

Multi-cultural group upset by immigration resolution

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

A recent resolution tabled by Ward 4 Councillor John Challinor on immigration has received strong reaction from the North Halton Cultural Awareness Council.

Mr. Challinor is calling on the federal government to review its immigration policy, identifying it as the "root cause" of residential growth in the GTA that's putting a strain on municipalities' ability to maintain and develop infrastructure and services.

But North Halton Cultural Awareness Council board member Judy Scannell said immigration isn't to blame for the population explosion.

"He assumes that this rapid growth is mainly a direct result of the 125,000 new immigrants who arrive in the GTA each year," she said. "The implication is that new immigrants to Canada are contributing to the immediate growth being experienced in the town of Milton. Yes, it is true that some new immigrants are coming to Milton, but these are very few. Blaming new immigrants for the construction of new housing makes no sense whatsoever."

She said that developers build homes in Milton because there's a large job market that will attract homebuyers.

But, Mr. Challinor said the information in his resolution isn't an assumption, it's a fact.

"It's not my opinion. The fact is Canada's existing population is not

reproducing quickly enough to provide us with the growth numbers that we're seeing," he said.

He added that he's not blaming new Canadians for anything.

"Again, they have misconstrued the purpose of the resolution," he said.

He explained that he wants to make the immigration policy issue a focal point for debate by Canadians, municipalities and the federal and provincial governments, along with bringing it to the attention of the upper levels of government that they have an obligation to help offset the cost of growth.

Meanwhile, Ms Scannell said that land use planning is the topic that should be looked at.

"Immigration is not the issue that needs to be tackled here," she said. "Changes need to be made in the way land use planning is conducted, and in the way decisions about growth are made with limited community input."

She added that with Canada's declining birth rate and aging population, new immigrants are essential to help ensure the availability of a skilled labour force down the road.

At a recent council meeting, Mr. Challinor explained that he's not advocating no immigration.

"The question is not one of who should be permitted to settle in Canada. Rather, the question is one of how many should be permitted to settle in Canada," he said. "I hope it's not misinterpreted by any-

body."

He said that so far, he's received no complaints on his resolution, just positive feedback that "finally, somebody is standing up."

Mr. Challinor explained the rationale behind his resolution in a letter to council.

It read that for more than a decade "as a direct consequence of federal immigration policy, almost 1.5 million new Canadians have settled in the GTA, requiring that communities like Milton enter into exhaustive, fiscally complex and long-term residential and commercial/industrial development planning and financing initiatives to host supportive housing and employment development so that these new Canadians might settle here."

It went on to say that, "Required by law to develop, finance and maintain infrastructure and program solutions to the challenges created by 125,000 new Canadians settling each year in the GTA, the Province and its municipalities find themselves at one of three stages: at risk of the breaking point financially, at the breaking point financially or broken financially."

The resolution, which council supported, called for the prime minister to establish a royal commission on immigration with a one-year mandate to review the federal government's current immigration policy.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Response expected Wed.

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"Challenge the need to have the degree of growth that's posed exclusively aimed at the Greater Golden Horseshoe," he said. "Have it aimed elsewhere to where it needs it more and could actually handle it with much less negative impact."

A response to the discussion paper from regional and municipal staff is set

to come before regional council Wednesday. A draft of the submission shows that staff think it's a good document, but want to remind the Province that the growth management strategy would be best delivered through regional and local official plan policies.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



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We are asking students and youngsters to do one of the following based on the topic "What Canadian Woman in History most inspires you?"

- Poster Contest - Ages 6 to 12 Years
- Essay Contest - Ages 13 - 18 Years



Contest Rules* - Poster Size 8.5x11 size paper, Essay 500-1200 words. Please describe the woman in Canadian History, her accomplishments, hardships and hurdles she had to overcome and why she inspires you.

Prizes A Gift Certificate to Milton Mall will be awarded to the 1st and 2nd place winners in both age categories.

Deadline for entries is September 24. The winning entries will be published in a Special Feature in the October 5/04 edition of the Canadian Champion.

If you have any questions please contact Joice at the Canadian Champion at 905-878-2341 ext. 241.



The Canadian Champion Submit entries to
191 Main St. E., Milton L9T 4N9
*Full contest rules available on request.

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