

# Clement supports 'choice' in health care

BY MIKE ADLER  
Staff Writer

His search for a platform to help his Tories win Ontario again took Tony Clement, a longshot contender to be premier, to a Richmond Hill coffee shop this week.

There he met John Emery, a Gormley man who told him the next political wave — "this swelling resentment that is growing," he called it — will come from affluent boomers like himself over their frustrations with health care.

"The answer to that is the answer to winning this election," Emery predicted during an informal Wednesday night meeting.

Emery, a builder, said boomers want their health care now and won't mind paying for it.

The perceived "God-given right to health care" is a hazy idea that "is bankrupting us," he added, acknowledging there are people who can't pay but "I don't know if they're that large a number."

Clement, Ontario's health minister, treaded carefully. A few hours earlier he had criticized Ernie Eves, front-runner in the race to replace Mike Harris, for suggesting patients who can pay should get medical services faster.

That's two-tier health care, Clement responded. At the coffee shop, he said Britain has such a system and he does not want it here. "They still have waits. They still have unhappiness."

But Clement said he favours "making sure the private sector is



STAFF PHOTO/ERIN REILLY

Provincial Tory leadership hopeful Tony Clement (right) chats with Martin Charney, Thornhill MPP Tina Molinari and Sam Ciccolini at a local coffee shop Wednesday evening

part of the solution," and with expectations of boomers retiring in "a 30-minutes-or-free society" that will mean more paid services at private clinics like Thornhill's Shouldice Surgery, which treats hernias.

"We're a rich society. If we as citizens want to spend more money on health care, that's our right."

Clement stressed he was talking about services not medically necessary, such as cataract surgery and some uses of MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) machines.

"We clearly are moving to an era of choice being demanded and we have to accommodate that."

The Brampton MPP suggested to Kiral Delivanov — a business student from Richmond Hill who

said he once had to wait three months for an MRI — that hospitals should use MRI machines only for medically-necessary services. Other users can go to a private clinic, and incentives should be provided to establish such clinics, Clement said.

The option to pay can't come soon, enough for Emery. "All the people like me are getting older and there are millions of us," he said later in an interview.

"My wife died of cancer. I spent two years walking through the halls (of hospitals) with her. The system is broken."

Clement, just 40 and eager to put out the touches of gray in his hair, is seeking the Premier's post with a low-key "reconnection

tour" focused on updating the Common Sense Revolution.

The underlying values behind two past Tory sweeps of "905" ridings — tax cuts, smaller government — don't go out of style, he said, but "I've drawn a conclusion that we are disconnected" from the electorate.

Interestingly, Clement's platform pledges to help family farms and curb urban sprawl. "I helped convince the premier that smart growth is the right strategy. Now we have to make it more than just rhetoric."

As municipal affairs minister, he steadfastly refused to freeze development on the Oak Ridges Moraine or introduce tougher rules to protect it, but said he has been "sensitized" to the landform's value.

He also admitted it was wrong for the province to see transit as solely a municipal responsibility. "We've now made amends on that."

Clement, supported in his run by Thornhill MPP Tina Molinari, also disagreed with fellow contender Jim Flaherty's promise to remove teachers' rights to strike.

Teacher contracts should be extended from three to four years, but "even if we had a no-strike clause ... it is not beneath the unions to carry on this war of attrition," he said.

"We've had this war for five years. It's getting a bit tiring on the rank and file."

Proceeding with education reforms such as testing teachers will bring positive results, he said.

# Rooster's fugitive ways halted

BY MIKE ADLER  
Staff Writer

Rudy the renegade rooster was behind bars Friday, grabbed from his Markham hideout by a chicken-hunting vigilante.

A Scarborough man who works near Rudy's roost at the busy corner of Esna Park Drive and Alden Road returned Thursday night to chase the celebrity fowl.

But where experienced animal control officers and others had failed for over two months to cage Rudy, the barnyard bounty hunter pursued the bird around an evergreen and grabbed him.

"Here's your chicken," he told astonished staff at the town's animal control agency Friday afternoon.

"Oh, it's on the barbecue now. That's what I'm having for lunch," animal control manager Dan Lawrence joked a half-hour later.

Had Rudy wound up as Swiss Chalet? No, actually Rudy was still in protective custody.

He was scheduled for transfer to a Georgina farm, where he would be reunited with other members of his gang, captured in October.

Lawrence said the two other roosters, similar to Rudy, did not come quietly. "We managed to corner them with other people against a fence."

Rudy, who was absent at the time, remained in the same industrial area, getting surprised looks from drivers and regular meals from employees of several businesses.

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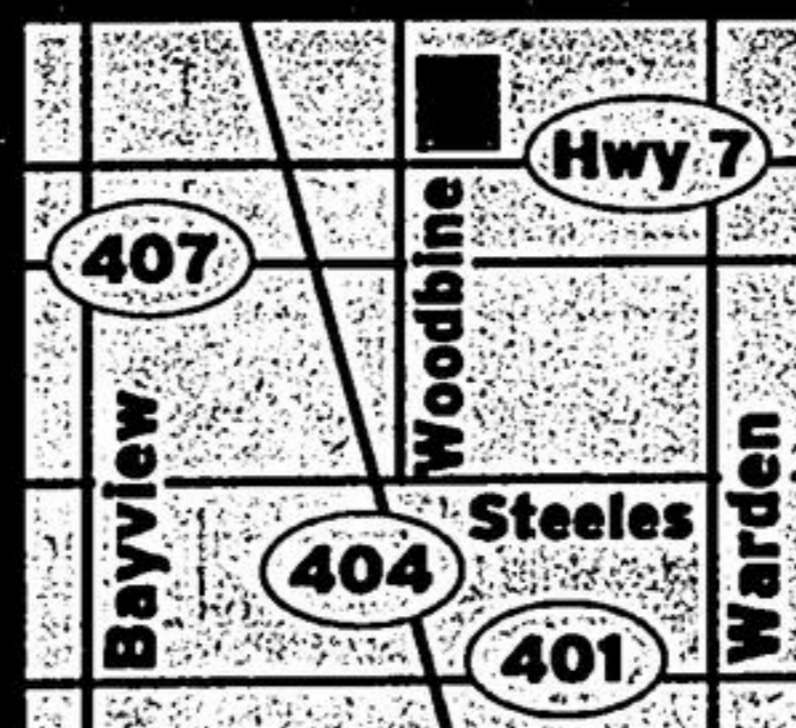
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