

44,000 Truckloads of Radioactive Waste

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lanes of an Interstate Highway for eight days, until the clean up was complete. The fire chief, the first person to arrive at the scene, has since died of lung cancer, from breathing radioactive material spilled on the highway.

The Siting Task Force estimates it will take about five years, or 44,000 truck trips, to haul all the low level wastes from souther Ontario to a new site. Resnikoff says there are 4.5 large truck accidents in North America

for every million miles travelled. That means there will be up to 120 accidents involving the movement of the low-level wastes, depending on how far the new site is from Port Hope. Yet, the Siting Task Force makes no mention of the cost of cleaning up such accidents, in its estimate of transportation costs.

Resnikoff is complimentary of the voluntary site selection process being followed in Canada, calling it "much more enlightened

than the site selection process in the United States." In the U.S., several possible sites are picked State governments, and the communities that are the weakest politically will end up getting the site, whether they like it or not. In Canada, Resnikoff observes, "you're allowed to hear opposing viewpoints, and come to your own judgement about what you want to do. It's a much fairer process."

In Atikokan, people in the audience, including MP Ian Angus, pointed out that the communities along the transportation corridor aren't involved in the site selection process, and won't have a say whether they want those 44,000 trucks rumbling by their homes for five years. Resnikoff added that the unborn-people living five generations from now-don't have a say either. That's why he's urging the creation of storage systems, rather than thinking about any waste site as "permanent disposal", for wastes that will remain radioactive for at least 10,000 years. He agrees with another nuclear critic, Norm Rubin of Energy Probe in Toronto, that new technologies will no doubt be invented in the next two or three centuries to deal again with the wastes we leave

behind. He suggests we should not make it hard for them, by burying the wastes in trenches and forgetting about them as the decades go by.

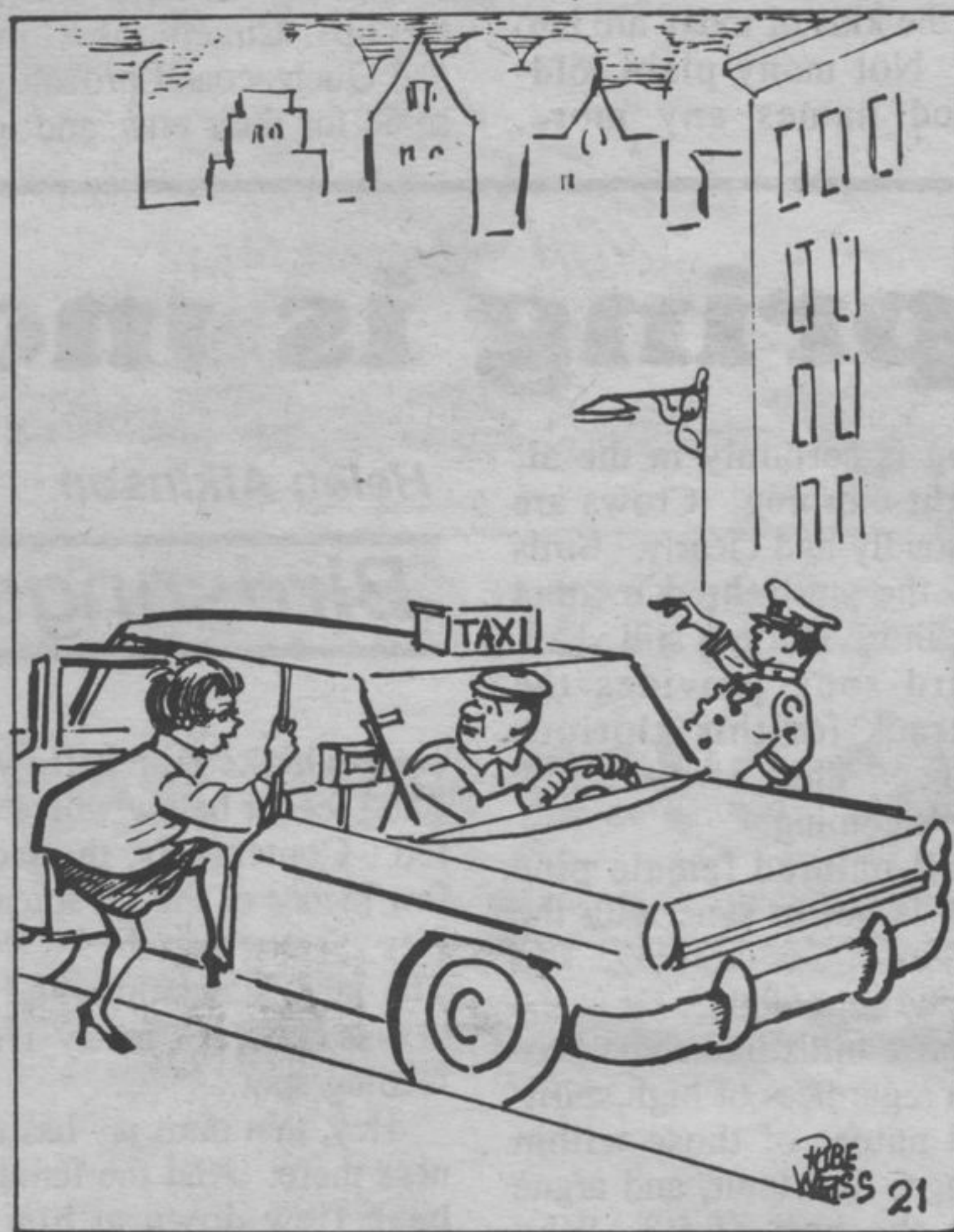
Resnikoff suggests constructing cement storage vaults, partially buried underground, surrounded by fences, and guarded 24 hours a day. "You have to be eternally vigilant. You have to continue to watch the material, repackage it, to make sure that the waste storage system remains safe." If that is done, Resnikoff concludes, it is possible to have a safe storage site-one that would not allow any radioactivity to escape into the air, or into the ground water. "If you maintain a cover, you have a liner, no material is leaking out, no radiation gets

into the environment, in essence, no environmental impact, then the leakage is zero. If it's uncovered, then radon gas can come out and of into basements or could be inhaled, or could leak into ground water. Is the facility going to be fenced? Initially, its going to be fenced. But at some facilities in the States, fences deteriorated fields. Kids were sliding into second base, kicking up radioactive dust."

But with "eternal vigilance" at the site, Resnikoff suggests it is possible to have an "environmentally friendly" storage site. But he's also urging that such a site should be close to where the waste is now, so "you've also reduced the risks from transporations."

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