

Editorial

Eye-opener

Ontario Health Minister Tony Clement's recent revelation that he wasn't aware roughly one in 10 Ontario nurses is employed on a casual basis and must therefore hold down jobs at more than one hospital to earn a reasonable income was surprising to say the least.

The minister's revelation—a product of the precautionary measure of eliminating nurses' movement between hospitals during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak—is disturbing for at least two reasons.

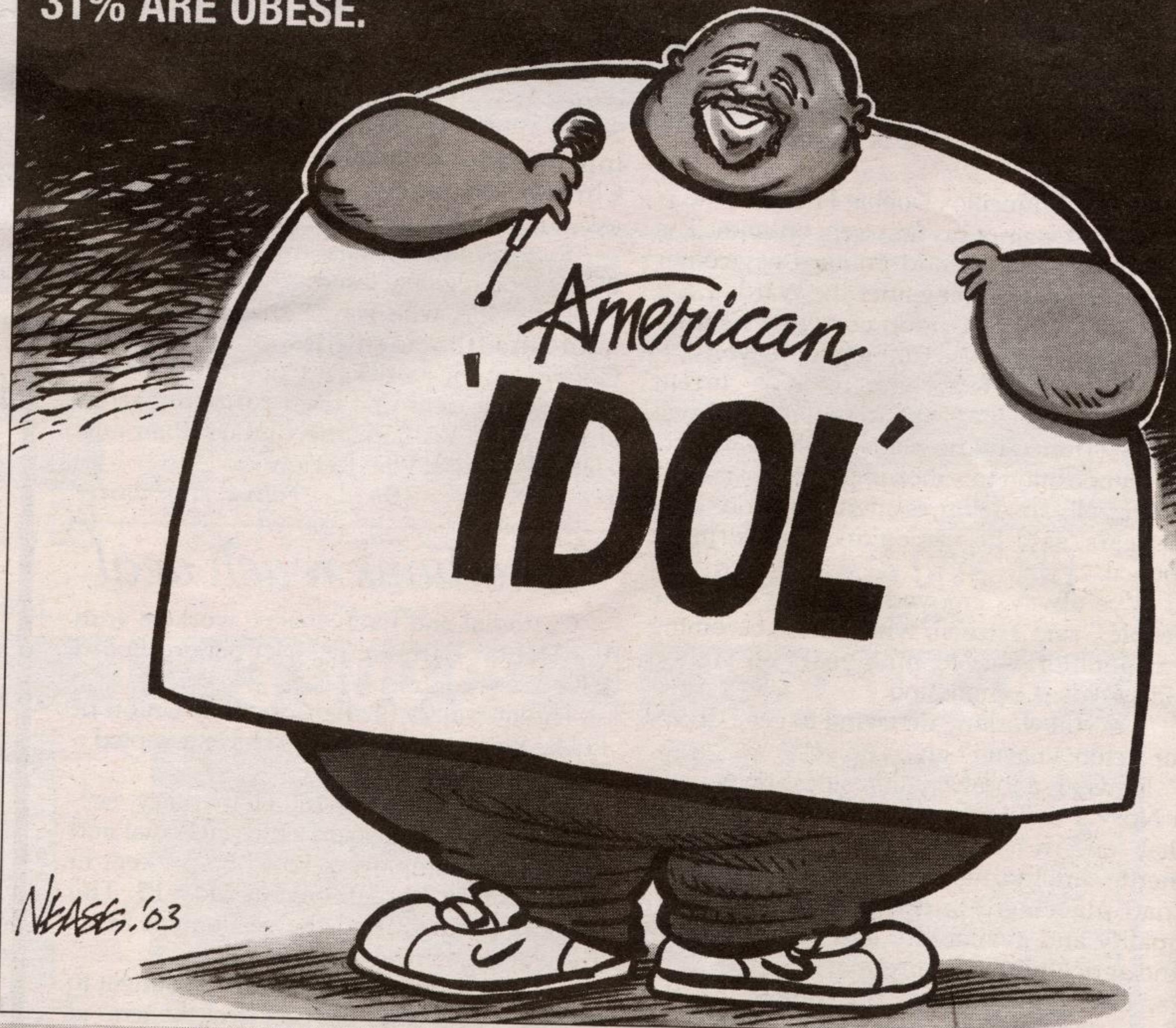
First, it's disconcerting to learn the politician heading up the department most vital to the health of every Ontarian could be so out of touch with the reality of the daily operations in our province's hospitals.

Second, this is not the kind of press Ernie Eves' government needs as it readies its election plan. Clement, a senior cabinet minister and potential leadership material, was made to look foolish at a time the Tories are flooding the airwaves boasting about their achievements and competency.

According to the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario the Conservative government has repeatedly been warned about how many nurses are leaving the professions because of the lack of full-time, permanent jobs. According to association figures, roughly 9.9 per cent or 8,000 nurses in this province are employed on a casual basis—called in only when needed. An additional 28,000 nurses—almost 35 per cent—are employed part time.

For the sake of the province's health care system we hope the silver lining of the SARS outbreak is that it has opened the eyes of the one government official who has the power to effect positive changes.

65% OF ADULTS IN U.S. ARE OVERWEIGHT. 31% ARE OBESE.



Letters to the editor...

Birchway Place residents 'let children down'

Dear editor,

An open letter to the residents of odd-numbered houses on Birchway Place in Acton.

This morning, two members of Protect Our Water and Environment Resources (P.O.W.E.R.) walked behind your properties to check on the trees and shrubs the students of St. Joseph's School planted in the spring of 2000. This was part of our millennium project Trees 2000, a P.O.W.E.R. initiative to celebrate the millennium.

Imagine our consternation to find the majority of them gone. Instead we found mowed grass at the back of your properties intruding into the wild space in which trees were planted, a number of paths cutting down to the water's edge, and several patches of the original flora cut down, the intent being, apparently, to extend the grass still further in the coming season. A garden was planted outside the fence line of one house; behind another, heaps of turf were dumped on the ground.

Those trees and shrubs we came to see were planted by school children on public land using grant money applied for to fund the project. P.O.W.E.R. was supported by

the wider community. The project's intent was to naturalize this space. The children were encouraged to visit the site often to watch the trees grow and the natural flora and fauna to come back.

The land naturalized by the students does not belong to you. Your properties end at the fence. If you chose to extend your gardening activities outside the fence you are guilty of trespassing. If you confined your gardening to your own property but saw what your neighbours were doing, you still had a civic duty to uphold the law, to inform, admonish, warn and finally report, your neighbours who were trespassing.

The bottom line is that you have let the young people of Acton down. By example you have told them you do not care about their activities on behalf of the earth. That it is useless for them to try to do environmental restoration because adults will simply ignore and undo all their hard work. By example, you have also told them it is OK to trespass.

Joan Cornfield, P.O.W.E.R.

Youths not respecting park

Dear editor,

Re: Remembrance Park May 1 and a previous occasion.

Driving past the park I noticed approximately 12 children skateboarding in the park, disregarding posted notices.

I admit, I did not get out of my car but I did tell them to cease, which they disregarded. This was at 10 a.m., so why were they not at school?

On this occasion, persons who I believe were town employees were cleaning up the park area prior to the Candlelight March on VE-Day May 8.

My understanding is that these employees brought the infraction of the posted notices to the attention of the youths and were met with the usual flippant expletives in response, so the police were notified. Are these youths above the law?

At taxpayers' expense a special structure for skateboarding was constructed in front of the Mold-Masters SportsPlex. The refurbishment of Remembrance Park, a continuing cost to taxpayers, was built through the efforts of dedicated volunteers and with donated funding. It is a part of Canada's history and, as a memorial to our fallen, should be a concern to all the town's citizens.

Young people should be convinced to have respect for the memorial area and for private property in general.

A concerned Georgetown citizen and veteran

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must be signed and include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

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