

opinion

"Let the men get back to work!"

I can't help but to sit here at my typewriter with a smirk on my face. I just got off the phone after speaking with a rather historical person. That person was none other than Don MacAlpine.

The story on the Nipigon M.N.R. employee, is included in this week's "News". I tried to be 'unbiased' while writing it, however it was extremely difficult to do that.

I have never made it a secret that I fully supported MacAlpine's decision to 'leak information' to MPP Jack Stokes. It was a hard decision for him to make. I know. I was in Nipigon on the front line, when the war commenced! Don is well known around the area as being an honest man who believes in what he does. It took a lot of guts for him to give Stokes information on the Black Bay timber allocations. He was prepared to suffer the consequences when he informed him. And he has.

He stood on his own beliefs, concerning the allocations ... and by the looks of the results ... he was standing on firm ground. And he along with many solid supporters have been standing on that same ground since March 31, 1982; the day that Don was fired for "breaking his oath of secrecy".

Oath of Secrecy. Is it a good policy? For many it is. For others, it's a mountain standing in the way of honesty and our future forests. He was concerned about the timber allocations. He knew his job and he did it well and had proof of his beliefs. Local and area independent cutters stood their ground alongside of him. They knew the "proof was in the pudding" - so to speak. In this case, the proof was in the cruise surveys that Don had personally conducted.

But the M.N.R. was slapped in the face. A direct slap made public. In fact it was one of the biggest scandals that ever hit Nipigon. Headlines of every newspaper and radio station were reading - "M.N.R. fires Nipigon forester" - "MacAlpine fired from Ministry for leaking information".

While all this was going on, the people of Nipigon and for miles around were busy trying to assist the unfortunate government employee. He was given their full support - verbally, physically and even financially. They set up a bank account for him and his family, who were hit hard by the Ministry's decision to fire him. Families must still be housed, fed and clothed - even when daddy is fired. A benefit dance was organized in his honour. And his union gave him their full support. He was presented with a ways and a means to fight back. And fight he did!

He thought the fight was over in November when he won his reinstatement. But it wasn't. **Round #1** - He received back pay (all but one week) and he was placed back on the Ministry payroll. **Round #2** - M.N.R. appealed his reinstatement. More bouts - more time - more hardship - more waiting ... for everyone. **Round #3** - a panel of three judges ruled against the M.N.R., deciding that MacAlpine's reinstatement was indeed to be upheld.

Results? MacAlpine is the winner - the victor - he won this round. Everyone is cheering! Someone has finally fought with the government and WON!

But is this the end, or will there be a **Round #4?** Will the M.N.R. appeal this decision too? Let's hope not. Public embarrassment is bad enough the first time.

As a supporter of MacAlpine was recently heard to say following the panel's decision - "It's time to call it quits, and let the men get back to work."

That folks ... says it all!

Arthur Black

Water, water everywhere

That young partridge hunter, Ronald Holmes, didn't have much going for him when he got lost in the bush a couple of weeks ago. He had no food, no coat, no compass, no bedroll, and only a book of matches too soggy to light.

He did have one factor in his favour, though. He had the good fortune to be lost in Northwestern Ontario bush, which meant that whatever else happened to him, he wouldn't die from lack of water.

The experts figure an uninjured person in fairly decent weather can last up to three weeks in our bush, thanks to the abundance of water. As it turned out, a thinner Ronald Holmes walked out under his own steam after six days and nights.

If he'd been lost in say, Death Valley or the Australian Outback or the Sahara or the Gobi, he'd have already been dead for four days. Dehydration.

Strange thing, water. We've got so much of it here in Canada that we more than take it for granted - we curse it.

Water in the basement, water in the gas line, water leaking through the shingles. Curse, curse, curse.

Canada has 35 per cent of all the fresh water in the world. A good part of Northern Ontario sits on the north shore of Lake Superior, the largest single body of fresh water on the planet, and within Northern Ontario we have so many lakes and ponds and rivers and streams that Statistics Canada can't even count them.

And what do we do with this embarrassment of riches? We waste it just about as fast as we can. Actually, "waste" is too meek a word for what we do with our most precious natural resource. "Squander" doesn't even capture it. Consider: it takes a gallon of water *per day* to grow a single cornstalk. You know that hard-boiled egg you tapped into at breakfast this morning? It took 120 gallons to put it on the table. A single bushel of wheat takes nearly 15,000 gallons of water to bring to maturity.

Okay, most of the foregoing comes from rainfall, over which we humans have little if any control. But take a look at some of the industrial uses of water:

- Production of a single automobile: 100,000 gallons.

- Production of a single set of tires: 30,000 gallons.

Even the humble toilet is a symbol of our water profligacy. In a speech, the Duke of Edinburgh called it "the biggest waste of water in the country by far. You spend half a pint and flush two gallons."

The truly shameful thing about the way we treat water is that we're burning the candle at both ends. Not only do we waste unthinkable vast quantities of the stuff, we also allow sewage, pesticides, dioxins and sundry carcinogens to pollute the stuff we haven't gotten around to mis-using yet.

On top of all that of course, there's the spectre of Acid Rain. In the past few years, environ-

mentalists have brought to our attention the fact that, thanks to our nearly non-existent policies regarding industrial pollution, we are gradually turning tens of thousands of our lakes into vinegar.

Ah well, so what? There's still plenty of fresh water around for everybody, right?

Not for everybody. I direct your attention to a tiny, recent news item datelined Saudi Arabia. The news story tells us that in some parts of that oil-drenched sheikdom, water is now selling for \$48 a barrel.

It's the first time in history that the price of water has exceeded the price of oil.

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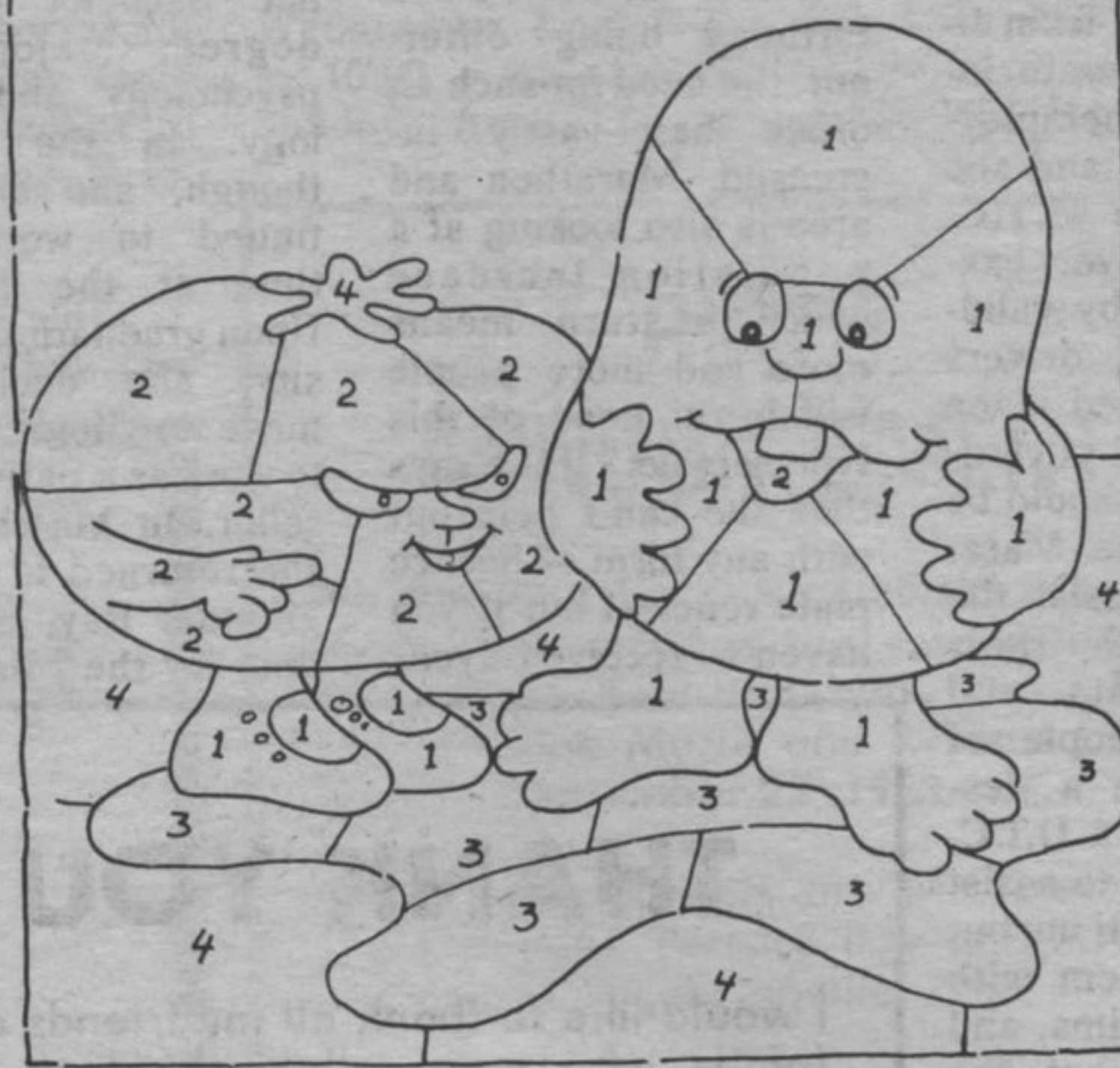
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Hole in the Fence

No. 11 Potato falls in the mud

"Why it is Potato," Tomato squeals.



Colour by code: 1 = Brown 3 = Purple
 2 = Red 4 = Green

In today's story, the Vegetables learn how wrong snap judgments can be.

Quite some time has passed and Eggplant has been banished to the edge of the Garden because he is purple. He has to live all by himself. No one even tries

to be his friend. Then one day a strange thing happens.

Potato is running along to meet his friends, when suddenly he trips and falls into a huge muddy puddle. "Now I'm all dirty," he sighs, as he pulls himself out

of the puddle, covered with mud. What Potato doesn't know is that the mud has turned him purple. "I can't stop now," he thinks. "I'm late already." He runs on and finally finds his friends. "Hi, guys," he says in a friendly voice. Mr. Cauliflower is shocked and snarls: "If you know what's good for you, Eggplant, you won't come to this part of the Garden." "I'm not Eggplant," says Potato, surprised. "I'm Potato." "Yeah, sure, Purple-Freak. You must think we're blind," taunts Carrot. "How dare you even speak to us," sniffs Tomato. "We don't want any of your kind here," bellows Cucumber. "So go away." "Yeah, get lost," adds Onion. Even Onion, Potato's best friend, doesn't recognize him.

"But it's me, Potato," protests Potato. "Liar!" snarls Cucumber, and he throws a huge bucket of water at him. What a surprise! All the mud washes off, and there stands Potato. "Why, it is Potato," Tomato squeals. "Oh, Potato, I'm so sorry," says Onion. "I didn't recognize you. You really did look just like Eggplant." "I don't believe it," Mr. Cauliflower says. "That's not Potato. It's Eggplant playing a trick. Don't talk to him." "Oh, you're so silly, Mr. Cauliflower," says Tomato. "Come on, Potato. Let's go, everyone."

The Hole in the Fence, a 132-page colour illustrated storybook published by Health and Welfare Canada, was developed in cooperation with provincial alcohol drug commissions foundations. It is available for \$4.50 through local bookstores or by sending a cheque money order payable to the Receiver General of Canada to: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0S9. A family guide to this preventive drug education and living skills program contains story resumes, colouring pictures, home crafts and discussion ideas. It is available free, on request, from **The Hole in the Fence**, Box 8888, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 3J2. Egalement disponible en français sous le titre "Mes amis, mon jardin".

