

Editorial

Shame on them all

It's disgraceful that provincial and federal officials would play political hot potato with the lives of 2,000 human beings, but that is exactly what was done on the Kashechewan Reserve.

Rather than taking the lead in bringing urgently needed medical care to residents of the remote reserve— where the water supply has been unfit for years— Ontario Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay spent the early part of last week discussing the critical situation with federal Indian Affairs Minister Andy Scott.

The residents of the Northern Ontario community have faced a boil-water advisory for two years and intermittent advisories since 2000— the same year Walkerton's E-coli-tainted water supply killed seven.

On Wednesday Premier Dalton McGuinty finally ordered the evacuation of 1,100 residents— many of whom are infected with the scabies parasite and the bacterial skin infection impetigo— to Sudbury and outlying areas.

Did it have to come to this?

Stan Louttit, grand chief for the Mushkegowuk people who live on the reserve, summarized the situation as "jurisdictional haggling."

According to Ramsay it's a question of jurisdictional etiquette. The province wanted to help out, he said, but found itself without the authority to do so without federal permission. Technically he's right, that the reserve falls under federal jurisdiction, but from a strictly humanitarian perspective this reluctance to step on the toes of bureaucrats in Ottawa shows little respect for these people's lives. The province— as has the federal government— has known about the region's water woes for the last two years and has done precious little to address the crisis.

For two years, Ottawa has done little to correct these deplorable living conditions— and there are dozens of other reserves in which similar conditions exist.

This problem was allowed to become a crisis. We believe it wouldn't have come to this had this occurred elsewhere other than a native reserve.



Letters to the editor...

Reader shocked at gas theft and others condoning it

Dear editor,

Re: Ted Brown's recent columns involving the gas theft as well as the two subsequent letters to the editor.

Letters to the editor

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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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

Mail or drop off

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I'm a 25-year-old male who has lived in the Georgetown area for four years. I always thought of it as being a nice quaint community but am shocked and appalled, not only at the original theft that occurred, but that there are people who are trying to condone it.

I was raised by parents who taught me the difference between right and wrong. Stealing is wrong. End of story. Granted, Mr. Brown may have gone a little overboard at times in his column, however the main point was clear— those who lined up at the pumps and took that gas at that ridiculously discounted price were thieves.

Trying to bring in outlandish stories of being ripped off by the government and trying to say that "we're all trying to get by too" is a load of crap. The majority of all robberies and thefts are done by people who need the money for whatever outlandish reasons they have— whether it is to buy food and clothes for their family or to support a drug habit. I'm not trying to compare all robberies to the theft of the gas, but all criminals believe what they're doing is justified, for whatever

reason.

In this case, stealing is stealing. Wrong is wrong. There are crimes committed all over the world on a daily basis where charges aren't laid— stealing cable, lying on insurance, or lifting a few pens from work. Just because we aren't charged (or caught) doesn't make it right.

I thank my parents for raising me how they did because the instant I read the original column Mr. Brown wrote, I was immediately on his side of the fence. Those of you who both stole the gas and are defending its theft should be ashamed of yourselves.

Yes, we're in hard times and gas is expensive, but we're all going through the same hard times. When we steal it always comes out of someone else's pocket.

Thank you Mr. Brown for taking the time to inform us of this unjust occurrence in our town. Know that some of us agree with your points and see the situation in the same light.

Jesse Petryna,
Georgetown

Participants in pro-life protest thanked

Dear editor,

On October 2— Pro-Life Sunday— there were 60-65 residents from our area, from four or five local churches, joining with tens of thousands internationally for Life Chain Sunday.

This annual event reminds us to have respect for life from conception to natural death. We shared this message from the corner of Maple Avenue and Guelph Street, as a large number of you saw, silently, peacefully, prayerfully, and meaningfully.

God's blessings on all participants and those who prayed at home in support of the life chain.

Tony Smyth,
Georgetown

The Independent & Free Press

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