



# COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Deoni must make his own decision

There are some — indeed some at this newspaper — who believe Milton's Joe Deoni should step aside, take a leave of absence, pending resolution of his legal troubles.

Mr. Deoni, readers have been informed today, faces a fraud charge, a serious one, in relation to business conducted privately, not as part of his Catholic school board duties.

There are compelling arguments in favour of that course of action.

First, Mr. Deoni, from this day forward until the matter is answered legally, operates under a cloud as a public servant.

Second, taking a leave of absence would be a quick and relatively painless way to deal with the situation, it appears, given the fact that trustees are now paid only \$5,000 per year. Mr. Deoni would sacrifice little financially.

In the past we have advocated public officials stepping down until their legal problems have been resolved. We did so with former municipal councillor Mary Long, and again with former Halton chair Peter Pomeroy.

It is Mr. Pomeroy's case that makes us reluctant to take the same position again.

Mr. Pomeroy counted on his income as Halton regional chair to make a living. It was a full-time job, and one he enjoyed immensely. As well, he was good at it by many accounts, including ours.

His regional council colleagues offered only cagey lukewarm support and were guilty of much political manoeuvring at Mr. Pomeroy's expense during his ordeal, we would submit, although even today Mr. Pomeroy would say no such thing.

After years of legal wrangling and water torture, the judicial death of a thousand cuts and innuendo, Mr. Pomeroy was not found guilty of anything.

Those who investigated him, and hounded him, were held accountable for virtually nothing. Their only penalty was a moderate backhanded reprimand from a judge.

But Mr. Pomeroy's political career was over, or at least very badly damaged.

That's what makes us so reluctant today to say Mr. Deoni should resign.

Anyone can be accused of anything by anybody.

This is not to discount the investigative work done by Halton Regional Police, who have some excellent minds on the force. It is not to downplay the seriousness of the situation confronting Mr. Deoni.

Any objective reading of the circumstances indicates Mr. Deoni is in for a rough ride.

And if there has been a victim of a theft here, a Milton firm, that alleged crime is one with real, probably substantial consequences.

In the end only Mr. Deoni can and will decide his immediate course of action. One can only hope that he answers his conscience, a conscience he has demonstrated, along with other qualities, such as courage and compassion, during his tenure as a school board trustee.

Rob Kelly



COOKING WITH PRESTON



## OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

### Trio upset over Reed's stance on Canadian flags in House

(The following letter was sent to Halton MP Julian Reed and a copy was filed with The Champion. A response from Mr. Reed follows.)

Dear Mr. Reed:

We are writing to enquire why you have sided with the Separatists on the issue of having a Canadian flag on your desk in the House.

Why would you vote with a party who is trying to break up Canada?

We are pleased to see that the Liberals have two members who stand up for what their constituents want (Bryon Wilfert -- Oak Ridges and Ivan Grose -- Oshawa).

At the next election we will be looking to vote for a person who will stand up to the Bloc and not side with a party whose main objective is to leave Canada.

This is just another case of our government wasting the already short period of time Parliament is in session.

On a recent trip to Ottawa we went to Parliament Hill to see a question and answer session. One word describes it -- disgraceful.

These are our leaders. The need for respect and good manners is most evident.

We wish all Canadians could see how our elected representatives are behaving on our behalf.

Our trip to Ottawa did not make us proud to be Canadians.

Sylvia, Irvin and Kenneth Johnson  
Milton

### Reed says he's for the flag

Dear Sylvia, Irvin and Kenneth Johnson:

In response to your letter accusing me of siding with the Separatists on the issue of the Canadian flag, I would like to point out that in the text of your letter, you answered your own question.

In the second paragraph you described question period as being disgraceful and that our leaders need to be taught respect and good manners.

Unfortunately, you were not in the House when the Member for Medicine Hat desecrated the Canadian flag by throwing it on the floor.

These supposed heroes of yours are the ones who have demonstrated that they wish to use the flag as simply a nationalist prop. The flag means far too much to me, as I'm sure it does to you.

If you had seen the incident and remember the antics of the Reform Party, the party that was going to come to Ottawa to do things differently, you will see why I will have no truck or trade with these people.

I will never support a party that desecrates the Canadian flag however much the press may try to make heroes out of them. I very much agree that it is time for civility in the House of Commons.

Please take this message to anyone you know in the Reform Party and tell them to begin behaving like Parliamentarians for a change.

Incidentally I wear a flag into the House everyday as I have done since the first I was elected, I will continue to do so as long as I have the honour to serve the riding of Halton.

Julian Reed, MP

### Pud

by Steve Nease

