

# CASTOR REVIEW

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## Bad Water Alarm

Several cases of gastro enteritis have afflicted residents of a Russell Village subdivision, a condition the homeowner's association blames on the quality of well water.

Tom Evans, president of the Heritage Road Homeowner's Association, says his two children Chantal, 3, and Braden, 2, have suffered bouts of vomiting and diarrhea during the past year.

During that period, Mr. Evans and his wife Esther have gone through three wells trying to find uncontaminated water. They've finally realized success but only with the aid of a water sterilizer.

Other residents — primarily children — have shown symptoms of the illness and residents now believe it's caused by a relatively rare parasite, Mr. Evans said.

The Evans' have scheduled an appointment with an expert on water-related sicknesses to find out exactly what is affecting the children and how serious it can be.

The homeowner's association has been trying for more than a year to get someone — anyone — to sort out what one official has called "a real can of worms".

It has taken pressure and perseverance, but the association has now won a commitment from the Ministry of Environment to finance most of the cost of corrective study which will identify water-related problems for 35-plus affected homeowners.

That commitment wasn't won until Mr. Evans flew to Toronto at his own expense and convinced the ministry of the seriousness of the Russell situation.

The study is to be conducted by Derek Smith, of Water and Earth Science Associates, Ottawa. Mr. Smith expects to begin work shortly.

The consulting hydrologist told the Castor Review that the chemistry of each well in the subdivision will be investigated to determine quality and pollution-causing factors.

Remedial measures will be recommended such as re-installation of wells, reconstruction of septic beds — anything deemed to be required, the consultant said.

Who's to blame for the Heritage Road fiasco? All parties concerned are pointing the finger at each other with none willing to accept any part of the responsibility, Mr. Evans said.

While the association has contemplated legal action to get pure water, it's holding off until Mr. Smith completes his study, the president said.

Russell Village lawyer Gary Barnes, who's well-informed about the situation, told the newspaper he would "sue everybody in sight" if he was an affected homeowner — which he's not.

Those who might be at least partly responsible include Russell Township which authorized the plan of subdivision and must provide adequate surface drainage, the Eastern Ontario Health Unit which certified septic systems now believed to be malfunctioning, the Ministry of Environment which approved wells now suspected to be substandard, Chantal Develop-

ments which supervised the project, and any contractors involved, Mr. Barnes said.

"I would file writs against all parties and it would be up to each one to explain why he shouldn't be held responsible," the lawyer said.

One aspect of the messy situation is clear: the well driller, who has since left the province, did not do his job properly, said Gerry McKenna, Cornwall-based spokesman for the Ministry of Environment.

The possibility of pursuing the man legally is being explored, Mr. McKenna said. The driller is believed to be somewhere in the Maritimes.

Had he not left, the driller would have lost his license based on work done along Heritage Road, the Environment spokesman said.

Wells examined by the ministry have proven to be improperly sealed and cased, probably allowing seepage from weeping-tile beds, he explained.

Mr. Evans' first well was found to be improperly installed. The second well, put in by the same driller, was also below specifications.

The third well, completed earlier this summer by a different contractor, was properly sealed and grouted. However, samples taken from the well are still showing high concentrations of fecal bacteria, Mr. Evans said.

Albert Belanger, MLA for Prescott-Russell, feels the Ministry of Environment should devise a system whereby it can

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### SUPER SUNFLOWER

Mrs. Lark Croteau and children, Emily, 4, far left, and Marissa, 6 are dwarfed by this giant sunflower that shot up on the Greely farm of J.L. Herbert, Mrs. Croteau's father-in-law. The big fella stands 9 feet. (Photo by Rowsell)

## A memo to the Chief

by Thomas Van Dusen

**Editor's Note: Mr. Van Dusen, publisher of the Castor Review, is a former aid to John Diefenbaker and was his long-time friend. Mr. Van Dusen was an honorary pall-bearer at the former prime-minister's funeral and is a literary executor of the Diefenbaker estate. The following is Mr. Van Dusen's account of the Chief's train trip to his final resting place.**

I think you would have enjoyed it all. After all, it was you who designed it. You would have enjoyed speeding through the towns and villages, the waiting automobiles, the farmers standing by the fences, or sitting on their tractors, heads bowed in respect.

The crowds on the station platforms, regardless of the hour, eight thousand in Winnipeg, equal to 1965. The old power is still there. As Joe Clark said at the graveside, it was a homecoming, not a departure.

The two caskets, side by side as the guns boomed out in salute and the Indians set up the mournful chant to a departed warrior; you would have approved of that, too. A special touch that you would have loved; like the ducks winging

into the Prairie sunset as the last guns sounded.

The people who gathered to pay final respects at the official service in Ottawa, the diplomatic corps, many of them representatives of the black nations who had not forgotten your denunciation of a system that deprived them of all rights but the right to suffer.

At one stroke you created a new order of Knights Templar in the pall-bearers, active and honorary, whose supreme dignity for whatever years they may have left will be that they marched, by your choice, beside your casket.

They had gathered, the loyal retainers, the swordsmen and spearmen of past campaigns, the foot soldiers and cavalry from Newfoundland to British Columbia. To Prince Albert came they and embarked on the train and filled its corridors and dining cars and lounges with the sheen of their spears.

A chosen crew, a hand-picked aggregation, those whose support had never failed or quivered an iota in spite of the jostling years. They were aboard the train and later, in the procession through the streets of Saskatoon and at the graveside.

They stood grim-faced and silent as the casket moved off the train on the straining shoulders of red-jacketed R.C.M.P., who knew what the force owed to John Diefenbaker. The railroad men gathered in little clumps on the cars, talking over the days when the Chief rode with them. "I knew him when . . ." You would have liked that, too.

The uniformed men from the House of Commons, a special guard of honour, without much sleep for 36 hours, glorying in the chance to stand by the Chief; the media, some of whom had known you when; many giving up the pretence of covering it as a news event and simply engrossing themselves as part of the ceremony. The cameramen mutually agreeing among themselves to take shots of each other as the ceremonies unfolded. That was all part of it, too, Chief.

As the train went speeding on and dusk closed over the silent land, they gathered in the cars to tell stories and reminisce, to drink and sing and go over the old fights: "I campaigned with him in '65". . . Remember the helicopter in '74? . . . One day, he said to me, you've got to come out . . . He was good to me . . . He told me, don't ever do

that again . . ."

And on and on, as the wheels went singing over the rails, on and on into eternity.

After it was over, on the plane coming back, it went on still, the stories, and remembrance, summing up the past, joining it to the present.

"I heard on the radio he was elected leader of the party. I sent him a telegram. I got back a nice letter and carried it around for days, showing it to people. Finally, I decided to run . . ."

"I wasn't in his party but respected and valued his friendship . . ."

There they were, the stalwarts of the Diefenbaker years, in many walks of life now; holding one thing in common, like a single scarlet thread running through the talk and comradeship and wondering about the future, their undeviating fealty to the Chief and his ideals, ideals of which they were now custodians.

Nobody would have appreciated more than you, Chief, Charlie Lynch in the private car playing his harmonica and the others singing. Paproski, Mazankowski, Epp, Guthrie, Aldred, Coates, Hnatyshyn, Hellyer, O'Sullivan, and the others who came in and

went out and came back and went away again. More signing on the aircraft, with the Speaker of the House leading them on.

I have a sneaking feeling, Chief, that if you witnessed it all, and I have no doubt you did, your only regret might be that it wasn't an election campaign when all that wonderful support could have been turned to political advantage.

There was certainly some of that feeling aboard the train and the aircraft as seasoned veterans of uncounted battles, from time to time glanced uneasily over their shoulders as though to make sure they might not be interrupted by your flashing eye and reverberating eloquence.

It's over and you, along with Olive, before the eyes of your family and long-time friends, with the words of the Prime Minister echoing under the Prairie sky, have been confided to the warm embrace of the Saskatchewan earth.

There was no one in the group around the last resting place who didn't feel that what you gave us and what you represented to all Canadians will go on and on, green in our hearts and memories. That's all for now, Chief.