

Letters to the editor

Water is not a trade issue, says minister

The following is an excerpt from a letter sent by the Honourable John Crosbie, Minister for International Trade.

Dear editor,
Canada's water is not for sale. The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) does not obligate or compel Canada in any way to export water to the United States, and in no way provides for the large scale export of Canada's water resources. In fact, the large scale export of water is not even covered by the FTA.

There has been considerable attention paid recently to the issue of the export of Canada's fresh water resources. Critics of the Agreement have concluded that because water is listed in the Tariff Schedule that accompanies the FTA, then the U.S. has full access to Canadian waters.

Nothing can be further from the truth. large scale interbasin transfers of water are an environmental matter, not a trade matter. A brief examination of the facts should clarify the Federal Government's position on this important issue.

environmental issue considered
The Federal Water Policy clearly states that the Government of Canada will not permit the large scale export of water or the diversion of Canadian rivers to the United States.

Nothing in the FTA affects the Federal Water Policy, which was announced by the Honourable Tom McMillan, Minister of the environment, on November 5, 1987. There is nothing in the FTA which prevents or hinders the Government from fully implementing the Federal Water Policy by legislation or otherwise.

Both the FTA and the Federal Water Policy were developed in keeping with provision of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which enables a country to restrict the export of a natural resource for reasons of environmental protection. These

are precisely the grounds for Canada's policy against water exports.

The fact that the Policy was announced four weeks after the completion of the Free Trade negotiations confirms that the Water Policy will continue to govern Canada's approach to the management of this precious natural resource.

Critics have suggested that since water was not explicitly excluded from the FTA, then the United States has some kind of claim to Canadian waters and that Canada will somehow be forced to sell huge volumes of water to the Americans.

Such a misguided assumption clearly demonstrates how a complex issue can be so poorly understood. large scale water exports have never been part of our trading relationship with the United States.

How can a trade agreement exclude a commodity or substance that is not even traded, particularly when Government policy forbids its export?

The argument suggesting that fresh water is implicitly or explicitly part of the FTA is largely meaningless. Nothing the FTA or GATT can force Canada to export water if it chooses not to. The Federal Water Policy makes the Federal Government's position on this issue very clear.

Even the Americans recognize that our policy prohibiting inter-

basin transfers of water is unaffected by the FTA. Canada has never been formally approached by any jurisdiction in the United States regarding the purchase and large scale export of water by diversion. They know our answer: "No."

The Government of Canada is fully aware of this special significance of our water for Canadians. Water has been, and will continue to be fully protected.

The Free Trade Agreement, the GATT, the Federal Water policy, and our ability to introduce legislation if necessary, all confirm Canada's ability to make decisions on the wise use of our water resources. The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement is no threat to Canada's water resources. large scale water exports will not happen.

Sincerely,
John C. Crosbie
Minister for International Trade

CLASSIFIEDS
\$5.00 -- two weeks
25 words or less
Prepaid in Advance
Deadline
Thursday 5:00

Birth Announcement



Hello! My name is Rylee Kristen Robson and I arrived July 21, 1988, 6lbs 5ozs, at the Port Arthur General Hospital. My Mom and Dad are Jenny & Wally Robson



Township of Schreiber

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
August 10, 1988
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

at
Community Hall - Recreation Complex

A public information meeting, will be held August 10, 1988 in the Community Hall, Recreation Complex, to provide the citizens of Schreiber with an opportunity to examine the details of the new zoning by-law and to provide comments on the by-law, if appropriate.

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Property owners call for tax refund and lowering of tax base in unorganized areas

Dear editor,

The Ontario Legislature passed Bill 100, which eliminates the arbitration process between the town clerks setting our school taxes.

We are pleased that the Minister of Education removed this injustice done to the taxpayers of Unorganized Areas (Localities). Unfortunately, our over-payment of taxes and the inflated tax base we were forced into over the past four years was never addressed in the Legislation and is of great concern to many of us.

As an example, the increases in taxes to us in comparison to Terrace Bay on a 100 dollar basis of paid taxes are as follows:

Terrace Bay	
1984 - \$100 at 12.5%	— \$112.50
1985 - ' 2.6%	— \$115.42
1986 - ' 5%	— \$121.19
1987 - ' 7%	— \$129.67

Unorganized Areas	
1984 - \$100 at 32%	— \$132.00
1985 - ' 20%	— \$158.40
1986 - ' 7.5%	— \$170.25
1987 - ' 32%	— \$224.73

Terrace Bay

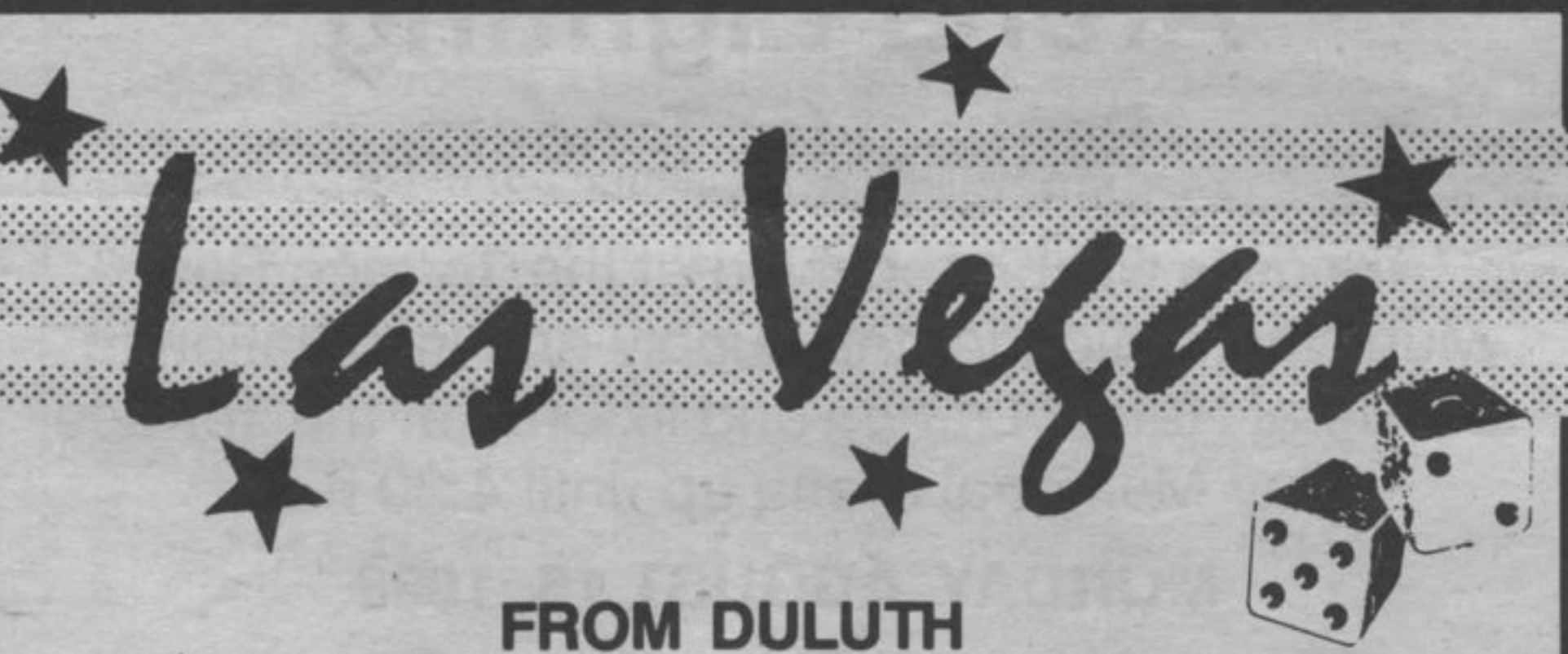
During that period, the taxes for Manitowadge and Marathon went down. If we accept the status quo, this will be the starting point for further tax increases with the first one this fall.

We would like to know from the Minister of Education why the Tax Question was not dealt with at the same time Bill 100 was introduced.

Bill 100 demonstrates clearly that we were not treated fairly, so a logical conclusion would be a tax refund for the previous years and a lowering of the tax base.

A petition will be circulated to property owners of unorganized areas in the Lake Superior Board of Education District asking for their signatures. **Charles R. Kneipp**

i . murray dodick
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Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7C 1B7
Telephone (807) 622-7726



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