

# The Independent & Free Press

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## This is fair?

The latest influx of boat people coming to Canada has ignited the continuing refugee debate and with another ship spotted off the B.C. coast Wednesday, the issue will likely only continue to fester.

On one side are Canadians who say authorities should turn away the ships loaded with illegal immigrants no matter the circumstances. Others say this country was founded on poor immigrants who gave up everything to start new lives here and we should—and can well afford to—continue to welcome those who want to come to the country rated by the United Nations as the best place in the world to live.

But, debaters are missing one crucial factor that should be considered in a country which prides itself on being fair to all and allowing everyone to have an equal chance at success in life.

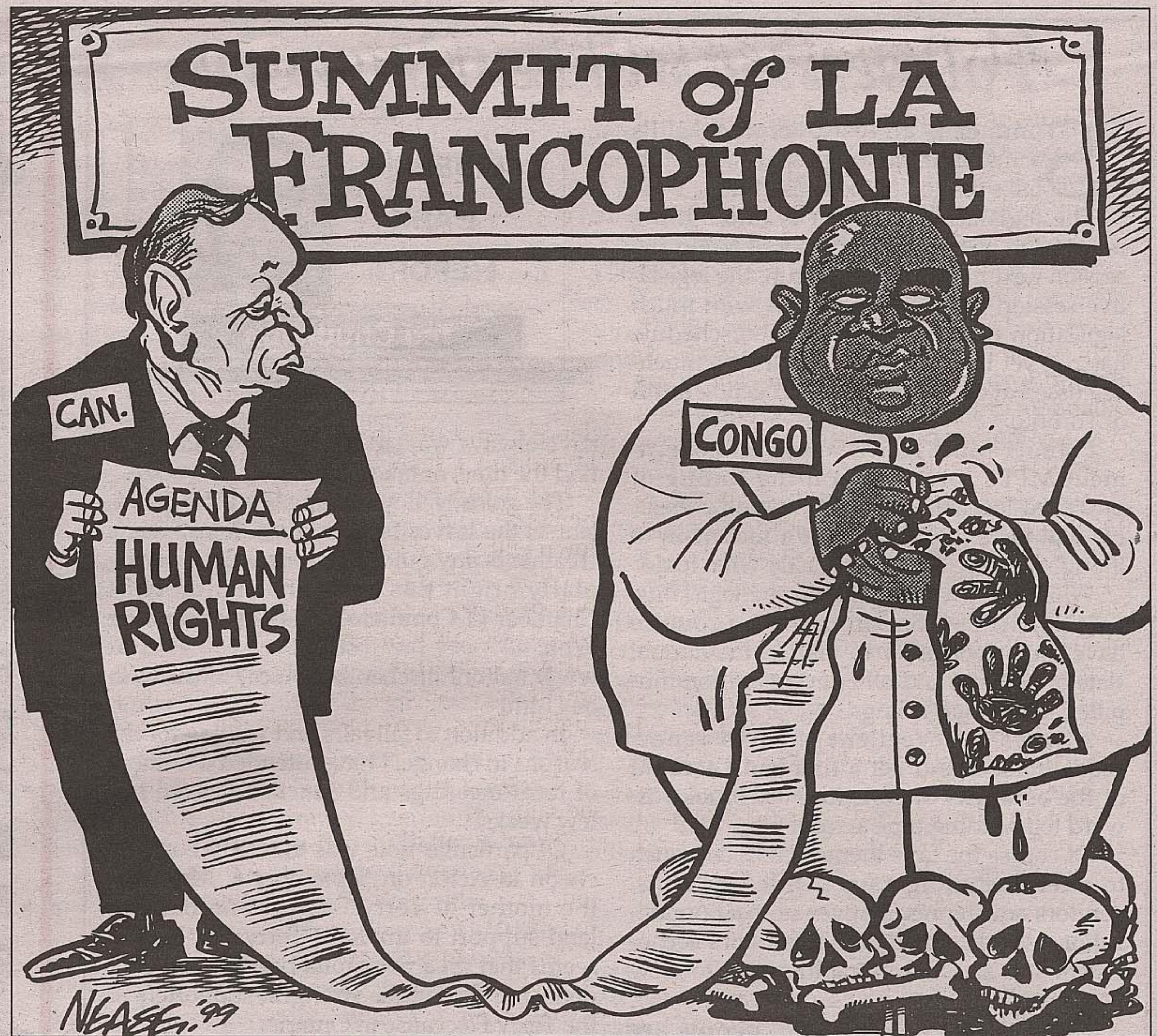
The current Chinese refugees who paid for passage to Canada are jumping ahead of the queue of legitimate would-be refugees. These Chinese migrants, who only have to pass a medical examination and prove they don't have a criminal record, are free to obtain work permits and social assistance while they await a refugee status hearing.

New Canadian residents from other countries desperately waiting months or years to sponsor their own family members are undoubtedly the most miffed at seeing the welcome mat put out for these boatloads of illegal immigrants.

Meanwhile, legitimate refugees—beloved wives or children—must wait in disadvantaged, sometimes war-torn, countries while the normal wheels of immigration grind slowly along.

These people have every right to be upset with our immigration system, which has been a mess for years.

As long as our refugee rules make it so easy to jump the line and sneak into the country, Canada may well be the best place to live, but also the most unfair.



### Miss Acton says thanks for a great year

Dear editor,

I would like to thank the Acton business community for their generous support of the 1998 Miss Acton Pageant.

Strong community support helps to make the annual pageant the great success it is from year to year and it definitely helps to encourage the contestants participating in the pageant to come out and take their chances in front of their home community. And I must say, participating in the Miss Acton Fall Fair Pageant is an amazing experience.

The entire fair weekend was a lot of fun. In fact, my entire year as Miss Acton, which has been very busy and exciting and included events such as a three-day stay at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, three days at the Canadian National Exhibition and CNE Ambassador competition, several fairs, carnivals and various fund-raisers, etc. has given me many opportunities to meet new people and become much more involved in community life.

I am most grateful to the Acton Agricultural Society for giving me the opportunity to represent them during this past year. I would also like to encourage other teenage girls from Acton and surrounding areas to come out and participate in this year's pageant and to

### Letter of the day

#### Save the Escarpment

Dear editor,

Enough is enough! When is this cannibalism of the Niagara Escarpment by developers going to stop?

The most recent attempt at despoiling Ontario's unique natural environment and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization)-bestowed World Biosphere Reserve is occurring right now in Milton in the Region of Halton.

One thousand acres of protection land between the scarp and the Town of Milton is in the advanced stages of being gouged from the very plan for which UNESCO commended all Canadians in 1990. We were very proud of this title in 1990. Have we lost interest now?

This precedent-setting proposal will delete Protection Area land from the Niagara Escarpment Plan in the Milton area and, if successful, will invite constant attack from other urban areas along the length of the escarpment. This is a test case.

The Town of Milton is taking a wait and see approach. The taxes from new housing estates would come in very handy.

Halton Region will decide today (Wednesday) whether or not to approve the land grab. Their vote is crucial.

A dozen years of democratic input at public hearings helped forge this Escarpment Plan. Let's hear the thunder of protest from all Canadians proud of their natural heritage. Enough is enough!

Jan Watkins, Milton

compete for the chance to be see you at the fair.  
Miss Acton 1999/2000.

Believe me, it will be an unforgettable experience that no one should miss. Hope to

Tanya Tonkovich,  
Miss Acton Fall Fair  
1998/99

### Our Readers Write

The Independent & Free Press welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. All letters must be signed and include an address and a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for content or length and can be mailed, delivered to our office address at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 4X5, faxed to us at (905) 873-0398 or e-mailed to: independent.freepress@aztec-net.com