

THE MISSISSAUGA Times

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Choose the best

Bruce Robertson doesn't have to explain to anyone why he has suddenly quit as Peel Board of Education trustee in Ward 7.

His resignation comes after long bitter battles among factions in his ward over school closings, battles which have left Robertson scarred politically, and only three months before the next election.

He says he could win the ward again easily, and that is debatable. At the very least, the election campaign in Ward 7 would have been extremely bitter and difficult. But a new job with the government is taking too much of his time and he can't continue as a trustee, he says.

The suspicion may be there, but Robertson doesn't have to say more publicly. Nor does he have to tell his remaining trustees how to go about the job of replacing him.

Robertson told trustees last week he doesn't believe they should appoint a replacement who stands to gain a great advantage in the November election. That is an obvious reference to John Walmark, the man Robertson defeated by only a few votes in the November, 1978, election.

As board chairman Bill Kent said, however, the trustees should appoint the best person for the job, regardless of the potential political situation. That person may very well be Walmark, who is away on vacation this week and could not be reached for comment. He has remained active in school board matters, qualifies as a Peel Region resident over 18 years of age and need only apply.

Kent's commonsense approach in this matter is the best. We hope, for the sake of Ward 7 residents, the rest of the trustees agree.

RAH! To the Peel Board of Education, which has referred the latest anti-strapping missive to its discipline committee. The constructive brief from the Social Planning Council of Peel deserves such deliberation and it's the sign of a progressive organization that new approaches can be considered.

BOO! To Gulf Oil and Imperial Oil, who have contributed \$25,000 and \$20,000 respectively to the Mississauga Hospital expansion program, pulling the fundraising out of mid-summer doldrums and putting the program closer to its goal.

RAH! To Norah Busby and fellow Peel Board of Education trustees Norma Crowley, Gary Heighington and Bill Kent, for supporting a study of the status of women in the board administration. Statistics show there are too few women in positions of authority in the board, and, as with any injustice, the situation can only be corrected by a determined push in the opposite direction. We hope those four trustees push harder and offset their more conservative fellow trustees when the matter is raised again.

RAH! To Howard Chipman of Clarkson Secondary School and David Horrocks of Erindale, who each scored 96 per cent in Grade 13 last year and headed the list of 306 Ontario Scholars (80-plus averages in six subjects) from Mississauga high schools.

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30-7-80

Immunity for evacuation leaders?

Following are excerpts from a brief presented to the Mississauga Railway Accident Inquiry by Mayor Hazel McCallion.

The following is a summary of the recommendations outlined within this brief.

1. That train crews receive instruction at a basic and advanced level to qualify them for operating trains carrying dangerous goods.
2. That the conductor be required to perform a pull-by inspection of any departing train carrying dangerous goods.
3. That all trains carrying dangerous goods in Canada be required to carry hazard emergency information forms.
4. That CANUTEC operate as a coordinating emergency response agency for all derailments, leaks or spills involving dangerous goods.
5. That the railway be responsible for cleanup operations under the direction of the Department of Transport.
6. That the dangerous commodity officers of the railway companies be confined to advising their own employees.
7. That in special circumstances, the railways be required to work under the direction of specialized emergency response teams from the chemical industry at the discretion of the minister of transport.
8. That municipalities receive advance consists of dangerous commodity trains and that CANUTEC operate as a central receiving bank and data retrieval centre for such information.
9. That the Canadian chemical industry expand its transportation emergency assistance plan in co-operation with the

dangerous goods branch of the department of transport.

10. That the minister of transport be responsible for coordinating the on-site activities of the various response groups and assume ultimate responsibility for the cleanup operation.
11. That the Canadian Transport Commission role be confined to accident investigation.
12. That the provincial government enact legislation giving clear authority to local government to take all necessary emergency measures, including the power to evacuate, in order to prevent or reduce the danger to life, health, and property of its citizens.
13. That those persons who act in response to an emergency be granted immunity from civil and criminal liability.

With regards to recommendations 12 and 13:

At Mississauga, the initial decision to evacuate the population was taken by the Peel Regional Police. As described earlier in this brief, by Sunday evening, an ad hoc command team assumed responsibility for the protection of the populace. The command team meetings which occurred with great regularity throughout the week were attended by local, provincial and federal officials as well as representatives of industry and the railway. Decisions were made on the basis of advice received from experts and arrived at on consensus basis. The Honourable Roy McMurtry, Attorney-General for the Province of Ontario, chaired the meetings and the composition of the meetings changed over the course of the week. The command team was kept advised as to the progress being made with respect to the patching of the

chlorine car, but exercised no control over the methods employed or the personnel performing the task. Although the command team at the Mississauga derailment was a loosely organized group, they worked together effectively towards a resolution of the problem.

Notwithstanding this, it is evident that a more formalized procedure is desirable. It is at the local level that decisions to evacuate the population must be taken and the police should have clear authority to do this at least in the initial period of the emergency.

Bill C-18, the proposed Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, authorizes an inspector under that act to take measures which include the evacuation of persons. It is suggested that that power be confined to those situations where an inspector under that act is also a local fire chief or police chief.

As to any continued evacuation, the local head or heads of government should bear that responsibility. Undoubtedly, there will be times when the mayor of a municipality will need to draw on the expertise and advice of provincial officials, but it is thought that the ultimate political accountability for decisions taken in response to an emergency such as Mississauga should remain at the local level. It is therefore recommended that the province enact legislation as outlined above.

Any legislation which gives the powers described above to local officials, should also protect those individuals from civil and criminal liability unless it can be shown that they did not act reasonably in the circumstances. In emergencies such as Mississauga, a cautious approach is desirable and it is therefore suggested that such an immunity will encourage that kind of approach.