



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Less would be more

Asking people to trim their own organizational empires is a recipe for disaster, as was amply illustrated by Milton's municipal councillors last week.

That's like calling for volunteers to be fired.

There has been success in other areas — Burlington council cut its numbers, but elected representatives there are expected to serve the community full time now.

In Milton, the status quo would not change in terms of compensation or commitment. There would simply be a smaller group of people doing the work, according to Councillor Rick Malboeuf.

His idea has merit. It deserves more serious and objective attention than it has garnered, but prospects for any kind of meaningful change look dim.

Infighting — sharp by Milton standards — has erupted. Views are polarized, and less than sublime.

Councillor Barry Lee was openly and bluntly critical of the initiative. Mr. Lee, not a man given to emotional outbursts, said the manner in which the suggestion was put, "is just stupid. It's just an attempt to score political points."

An angry Councillor John Challinor, intentionally or not, and probably not — sidetracked debate by saying that if it is a matter of money, he is willing to cut his stipend.

Mr. Malboeuf was of the opinion, perhaps triggered by criticism, that Milton needs at least as many full-time firefighters as municipal councillors, a situation that does not prevail at present.

Yet money is not at the core of this issue, nor is the manner in which it was presented. How many firefighters Milton does or doesn't have is an amusing riposte by a frustrated man, and nothing more.

The key here is efficiency and true accountability. That is, how many people do you actually need to do the work given the thrust of provincial policy to cut duplication, and given that you must set an example for others.

That last bit about setting an example is key. The cutbacks at municipal government are not finished yet. More properly perhaps, they should not be finished yet. There are still too many elected officials at the municipal level, both regionally and locally, too many duplicated bureaucratic functions, too much of this, that and the other thing.

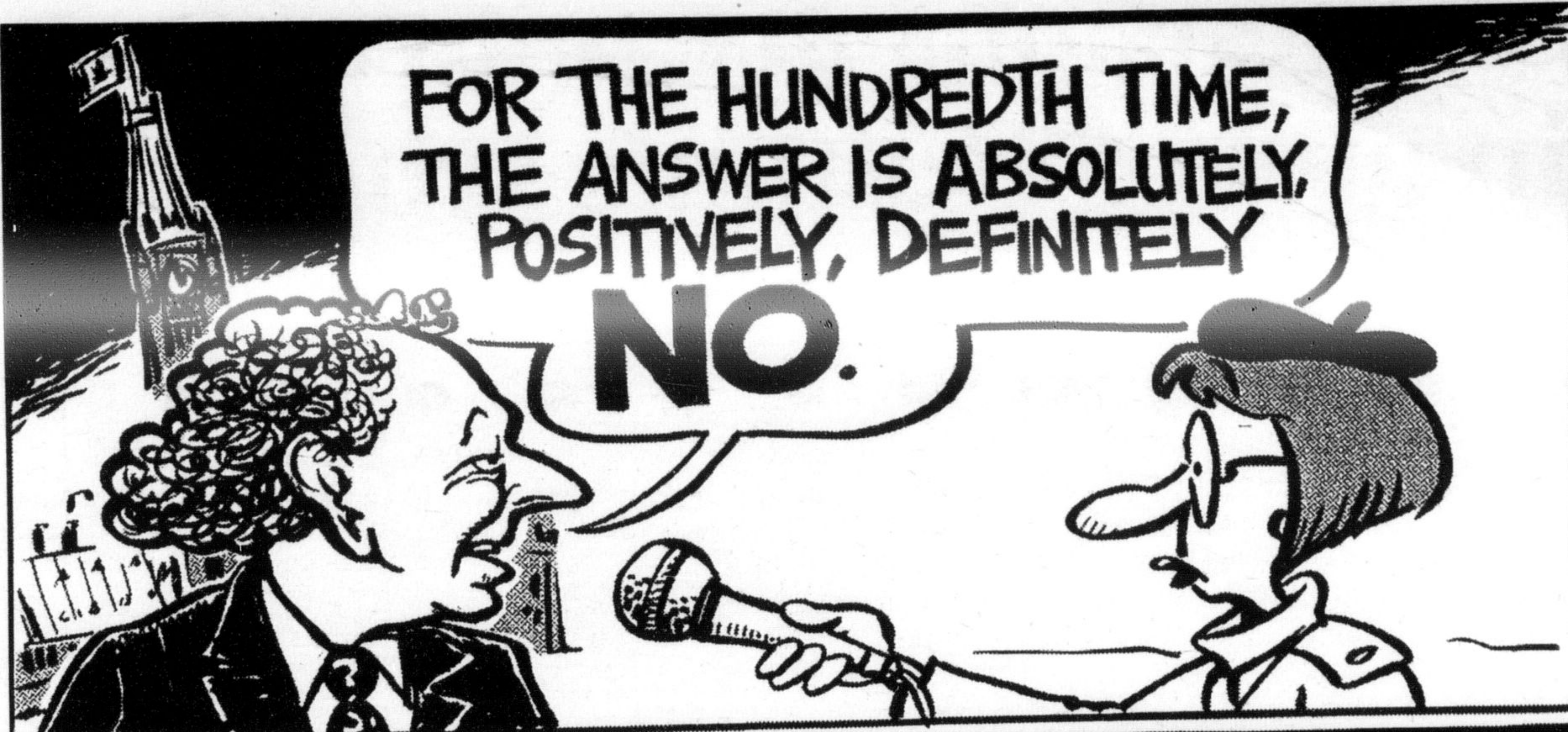
And there are too many people trying to justify their existence by claiming they run lean and mean departments or tiers of government. Compared to what? To each other?

Councillor Rick Day's comment last week was revealing. Like most of the others on Milton council, Mr. Day has by and large good intentions and the community's interests at heart. But he thinks that, for example, the Milton Ratepayers Association should favour more municipal politicians, not less, since that way there would be enhanced democracy.

More councillors don't mean more democracy when you've already got close to a dozen in a relatively quiet suburban centre of about 32,000 people.

The only ones who really think like that are some of the councillors themselves, who, with all due respect, appear to have an inflated opinion of themselves.

Rob Kelly



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Dealing with the government ends up big waste of time

Dear Editor:

Recently I faced another example of multi-tiered bureaucratic government in action.

I was attempting to deliver a truck load of clean, flattened cardboard to the Milton landfill site run by Halton Region. This was what I considered the more responsible option, instead of simply throwing it in the dumpster by my business — a dumpster which I have to pay for myself, incidentally.

I can remember some years ago, weekly garbage pick-up was a service, provided through the business taxes I pay. Now, however, we all have ugly dumpsters by our businesses, and of course, we never saw a tax rebate or cut when waste collection and haulage became a private sector responsibility.

Now we have a regional landfill, yet when I drove there to dispose of my cardboard properly, I was turned away, and told it was considered commercial waste.

I was told to haul the cardboard down to Burlington, a round trip of an hour.

These regional people, it would appear, would prefer to see all kinds of pickup trucks driving all the way to Burlington and back, burning fossil fuels and polluting the environment, rather than accepting the waste in Milton.

How does this square with environmental preservation to say nothing of efficiency?

There is already a large waste disposal facility in Milton — where I pay my residential and business taxes. I don't

pay those taxes to Burlington.

After many phone calls I was instructed to return to the regional landfill site in Milton, pay my \$5 disposal fee, and my cardboard would be accepted.

I sent one of my employees. When he got there, he was told to dump the cardboard in with the general garbage because the cardboard recycling bin was full.

That's about par for the course when it comes to dealing with the government, as far as I'm concerned.

Brian Bell
Brian's Auto Repair
Milton

Quit holding out on us, please

Dear Editor,

After reading Joyce Hagevik's comments (March 10) about how The Canadian Champion had once been the pride of Milton but was now one large advertisement newspaper, I reluctantly agreed.

Upon turning the page and reading 'Snowboarding or I've Fallen And I Can't Get Up', I found Murray Townsend's article absolutely hilarious, informative and something that I could really relate to, being overweight and over 40, etc.

Please release more of these gems that I know the people of Milton are capable of producing.

Quit holding out on us.

Kevin Welsh
Milton

Pud

by Steve Nease

