

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Chong is right

The resignation of Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong from the federal Conservative cabinet over the controversial resolution to formally recognize the Quebecois as a nation within Canada, should be no surprise to those who know Chong and his personal belief in a Canada without ethnic nationalism.

As intergovernmental affairs minister responsible for the unity file, Chong was never consulted about the decision to propose the resolution although Prime Minister Harper did consult leaders in the Liberal and NDP as well as Liberal leadership candidate Stephan Dion, a former intergovernmental affairs minister in the Chretien government.

An oversight? Or a suggestion that Chong's input was not important? In any event Michael Chong did the right thing by resigning from cabinet in which he also held the sports portfolio. He'll now sit as an ordinary Conservative MP. That allowed him to refrain from voting on the resolution which easily passed the Commons by a vote of 266-16.

Independent Halton MP Garth Turner was one of the 16 MPs who voted against the resolution.

Although there was strong support from all parties for the resolution there is no doubt that the public at large especially here, is doubtful about the wisdom of the resolution which conferred "nation" status on the Quebecois. Many will side with Michael Chong who declared "I believe in one nation, undivided, called Canada."

Speculation is that Stephan Harper let Chong go because the price of losing him was preferable to that of losing two more MPS over the resolution.

Now the controversy over the resolution swirls to what the term "nation" actually means. It is possible it has different meaning in English and French. At least it has for Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe who says that now Quebec has been formally recognized as a nation within Canada it can press its demands for more money and spending powers.

Duceppe's notion conflicts completely with Michael Chong who recognizes this country's linguistic duality and a need for the "French fact" to flourish but feels it is best done through bilingualism. Chong feels the resolution encouraged retreat into the old two solitudes instead of engaging in common "civic nationalism."

It's a view we share.

## Something in the water?

People in other parts of this enormous country must be asking if there's something in the water in the chunk of Ontario which results in the unusual conduct from its federal politicians.

First there was Halton MP Garth Turner who was turfed out of the Conservative caucus when he published views on his blog contrary to the party's policies. Now we have our local MP Michael Chong, resigning a Cabinet post which included three portfolios, because he couldn't support the motion which recognized the Quebecois as a nation.

In Mr. Turner's case he had no option but to accept his fate since he continued to let his views be known in the interest of free speech, no matter the consequences. He continued to pursue his own agenda as an independent Member of Parliament. Surprisingly he is getting far more ink and attention than he ever got when he sat as a member of the caucus.

Michael Chong, left out of the deliberations on the motion to recognize Quebec as a nation might have been annoyed by the slight, but his belief in "one nation, undivided, called Canada," based on a civic not on an ethnic nationalism, settles the issue for him. He couldn't as a member of the cabinet, vote for the motion, crafted by the Prime Minister and his close associates, to counter a motion from Gilles Duceppe of the Bloc.

Mr. Chong then took the step of resigning from cabinet on that principle, an action which some might deplore but one which also received a lot of respect from the public which has been getting disillusioned by some of the critics in Ottawa.

Unlike Mr. Turner he is still the sitting MP for this riding and fully in accord with the government's agenda.



**KETTLE CAMPAIGN:** The Acton Corps of the Salvation Army kicked off its annual holiday kettle campaign to raise money for the needy on Friday. On hand were, from left: Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary, Sobeys rep Jon Dobbin, kettle co-chair Reg Marsh, Major Dean Locke and Acton Councillor Jon Hurst. — Frances Niblock photo

## Common ailments now passé

With all the commercials on television and ads in newspapers it is a wonder all of us aren't hypochondriacs.

On Saturday evening as I was putting the laundry away and watching the T.V. I think I had finally reached my boiling point. I had had enough of T.V. ads trying to convince me that for every ache and pain there is a syndrome and we need a special clinic or medicine.

Do you suffer aches and pains in your legs? Do you feel the need to walk around and stretch? Then you must be suffering from restless leg syndrome. Well, I must be suffering from it because my legs hurt when I sit at my desk for hours on end.

Are you tired of trying to lose weight? Have you been dieting and it seems there is no end in sight? Well, the Gastric Bypass clinic can help you. I feel like yelling out at that commercial... "so can eating properly!". If you were overweight before you basically were a victim of overeating or maybe a medical condition like a thyroid problem. Now,



By  
Angela Tyler

you need to see a surgeon and get your intestines made smaller with an elastic or whatever they do. What happened to being a bit overweight because you may have been over-indulging too often?

Do you find yourself needing to go to the washroom frequently? Maybe you have irritable bowel syndrome. What constitutes going to the washroom frequently? I recently read that the average person passes gas 14 times a day. If you do it 15 times does that mean you have a flatulence problem and need a doctor? When I am about to go to sleep, I find myself frequenting the washroom more times than I did all day. Does that mean I have a syndrome, or is that just me?

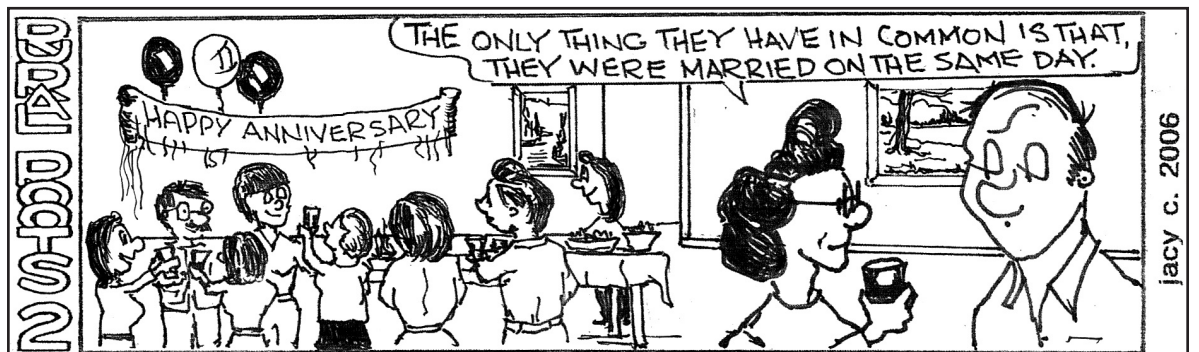
I just don't understand it. It seems that before there were the

regular sicknesses. Basically it boiled down to having a cold, the flu or you were just feeling your age. Now there is syndrome after syndrome and the pending pandemic. If we paid attention to all the experts half of Acton would already be dead with a pandemic.

If your legs ached, more than likely you were old and feeling the aches and pains of a high school sports injury or arthritis. Now, any ache and pain means you have a syndrome.

If you went to the washroom too much before, you had a flu bug, or maybe ate too much chili. Now, you have an irritable bowel.

My name is Angela. I have restless leg syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, and I sneezed this morning which is a sure sign I am going to die of a pandemic. Or it could all mean that my legs ache because I wear inappropriate shoes to work, and I have to go to the washroom a lot at night because that's just me, and the sneeze I had this morning was because of somebody's stinky cologne.



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