



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Chudleigh's last gasp likely won't fit the bill

Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh may be putting the best face on the latest reversal concerning chlorine in Milton, but there really is little chance that he can gain the upper hand.

Mr. Chudleigh says he will attempt to float a private member's bill at Queen's Park that would, in essence, be one of the last skirmishes in the chlorine war.

It would be a muted one as well, in the unlikely event it ever got off the ground.

Private member's bills rarely go anywhere at Queen's Park, and this one certainly wouldn't. There are simply too many legal and political risks involved, for potentially marginal gains, when it comes to the big picture.

The Tory government will not go against the prevailing opinion at the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, that chlorine should be in Milton water.

To do so would invite a scathing attack from opposition parties, who would use the opportunity to depict the government as unconcerned about water quality regulations, and contemptuous of the health and safety of its citizens.

Mr. Chudleigh knows the feelings of the majority of Miltonians when it comes to chlorine, and so he is unwilling to look as if he is throwing in the towel.

But those unacquainted with the technical aspects of government have faint cause for hope. The Halton North MPP can do little further influence events.

And, on a purely tactical political level, the blame for chlorination does not appear to have fallen on Queen's Park politicians per se. Instead, Halton's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Bob Nosal, and the MOEE have by and large taken the heat and provided convenient scapegoats.

Therefore, the provincial government has yet less impetus to change the situation.

The MOEE has proven unswerving in its commitment to current water regulations, and would have only granted Milton an exemption if Halton regional politicians had stuck their necks out.

In the end, Halton Region proved unwilling to shoulder legal responsibility for Milton's water purity without chlorine. Regional council then put forward the face-saving position that they had never opposed Milton's position, either.

Once everybody starts rationalizing their lack of success on a given political issue, in the face of a potentially cranky public backlash, one can pretty well assume the fight is for all intents and purposes over.

That is the case with local chlorination, barring some sort of minor political miracle.

Rob Kelly



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Enough is enough of teachers' union slamming, says reader

Dear Editor:

I am an elementary school teacher of 29 years. I am proud to be a teacher, proud to have contributed positively to public education in this province and proud to have had the honour of being a part of so many children's lives.

It is my hope that I have had a positive influence on my students, developed a strong work ethic, expected responsible behaviour and encouraged them to believe in their varied abilities to become life long learners and critical thinkers.

I am also proud to be an active member of my teachers' federation, the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. At the local level I serve on the executive (a voluntary non-paid position) of the Halton Women Teachers' Association.

I am writing this letter to counteract the campaign of the Harris government against the various teachers' federations in Ontario. When the premier said in his visit to Milton, "It's not teachers I slam, it is their unions," I knew that I needed to write to the editor to inform your readers of some of our activities.

The Halton Women Teachers' Association put on a fashion show recently to raise more than \$2,000 for CAVEAT, and wrote, produced and provided Halton teachers with a curriculum document on TV violence geared for the junior years.

Each year our members organize and run the Red Rose White Ribbon campaign against violence within our

schools and the community to raise awareness of violence in our society and raise money for the Halton Rape Crisis Centre and Halton Women's Place.

For several years now we have sponsored children's sports teams in Oakville, Burlington, Milton, Georgetown and Acton. Each year we sponsor at least three different teams in Halton. We proudly keep the photos of the numerous teams that we have supported.

We offer scholarships and bursaries for both students in our Halton high schools and members' children. Most are in amounts of \$500 and more than a dozen are given out each year.

Oh yes, as all unions we do negotiate with the Halton District School Board for the best possible collective agreement for our members. We do try to promote and advance the image of our teachers, raise the status of the teaching profession and ensure a high standard of professional ethics.

The activities of the Halton Women Teachers' Association that I have listed are just a few of what has been offered over many, many years. All of these activities have been delivered by teachers on their own time with only one paid full-time president.

Now I ask you, does this sound like a union that needs slamming as both our premier and minister of education have suggested time and time again? I am always confident that when people are encouraged to find out all of the information that they will make informed decisions. I let your readers decide.

Linda Middaugh
Sam Sherratt Public School

Pud

by Steve Nease

