

THE LAST WORD

I am holding back from crassly saying: **"TOLD YOU SO."** The events on Thursday September 22nd. at The Picton Community Centre could be called an epitaph to our Picton Memorial Hospital. The centre was filled to overflowing and my congratulations go out to The Fire Chief who, as he said, "laid his neck on the line," to allow the meeting to continue with a crowd that was about double the fire rating of the building. How many were there? I don't think it matters whether it was 500 or 1000 or even more. What matters is that it was too little too late. Those who sat at the head table were presiding over a wake.

The people of Prince Edward County have, by those who represent us on QHC Board, been given to believe that everything was O.K. and our interests were being looked after. Not so, as we found out on Thursday. What I cannot understand is how County members of QHC could attend committee meetings; could even move motions and give their approval to actions which, in the words of our doctors, will close our hospital. I heard words like "I didn't know that would be the effect of this motion...." Or, "It took us by surprise," or, "that's not what we voted for...." and many more.

Enough of the rhetoric. We have heard too much of it these past months. The plain fact is that our representatives have been caught with their pants down

and are scrambling to repair the damage to their images. Mr. Kramp must have been smiling all the way home following that meeting, since everything he heard that night added fuel to his statement "The Health Care Status Quo Isn't Working!" Well Daryl....sorry to burst your bubble, but IT IS WORKING, if you allow for the fact that it needs a "tune-up" before it will run smoothly again.

What might that "Tune-Up" consist of? Let me give you some ideas.

- 1) Open Management style to be adopted by QHC. Be prepared to substantiate your key decisions to the local taxpayer.
- 2) Perhaps a more equitable sharing of resources between the hospitals. I had a strong sense from one doctor that his aim was to have one hospital only (Belleville) and concentrate all resources at that one point. A decade or so ago Picton Hospital had about 80 beds in operation. Today the number is less that 40 and yet our population has increased!
- 3) Wage restraint. It is easy to blame Ontario Wide agreements with labor unions on double digit wage increases. These are good while they last however, your wage increase my friend is and MUST be costing jobs. Still feel good about your increase when you think about that? YOU might be next.
- 4) Utilization of local resources to fix or supply local needs. Does Picton Hospital staff need to phone Trenton when a toilet blocks or a light bulb needs changed? If this is truly what is happening then it needs to stop. NOW!
- 5) Admit when contracts are NOT working. I have heard so many complaints about food that was unappetizing and even inedible. I have seen for my own eyes tea and coffee that arrives at the patient's bedside tepid at best, and in my view, undrinkable. We have caterers in Picton who could supply the hospital's food needs. Let's see if they can make a competitive quote to supply this service. If QHC refuses to do this then I have alarm bells ringing in my mind about other contract issues.
- 6) On the other side of the coin, let's UNDERSTAND what the QHC Board is up against in terms of providing the services we require within budget parameters. QHC is a VERY complex \$155 million dollars a year business with no simplistic fix. The problems need to be tackled one at a time, and we need to learn to live WITHIN our resources. No NEW buildings when space exists in alternative locations. Consider renting rather

PUZZLE SOLUTION



ACROSS

- 1 CUR - TAILED
- 6 UN - DER
- 9 PUNCH
- 10 SUR- (CHAR) -GE
- 11 SEE - PAGES
- 12 T- (ASS) -EL (let rev.)
- 13 S - WAY

- 18 UN- (DRESS) -ED (anag. nude)
- 19 ACES (anag. case)
- 21 BUDGE - T
- 23 M- (IS - C) -OUNT
- 26 REENACTED (anag. decent era)
- 27 NOTES
- 28 RID- (G) -E
- 29 MAN - I - CURES

DOWN

- 1 CAPES
- 2 RANGE - LAND
- 3
- 4 LIST - ENERS (anag. sneer)
- 5 DARN
- 6 UPHEAVAL (anag. have Paul)
- 7 D - ARES
- 8 REENLIST (anag. listener's)
- 13 SLUM - BE (R) -ER
- 15 B- (EDR (anag. red)) -IDDEN
- 16 EN - COUNTER
- 17 SERENADE (anag. ears need)
- 20 SC- ENIC (anag. nice)
- 22 D - READ
- 24 T - ASKS
- 25 STEM