

Comment

Contaminated leaders

It's disgraceful that provincial and federal officials would play political hot potato with the lives of 2,000 human beings.

Rather than taking the lead in bringing urgently needed medical care to residents of the remote Kashechewan Reserve — where the water supply has been unfit for years — Ontario Natural Resources Minister David Ramsey spent the early part of this week discussing the critical situation with federal Indian Affairs Minister Andy Scott.

The residents of the northern Ontario community on the shore of James Bay have faced a boil-water advisory for two years and intermittent advisories since 2000 — the same year Walkerton's E-coli-tainted water supply killed seven people.

On Wednesday, Premier Dalton McGuinty finally ordered the evacuation of 1,100 residents — many of whom are infected with the scabies parasite and the bacterial skin infection impetigo — to Sudbury and outlying areas.

Did it have to come this this? In a Toronto Star report, Stan Loutit, grand chief for the Mushkegowuk people who live on the reserve, summarized the

situation as "jurisdictional haggling."

According to Ramsey, it's a question of jurisdictional etiquette. The Province wanted to help out, he said, but found itself without the authority to do so without federal permission. Technically he's right that the reserve falls under federal jurisdiction, but from a strictly humanitarian perspective this reluctance to step on the toes of bureaucrats in Ottawa shows little respect for these people's lives. The Province has known about the region's water woes for the last two years and has done precious little to address this post-Walkerton crisis.

Meanwhile, our federal government is reportedly responsible for building the reserve's 10-year-old water treatment plant downstream from sewage lagoons.

While Ottawa has been supplying bottled water to the region, before last week's evacuation little had been done to correct these deplorable living conditions — comparable to those found in many Third World countries.

The problem was allowed to become a crisis. It didn't have to be that way. We doubt it would have taken government so long to act if it had happened in Milton.



Our Readers Write

Town of Milton needs to start running like a real business and stop wasting money

Dear Editor:

While taking my morning walk around town recently, I noticed new street signs being put up.

What was wrong with the old signs? Are the new signs supposed to justify the increase in taxes town council is going to impose on us?

On the subject of affordable housing

that people have been writing about to the newspaper, will these same people buying these affordable houses be able to afford the taxes?

If private industry ran businesses the way towns are run by politicians, they wouldn't survive for too long.

Agostino Galioto
Milton

Mayor's views on traffic situation disturbing

Dear Editor:

Mayor Gord Krantz's response to the traffic issues in Milton was awe-inspiring.

If this is truly the way he views the subject, we should all be hopeful that the celebration of his 25 years as mayor soon goes hand-in-hand with the celebration of his retirement.

Perhaps he thinks we should all get jobs that allow us to walk across the street to our 'work'. Since very few ribbon-cutting ceremonies are held on Thompson Road, he proba-

bly hasn't seen it since it was bounded by cornfields. The congestion on this street, along with the lack of a left hand-turn signal from northbound Thompson doesn't even allow you to get to public transit facilities.

Not only that, but the situation is extremely dangerous. Because of driver frustration, people are taking ridiculous risks just getting onto the street. I see cars run red lights at the corner of Laurier Avenue and Thompson every time I use that intersection. People are walking on

semi-lit road shoulders when drivers are going onto the shoulder to avoid left-hand turners.

The back-up is so bad that it can only be a matter of time before a car is hit by a train because of gridlock. I can only imagine what it will be like when the latest subdivision is fully occupied, to say nothing of whenever the construction crews at the new Loblaws site get tired of pushing dirt around and actually get the facilities built.

Don Burns
Milton

Milton council just doesn't seem to be listening

Dear Editor,

Every week The Champion publishes letters to the editor that clearly speak to all of the many problems caused by uncontrolled growth in Milton.

Yet it still appears that we're moving blindly ahead, with little or no regard for what is happening to the residents of Milton.

For instance, in the October 14 Champion there was an article about a large residential subdivision with almost 2,000 homes being proposed for land at the northeast corner of Derry and Tremaine roads and another 597 homes being targeted for the south side of

Main Street West, abutting the above-mentioned subdivision.

Is it the developers who are driving our direction, our Town staff or our town council? One thing is crystal clear; it's not the citizens of Milton, for it truly appears that no one is listening to their concerns.

If our current Town council isn't listening to the valid concerns of its electorate, then perhaps we need to change our council. Come next election, I'm sure the citizens of Milton will be heard.

Bob Beyette
Milton

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