



Schreiber O.P.P. Constables, left to right, Paul Crowder, Jim (JJ) Johnson, Ian Macpherson, and Bert Logan joined in the Schreiber Winter Carnival spirit by building this police car made entirely of snow. Their entry tied for first place with the mantle clock entered by the grade three class at Holy Angels. Photo by Dave Chmara

## Insufficient number of auto insurance companies in Northern Ontario - Pouliot

Gilles Pouliot, M.P.P. for the riding of Lake Nipigon, is concerned with the lack of availability of auto insurance in Northern Ontario.

This is a letter he sent to Mr. J. J. Wilbee, Superintendent of Insurance, Ministry of Financial Institutions.

I am writing to you to apprise you of some of the problems that are facing customers and agent brokers in the auto insurance field in Northern Ontario.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago, there were more than fifty companies offering this type of insurance in the North; now, due to mergers, buyouts and closures, this number has been reduced to no more than twenty.

Even Canadian owned companies are neglecting this market in smaller communities in the North and concentrating on larger population centres.

Auto insurance companies are closing service offices in Thunder Bay and attempting to service the northern market from Toronto to the detriment of consumers and agents in smaller cities and towns.

When a company is issued a licence to sell auto insurance in Ontario, who guarantees the consumer adequate service at competitive rates?

There are numerous instances where companies have covered a driver for automobile insurance at the preferred rate (6 star) for five years or more. When he or she makes a claim or is involved in a driving infraction, they simply cancel his insurance.

Agent brokers in the North attempt to intervene on behalf of their clients but in many cases are unable to convince underwriters in Toronto that they have a responsibility to provide coverage. Customers in Toronto can shop around where there are more than 150 companies in the auto insurance business. This is not the case in the North.

With life insurance, a policy is non contestable after two years. Auto insurance companies operating in the North are cancelling policies if the insured has more than one comprehensive claim in a 12 month period even where the driver has not been convicted of a driving infraction. Companies have the option of increasing premiums on

not be allowed to cancel a policy as long as the Ministry of Transportation and law enforcement officers deem him to be a safe driver. Where does your office come into the picture? When the province issues a licence to a company to sell auto insurance, does your office insist that legitimate market needs are met?

Rate books provided to agent brokers list premium charges for drivers with one to six years of driving experience. The only rates the agent is allowed to use are those where the client has 4, 5 or 6 years of driving experience. Rate manuals have surcharges for those convicted for a driving infraction but companies are not using them, they simply cancel the policy.

One such case involved a twenty year old man who has been driving his father's vehicle since age 16 as an occasional driver. He recently purchased his own car and applied to the same company for auto insurance coverage. His application revealed two minor convictions and he was issued a policy. Within a week his policy was cancelled for allegedly failing to disclose convictions. Apparently, had two speeding violations, two seat belt infractions and went through a red light over a three year period. Ministry of Transportation violations stay on the record for 2 years, with insurance companies, it's 3 years. This causes confusion and resulted in cancellation of the policy. His agent has to deal with a company in Toronto making it extremely difficult to convince the underwriter that they have an obligation to provide coverage to a driver licenced to operate a vehicle by the Ministry of Transportation.

Most companies are interested in servicing only the accident free drivers not the customer who really needs the coverage. If the province

and the police allow people to drive, companies licenced to sell insurance should be obliged to provide coverage even when surcharges must be applied. They must not be allowed to abdicate their responsibility to provide adequate coverage for a service that has been declared mandatory by the province. Insurance is a service industry controlled by companies who are not meeting their obligations.

One company FAFCO who will not serve our market in our part of Ontario has requested a rate increase of 50% to compensate for underselling the competition for the past four years.

Some companies will not deal with a client who has had a claim against his auto insurance policy unless they are allowed to underwrite his dwelling insurance, a more attractive line because of the lesser risk.

Where can the consumer go to get adequate coverage? Where can an agent broker go when his efforts to serve his clients are continually thwarted by underwriters in ivory towers in Toronto?

The present situation in the North has become so frustrating for consumers and agents that it is an invitation to drive without adequate coverage. This would be a disaster.

Let the police and the Ministry of Transportation monitor and control the driving public to ensure maximum safety and minimize personal and property damage.

Your office has the responsibility to see that insurance companies live up to their mandate of providing coverage to an adequate level at competitive rates for everyone in Ontario wherever they may live.

Your advice and assistance in this important and urgent matter will be greatly appreciated by consumers and agents alike.

## Parenting a skill which can be learned - study

Canadians believe that parenting is a skill that can be learned, according to a recent Decima Research study for the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse (IPCA).

The telephone survey of 1305 Canadian parents and potential parents reveals that Canadians believe that the main sources for learning about child rearing are one's own parents and families, one's childhood experiences and available written material.

This research was conducted in order to determine Canadian attitudes towards the raising of children, child discipline, punishment, and child mistreatment, as a way of developing meaningful and useful parenting information.

The survey indicated that 25 per cent of Canadian parents admit they "occasionally come close to losing control" and 9% "often come close to losing control". However, the majority of parents said that they are more likely to keep calm, with 46% indicating they "hardly ever come close to losing control" and 19% saying

they "never come close". Almost half of the respondents indicate that to avoid losing control they walk away.

Most parents believe that child discipline should consist of guiding, teaching and correcting their children rather than punishing them and that it is possible to raise children with little or no physical punishment. In fact, 80% believe that physical punishment is harmful to children and most believe that it often leads to injury.

The majority of respondents define child mistreatment in a broad sense and not just as physical abuse, with more than 80% indicating concern with the long term emotional effects of "repeated yelling and swearing".

Dr. Robert Bates, Pediatrician at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto and Credit Valley Hospital, Mississauga, and Chairperson, Board of Directors, IPCA states that "IPCA's challenge is to encourage Canadians to consider positive ways of parenting through a broad-based campaign aimed at grandparents and parents".

## AT YOUR SERVICE



Gilles Pouliot, MPP Lake Nipigon

**"Helping you is my job!"**

CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-268-7192  
Monday to Friday  
During Business Hours

## NAIDA'S Floral Art & BRIDAL CENTRE



- \* WEDDING STATIONARY
- \* FRESH OR SILK FLOWERS
- \* HEADPIECES, HATS & ACCESSORIES
- \* UNIQUE CAR TOPS & CAKES
- \* SATIN SHOES (COLOURED GLAZED & WATERPROOFED)
- \* WEDDING GIFT IDEAS

RENTAL DECORATIONS FOR CHURCH & HALL  
Including Rental Cakes  
For out-of-town Weddings

**"We welcome out-of-town weddings"**

We are now performing a unique variety of extra personalized services for weddings  
Call for details anytime!

Reserve Naida's early to ensure that all of our Professional Attention will be spotlighted on your important day!  
Consultation by appointment only

NAIDA'S FLORAL ART  
208 Simpson St.

**622-4673**

## FISH SUPPLIES

Now available at  
**PHIL'S PET  
BIRDS & SUPPLIES**

137 Drummond, Schreiber  
**824-2354**