

# Welfare recipient issue is one of "flesh and blood"

On the issue of welfare recipients, the central focus should be "flesh and blood," a point some Regional Councillors, including Halton Hills Regional Councillor Joe Hewitt, seems to have missed.

Coun. Hewitt voted against Halton Region hiring 10 extra staff members to handle the increase in General Welfare Assistance caseloads in the Region, during a Regional Council meeting last Wednesday.

The councillors voted against the extra hiring despite hearing from Halton Social Services Commissioner Bonnie Ewart that without the additional employees, each current staff member would be required to manage 180 to 190 welfare cases.

A manageable number of cases per staff is 115, said Ms. Ewart.

Coun. Hewitt voted against the hiring of extra staff because the province has yet to indicate whether it will provide funding for the extra staff. However, Ms. Ewart predicted the provincial money would be forthcoming.

Coun. Hewitt supported fellow Oakville Regional Coun. Kevin Flynn, who said opposition to the hiring would send a message to the province it is obligated to provide funding for the program. He was referring to the fact the General Welfare Assistance program was imposed on municipalities by the province.

The province will also receive the message, it is not doing enough to help people get off



**Ben's Banter**  
by Ben Dummett

welfare, said Coun. Flynn.

The arguments put forth by Coun. Flynn and Coun. Hewitt are legitimate in principle. If the General Welfare Assistance program was imposed by the province, then the province should

be obligated to provide some of the funding.

This assertion is that more logical since Regional Social Services staff have had to handle 76.3 per cent more cases between January and May 1991 over the same period in 1990.

As well, it is legitimate for the councillors to say not hiring the additional staff will pressure the province to find ways of getting people off welfare. If the province realized the municipalities can't handle the existing welfare cases, then is it more apt to try to reduce the number of caseloads.

That stated, the reality is that people need welfare just to survive and this factor must be kept in the forefront of people's minds.

As Burlington Regional Coun. Ralph Scholtens said, the issue of

welfare is different because it deals with "flesh and blood."

In light of the recession it is highly unlikely those on welfare are attempting to abuse the welfare system. A lot of the people on welfare are those who have lost their jobs and have yet to find new employment.

The well-being of these people shouldn't be sacrificed for the sake of fighting a principle.

Luckily for these people, the majority of Regional Councillors appeared to agree because they voted for the extra staff.

Now that the extra staff will be hired, politicians like Coun. Hewitt who voted against extra hiring, should lobby the provincial government to improve the system so this problem doesn't arise in the future.

## Political Forum

### Ottawa Report

# Healing time is needed for our battered country

There is great change in the air - along with a lot of anger. A few days ago, the Spicer Commission released its report. A few days before that, we got the report of the other committee studying ways to change the Constitution.

Now the studying and the searching has stopped.

Here are some of the things being recommended:

- Turn the country from 10 provinces into five regions when it comes to approving constitutional change. No longer should 130,000 people in PEI have a veto over the 10 million in Ontario.

- Stop the destruction of national symbols that give Canadians a sense of identity.

- Recognize that Quebec is different. As Spicer put it, "People outside Quebec could accept that Quebec should have the freedom and means to be itself - a unique society with its own distinctive place in a renewed Canadian family."

- Let Quebec protect its language and culture in return for changes to its unfair laws prohibiting English signs.

- Better inform Canadians of the economic, political, social and international consequences of Quebec independence.

- Completely review the policy of official bilingualism.

- Settle land claims with native people - fairly and quickly. Give them self-government and phase out the federal department of Indian Affairs.

- Eliminate federal funding of multiculturalism, but keep funding programs to counter racism. As Spicer said, "The key goals of multiculturalism should be to welcome all Canadians to an evolving mainstream."

- The federal government should be in partnership with the private sector to raise our knowledge of our own country - with travel and exchange programs for young people. Provincial education programs should

**Garth Turner**  
MP  
Halton-Peel  
Progressive Conservative



be co-ordinated to promote a better understanding of Canada and its history.

- The government has to better explain, and involve people in, economic programs. Free trade, deregulation, selling-off to crown corporations and so on have people feeling "betrayed and bereft."

- Governments have to work together to eliminate overlap and duplication, so the people are

served more efficiently.

- Our political system is too partisan and adversarial. This style of open-war politics has brought disdain on Parliament and our leaders.

- There is too much Party discipline. Sessions of Parliament should be shorter with MPs allowed to spend more time listening to constituents. And there should be more free votes.

- There should be an ongoing process of open dialogue between the government and the people - especially when facing decisions on major issues.

- Reform, or abolish, the Senate.

That is what the government has now been told, after Spicer consulted with about 400,000 people. Much of what was in the report pleases me, and regular readers will have noticed some of those themes have been constant here.

I want MPs to be more independent, to vote freely, to represent

their communities as faithfully as possible. I think Parliament should be reformed, and that there should be new mechanisms for people to be more involved in the political process.

But we also have to be careful - the last election cost \$100 million, so having a referendum on everything would cost taxpayers a bundle.

I'm also solidly behind reforming the way all levels of government work with each other. As I've been saying - we have too many governments, too much government and too many politicians. We have too many provinces. Too many civil servants performing too many overlapping jobs.

Please review these suggestions for our country's future, and let me know your thoughts. This is a summer to prepare for healing our battered country. Write me: Garth Turner MP, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6. Thanks.

## Queen's Park Report

# First Ontario NDP budget clarified further

In view of the interest - both positive and negative - shown toward our first budget, I believe it deserves a few more comments.

Although the opposition parties have responded negatively to a document designed to help us out of the worst recession in fifty years, they have neglected to offer any realistic alternative. The Liberals called the election last summer because they realized the impending recession pressures upon our services and wanted a mandate to take them through the worst of it.

The Conservatives talk about restraint but wasted time and money holding up the business of the legislature. Of course we are concerned about the size of the deficit, but we could not abandon people who had lost their jobs nor close our hospitals and schools. New spending accounts for only \$1.5 billion of the budget and has been geared toward job creation programs and projects that will be enduring assets - such as the necessary improvements to the Milton and Georgetown hospitals.

Lower provincial revenues, an initial \$3 billion deficit, federal cutbacks in funding, and the maintenance of existing services account for the balance. It is certainly our intention to reduce the size of the deficit as the economy



**Noel Duignan**  
Halton North  
MPP  
New Democratic Party

recovers, but I tend to agree with the comments of the Treasurer that he was "getting a little tired of having the Conservatives in this Legislature and the ones in Ottawa, the very ones who created the recession and gave us this deficit, telling us that we are not doing the right thing."

We have been listening to your concerns and are trying to address them. For example, after meeting with auto industry representatives and environmental groups, the Treasurer modified the earlier budget proposal to double the existing gas guzzler tax rates. The new initiative has since been renamed the "Tax for Fuel Conservation" in recognition of its changed nature and will take effect on August 1st. The new policy retains the doubling of rates on cars with poor fuel economy ratings

(those with ratings of 9.5 litres per 100 kilometres or worse) but offers a rebate of \$100 to purchasers of new cars that use less than 6.0 litres per 100 kilometres. Cars that have fuel economy ratings between 6.0 and 8.9 will be

subject to a \$75 tax.

Vehicles which fall in the range of the \$75 tax include cars such as the Ford Festiva, Honda Civic, and Toyota Tercel. If you buy one of the most fuel efficient cars

such as the Pontiac Firefly, Subaru Justy, or the Chevrolet Sprint, you should be entitled to the \$100 rebate. For more information on the different rates, please call my Milton office at 878-1729.



Ed Stein  
Rocky Mtn.  
News-Net