

Farm family feels for Manitoba flood victims

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Ministry of Agriculture.

"Canada is a leader in the world in agricultural productivity. We've made astronomical advancement and yet now they're taking money away. There's a real concern."

The 265-acre family farm, located on Kennedy Road and Bloomington Road, has been in the family for years.

It's where Paul was born. And, it's home to his family. His wife Thea, and children Bryant, 17, Michelle, 15, Natalie, 13 and Bradley, 10 understand that the family farm is an institution in Canada.

The family knows that in order for future generations of Hulshofs to cut a living out of this Stouffville farm, strong governments are needed in Ottawa.

This election campaign while under way in the middle of the farm's planting season, it's important by all pa

Hulshof is, however, upset that Prime Minister Jean Chretien asked that the writ be dropped so

early in his mandate.

"I disagree with the call," said Hulshof. "It's too early. He (Chretien) didn't take into account the situation in Manitoba—That's an all out tragedy. From an agricultural perspective, it's devastating. It's affecting thousands of acres of agricultural land. There's widespread contamination. With this campaign on, what are we, as a country, doing about it?" he said. On Thursday, the federal government handed over a \$25 million cheque the first of a few to be given to help the flood victims. Meanwhile, the Reform Party leader Preston Manning accused the prime minister of exploiting the people of Manitoba.

As Canada enters the 21st century, leadership is important, especially on a global scale, Hulshof said. The leaders of all four political parties impress Hulshof. They've all got what it takes, he said.

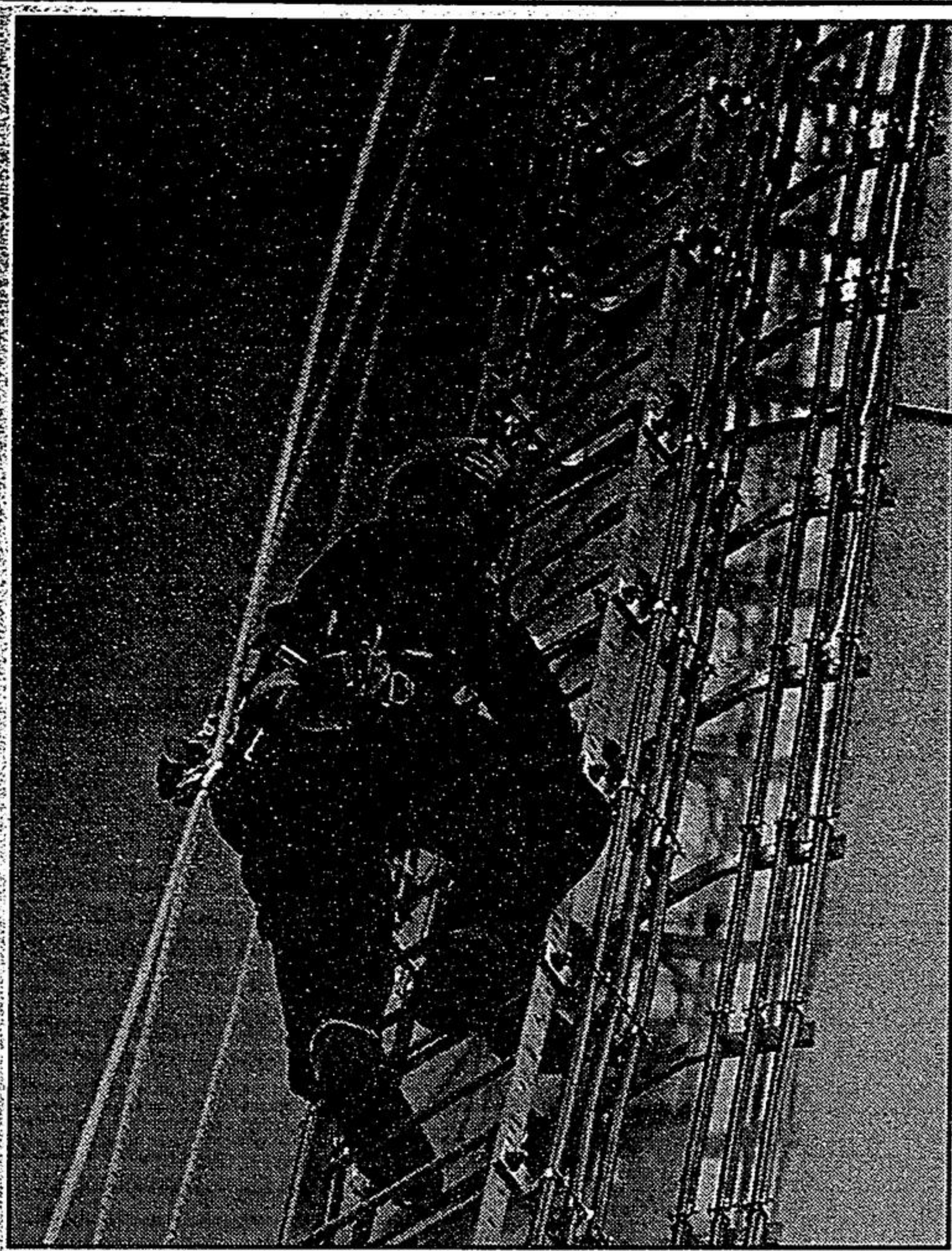
As well as agricultural issues, the Hulshofs will keep their eyes on how education fits into party platforms.

Bryant and Michelle attend Stouffville District Secondary School, while Natalie and Bradley go to St. Marks Separate School. Federal money earmarked for education is, indeed, important for this family.

While the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, the Reform Party and the New Democratic Party seem to down play the national unity issue, Thea Hulshof is definitely not ignoring it. A native of Ayres Cliff, which is an eastern township of Quebec, Thea, 45, is most concerned about the country and especially the fate of her home province.

When the Hulshofs vote in Oak Ridges, it will not be done without soul searching. "We got fooled last time," said Hulshof. "I expect the voters in Stouffville will pay a lot closer attention this time out. I know I will."

When it comes to marking the ballot, Hulshof said he thinks he's eliminated the Reform Party and the NDP as a choice. "Yet, you never know. It all depends on how the campaign goes."



ON THE WAY UP: A crew from GTI Telecom of Scarborough finish the electrical innards on this Microcel Cellular telephone communication tower on Ringwood Drive in Stouffville recently.

Photo by SJOERD WITTEVEEN

York public board's task force meets to 'heal' contract dispute rift

In Richmond Hill last week, a collection of parents, trustees, teachers, school board officials and teachers' representatives met for the first time.

Its members were chosen to answer a question: Where did negotiations between elementary teachers' unions and York Region's public school board go wrong?

Education Director Bill Hogarth announced plans for the task force

after teachers came within hours of a strike last month, saying he hoped it would "clear the air."

Superintendent Jaimini Randev, who chairs the group, says he and two local union presidents chose its 18 members out of 50 people who applied.

The task force, which met one week ago, will review what happened during negotiations, collect opinions, identify issues of concern

and find ways to communicate better in the future, Randev said.

If it can improve relations between teachers, parents and the board, then the exercise will be worth doing, says a school trustee in the group.

"I think there are probably a lot of hurt people coming out these negotiations," said Ann Forfar of Unionville.

"I think both sides did things

wrong," added trustee Harry Bowes of Stouffville, also a member. "Even though we had strikes before, they weren't as bitter as this."

Hogarth has asked the group to give the board its recommendations in June, and pledged its report would be passed to Ontario's Education Minister, John Snobelen.

Not all kudos for the provincial budget

Durham/York MPP Julie Munro's budget address was met with a variety of viewpoints from members of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

Munro stated at the Wednesday morning breakfast meeting that the province's Tuesday budget was filled with "good news" for local residents.

The province is offering:

□ a 3.4-per-cent cut personal income tax rate on July 1; another 3.4 per cent cut January 1998.

□ new child-care tax credit for low income families.

□ a 1996-97 deficit of \$7.5 billion and a projected 1997-'98 deficit of \$6.6 billion.

□ \$250-million to expand fund to help university and college students facing financial barriers.

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□ a deferral of the planned \$500 million health care cut, pending analysis of health services restructuring plans,

□ a new \$30 million task force to help children with learning disabilities,

□ vehicle registration fees to be standardized in southern Ontario at \$74 per year. In the GTA, it means a decrease of \$16 a year.

□ new tax credit for companies that publish first-time Canadian authors.

Here is a sample of the reactions to the Tory document from others:



BILL ATTEWELL

Former local (PC) MPP Bill Attewell said, "The (provincial government's) privatization plans seem to be slow getting off the mark."



BILL BALLINGER

Former Durham-York (Liberal) MPP Bill Ballinger said, "The government can offer programs for small business through all money and make all the fairy and flowery promises it wants but if the banks don't cooperate, it means nothing."

There needs to be a partnership of federal and provincial governments to bring the banks into the circle to make sure money is made available for small business."



GINO TESTA

Local developer Gino Testa said, "I respect this government, but it's doing too much too fast. We need to trim the tree, not chop it down. Small business is hurting. It's the banks. Small business can't borrow \$10."

Police called after handgun displayed at Stouffville High

A 14-year-old Bramble Ct. boy is charged after showing off a handgun to his Stouffville District Secondary School classmates.

When his teacher walked in and saw what was going on, the boy was marched to the principal's office, where police were called.

"He was showing it off," said York Regional Det-Sgt. Jack More. "It was loaded with blanks."

The boy faces four charges: possession of an offensive weapon,

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carrying an offensive weapon, carrying a concealed handgun and failing to comply with recognition.

The latter charge refers to a previous court order prohibiting the boy from possessing any weapons or explosives, More added.

—Kathleen Griffin

Fate of new indoor pool to be decided June 12

JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

The Stouffville Recreation Complex is the preferred home for the new indoor swimming pool, a committee chair has reported.

While it's full steam ahead for the plan to bring an indoor swimming pool to Stouffville and the local recreation centre is the most often mentioned site, "people also want to consider other locations such as the current outdoor pool" site in Memorial Park said Susan Harmsen.

The new pool will be the subject of a public meeting to be held June 12, beginning at 7 p.m. in the recreation complex.

A pool could be built by 1998, Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson has suggested.

Besides the chair, members of the pool committee are Bruce Brown, Own Craig, Dave Muir, Nicole Ongman, Jim Sanders, Barry Squires and Ward 2 Councillor Mike Watson.