Liberals 36 seats and the Conservatives 20 seats, said on Monday he will announce the cabinet on Oct. 1.

He will also be sworn in as Premier on the same day.

## Canada - U.S. anti-pollution agreement near

Rennie MacKenzie  
Ottawa  
Thomson News Service



OTTAWA - Word that Canadian and U. S. negotiators are wrapping up a deal to cut air pollution and acid rain is heartening news for all. Well, almost all.

The assurance that the "air quality" agreement will be inked by the end of the year, ending an agonizing decade of debate, has the Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain so enthused that the organization may disband.

The framework agreement that enables the two countries to act on any transboundary air pollution problem, including acid-rain-causing emissions, will be reinforced by tough new clean air legislation approved this year by the U. S. Congress.

Michael Perley, spokesman for the coalition, explained recently that the organization's aim is to see acid rain emissions cut by 50 per cent. And the group's directors are considering winding down when that target is reached, he added.

"I think it's everybody's feeling that (the coalition) was created to

do a job and put itself out of business."

## REASSIGNED

At Environment Canada, the conclusion of the deal and the implementation of effective controls means Alex Manson, the government's director of acid-rain policy, will be reassigned.

After working on the acid-rain issue for 12 years, Manson is confident the control programs in both countries will provide enough protection for the environment.

"We think we have the solution," he said. He expects the broad agreement will enable the two countries to deal more effectively with future air-pollution problems than under the "ad hoc" approach taken in the past to acid rain.

But a form MP - who headed up a Commons' committee struck 10 years ago to define the acid rain problems - is not so confident. Ron Irwin, who returned to a law practice in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., after defeat in the 1984 general election, claims that "not a heck of a lot" has been done.

People are more aware of the issue, but automobiles, smelters and generating stations continue to belch their corrosive exhausts, he argues. Irwin's committee produced two glossy reports, Still Waters: The Chilling Reality of Acid Rain and Time Lost: A Demand for Action on Acid Rain, that he says are still used as reference documents by students and environmentalists.

Perley advises those impatient for cuts in acid rain to wait a little

longer.

"If somebody's sitting there asking 'Is there any change in my air yet?' - not a dramatic one, but in the next five to 10 years, there will be."

Perley explains that it is not always easy to distinguish between the real progress that has been made and the "posturing and puffery."

The road to understanding the issue since the signing of a memorandum of intent in 1980 has often been rough and nasty for politicians and environmentalists of both sides of the border. "Bunk," "bull," "neanderthal," and "voodoo science" were some of the terms fired off by just one environment minister at prominent Americans and their acid-rain arguments.

Those were the White House years of former president Ronald Reagan. He just wasn't interested in the issue or in co-operating with Canada to control sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions, Perley said. Even after Canada implemented its own controls in 1985, there was no real advancement until George Bush was elected, he commented.

But with the groundwork and preparations of the 1980s, the bilateral agreement and the new Clean Air Act came together quickly, Perley added.

## COSTLY

The clean-up in both Canada and the U. S. over the next 10 years will be costly. In the U. S., the

estimates run as high as \$40 billion.

In Canada, federal-provincial agreements provide for 50-per-cent reductions in sulphur and nitrogen emissions by 1994. In Ontario, four of the major villains in the acid rain saga, Inco, Ontario Hydro, Algoma Steel and Falconbridge, now owned by Noranda, have been ordered to cut emissions by 60 per cent in the same period.

In the U. S., the new air act will require more than 100 utilities to slash emissions by 50 per cent in two stages by the year 2000.

Across North America, the world's toughest automobile emission standards, those enforce by California, will be applied by the 1994 model year.

There is general agreement that a major reduction in emissions will reverse some of the damage caused by acid rain. Scientists say many of the 55,000 dead and dying lakes in Eastern Canada could come back to life, but sensitive areas such as the Haliburton and Muskoka resort districts of Ontario will continue to suffer.

## Province given bleak review

From the Ottawa Bureau  
of Thomson News Service

OTTAWA - Ontario's job market will continue to tighten through 1991, says a leading independent research institution.

In a bleak quarterly review of the province's economic performance, the Conference Board of Canada predicts that Ontario's unemployment rate will rise to 6.3 per cent in 1991 from 5.7 per cent this year and 5.1 per cent in 1989.

The actual number of jobs will increase by 0.2 per cent from 4.96 million to 4.97 million in 1991, according to the board. But the number of jobs per 1,000 residents has been slipping. The rate dropped by 1.2 per cent to 51 per 1,000 this year and will drop another 1.1 per cent to 50.5 in 1991.

The board reports that manufacturing industries in Ontario are cutting production as markets weaken. But there has been some growth in the service sector and an anticipated recession may yet be averted if the province's trade performance improves.

Ontario's economy should perform better in 1991, say the board's analysts, but high interest rates and the new goods and services tax will limit growth.