

# THE MISSISSAUGA Times

Established 1938

Publisher  
Richard W. Desrochers  
Editor  
Peter Armstrong

The Mississauga Times, 2300 South Sheridan Way, Mississauga, Ont. L5J 2M4, is published every Wednesday by Metrospan Community Newspapers, a division of Metrospan Printing and Publishing Ltd.

Vice President Director of Publishing West Division H.J. Foley

## Szabo is misguided

Paul Szabo, the defeated Liberal candidate in Mississauga South in February's federal election, raises some interesting questions in his brief to the federal government questioning MP Don Blenkarn's election expenses.

Unfortunately, Szabo could probably have saved the Commissioner of Federal Elections some time if he had conducted a little more research himself before firing off the 25-page volley. It appears misguided.

Szabo, as recounted in an exclusive story on Page 4, listed several areas in which it appeared to him that Blenkarn underestimated expenses for the campaign. They included office furniture, signs, food for workers and photographs. In total, Szabo argued, it appeared Blenkarn had underestimated his expenses by at least \$7,000. If so, that would put the Tory MP over the legal ceiling on spending and subject to some pretty serious penalties: he could lose the \$16,000 federal subsidy; his financial agent could go to jail and the candidate could lose his office and be barred from public office for 10 years.

Szabo also suggested that Blenkarn kept his constituency office open during the campaign and used his constituency staff, a definite no-no for incumbent candidates; and was involved in the distribution of a right-wing book by Toronto columnist Lubor Zink attacking Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

These matters, wrote Szabo, "cannot readily be explained and ... may warrant further investigation."

Commissioner J.O. Gorman has agreed, so far, and is probing Blenkarn's expenses. But he might have been saved the trouble if Szabo had not fired so readily from the hip. Many of the questions in his office complaint are nitpicking, could have been answered by a closer examination of the regulations governing election expenses or are subject to reasonable explanations.

**Complaint:** Szabo says Blenkarn bought 22,000 17-cent stamps and therefore must have sent out 22,000 letters, and that was not accounted for. **Answer:** Only 9,000 letters were used before the campaign workers changed to postcards.

**Complaint:** Szabo says the Return Don Blenkarn sign that adorned the front of his campaign headquarters was not declared properly. **Answer:** It was an old sign (used in the May, 1979 campaign) worth less than \$100. No expenses under \$100 need to be declared.

**Complaint:** Szabo says the cost of food for scrutineers on election day was not accounted for. **Answer:** Food does not have to be declared.

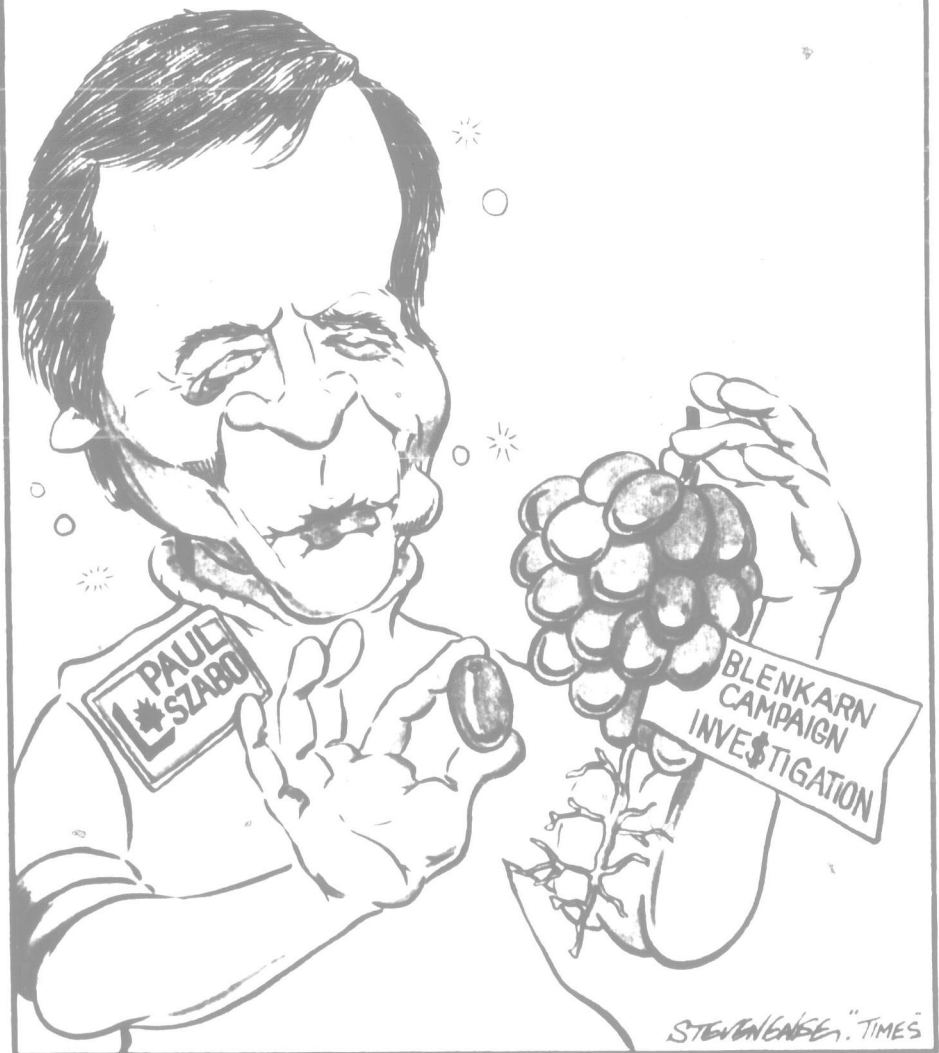
Blenkarn denies vigorously that he had anything to do with the distribution of Zink's book. And he points out that his constituency office was officially closed and office staff laid off, as most MPs routinely do when the election is called.

Szabo, a chartered accountant and political rookie who came within 403 votes of defeating Blenkarn, says the complaint he filed with the election commissioner is "no big deal." He told Times reporter John Stewart he filed it "to satisfy my own curiosity," to help the federal government tighten up regulations governing election expenses, and on the outside chance that Blenkarn had overspent. It is "not an attack," he said.

Well, the 25-page document is one of only a few filed with the commissioner. It is carefully put together and Szabo admits he had a lawyer help him with the phrasing in places. Surely Szabo could have satisfied his curiosity without such bother. And a brief dealing directly with the federal regulations may have been more constructive for the officials reviewing them.

We appreciate Szabo's interest in watching MP Blenkarn and his activities.

However, we hope Szabo is more careful in his research before again suggesting such serious improprieties about an elected official.



## Steps to improve rail safety

Following is an edited version of a brief submitted to the Mississauga Railway Accident inquiry by Basil Gerol, the provincial Liberal candidate in Mississauga South.

(1.) As is the practice in Halifax, trains loaded with hazardous material are routed into urban areas on tracks built in trenches. That eliminates the potential for a tank car, if derailed, to overturn and rupture.

(2.) It must be mandatory that monitoring devices are placed on all routes that are used for the shipment of hazardous materials to check for the failure of journal boxes. A monitoring device, such as those already installed on the Toronto-Montreal route, immediately alerts the engineer to a hotbox problem. As CP Rail has been slow to install monitoring devices, saying that they are "on order," government must enact new regulations for all rail companies to install monitoring devices before being permitted to have these trains in service.

(3.) All communities should have a "Centrex" number to phone regularly to find out what hazardous materials are passing through its area in the next 24 hours. No municipality should ever be in the position of not knowing what is happening within its boundaries. One central phone number for the province should be established with

complete information of all hazardous material traffic.

(4.) Apparently for some time in the Mississauga accident it was unclear as to what exactly was on the train and where each particular cargo was located. The inquiry of the accident will have to determine what happened but clearly that information must be absolutely accurate, stating the type of material, its exact location on the train, its particular hazards and the measures necessary in the event of a spill. Such information should be up to date as the train loads and unloads.

(5.) It is common practice that a car with flashing lights goes ahead of a truck which is moving a mobile home or an extremely wide load. Police vehicles escort the shipment of radioactive materials. Hence, an advance train should go ahead of the train carrying hazardous materials to ensure that the tracks are safe and clear.

(6.) Trains which are carrying hazardous materials should have the neutralizing solution for that shipment on board.

(7.) Hazardous chemicals should be shipped in tanks which are built to more effectively withstand an accident.

(8.) Tank cars can be built with multiple compartments. That effectively localizes the effects of a rupture and the amount of

chemical which is spilt.

(9.) The problem in the accident was the difficulty in getting at the chlorine tank because of the fire from the propane. They were too close. Improved regulations must in the future ensure that hazardous chemicals are located well away from each other and other highly flammable fuels.

(10.) Chlorine is classified as a "nonflammable compressed gas." But there is no mention of it being poisonous. With that classification, chlorine tank cars can be hitched to others containing almost any other cargo, including propane which can explode like dynamite in train wrecks — and has. Suitable classifications which reflect reality must be enacted to establish potential problems and ensure that they are avoided.

(11.) Overworked transport commission inspectors can't hope to catch all the defects, worn equipment and human errors that have led to every hazardous cargo spill. But, according to Carleton University engineering professor Julius Lakasiewicz, they do find deficiencies in almost 75 per cent of the 100,000 equipment checks they make each year. The federal government must improve the allocation of funds and manpower to ensure more thorough inspection.

THE MISSISSAUGA Times

Classified advertising 252-6391

Other departments - 823-3800

Advertising Director, Nick Anderson

Production manager, Alan Jordan

Circulation and Promotion supervisor, Ian MacPherson

Real estate advertising manager, Harry Folland

Classified advertising manager, Judith Lennon

Subscription rates: Home delivery by carrier \$13.00 per year in advance \$1.00 every four weeks. Single copy sales 25c. By mail \$31.20 per year in Canada, \$52 a year outside Canada. Authorized as second class mail registration number 1235.

Metrospan Community Newspaper publishes The Richmond Hill Thornhill Liberal The Oakville Journal Record, The Halton Consumer, The Mississauga Times, The Etobicoke Advertiser Guardian, The Etobicoke Consumer, The North York Mirror, The Scarborough Consumer, The Aurora Newmarket York Simcoe Banner, The Woodbridge & Vaughan News and The Bolton Enterprise.

A Metrospan Community Newspaper