

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA CARLETON  
 MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA CARLETON

---

REPORT  
 RAPPORT

---

Our File/N/Réf.                      03 07-96-0119  
 Your File/V/Réf.

DATE                                      27 August 1996

TO/DEST.                                Co-ordinator, Planning and Environment Committee

FROM/EXP.                              Councillor Alex Munter

SUBJECT/OBJET                        **RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH CROSBY  
 REGARDING THE RIDEAU CANAL SYSTEM**

---

**REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That Planning and Environment Committee recommend that Council request that the Federal Government maintain and operate the Rideau Canal System as it is at present under the Federal Government as an Historical Waterway.**

**DISCUSSION**

The Council of The Corporation of the Township of South Crosby has forwarded the attached correspondence asking for the Region's support in requesting of the Federal Government that the operation of the Rideau Canal System not be privatized but rather continue to be operated and maintained by the Federal Government as an Historical Waterway.

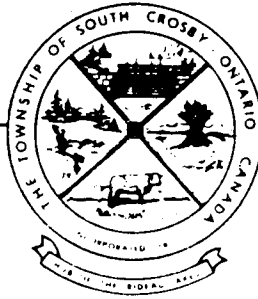
*Approved by  
 Councillor Alex Munter*

Attach. ( 1 )

# The Township of South Crosby

JUL 26 1996

REEVE - W. T. Sly  
CLERK TREASURER - M. Stearry



85 Davis Lock Road, R.R. 1,  
Elgin, Ontario K0G 1E0  
Tel. (613) 359-5830 • Fax (613) 359-5849

July 26, 1996

Reeve and Council Members:

Please find enclosed a letter, and supporting documents requesting the Federal Government to continue to maintain and operate the Rideau Canal, under its jurisdiction and not adhoc private hands.

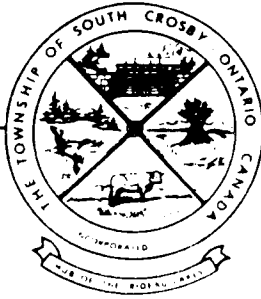
The Council of The Corporation of the Township of South Crosby asked that you give some consideration to this information, and forward your support to those listed at the bottom of the second page of said letter.

Yours truly

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH CROSBY

Myrna Stearry, A.M.C.T.  
Clerk-Treasurer

# The Township of South Crosby



REEVE - W. T. Sly  
CLERK TREASURER - M. Stearry

85 Davis Lock Road, R.R. 1,  
Elgin, Ontario K0G 1E0  
Tel. (613) 359-5830 • Fax (613) 359-5849

Wednesday, June 26, 1996

The Honourable Lucienne Robillard  
Minister Heritage,  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Honourable Robillard:

Due to the commitment of the Federal Government to cut costs with little regard to effect, we the Council of The Corporation of the Township of South Crosby hereby solicit your support to the enclosed "Letter to the Editor", author Mr. Donald Warren.

Mr. Warren's commitment to the Rideau Canal System is legendary, both as a supporter and user, reflecting the needs of communities in Eastern Ontario who benefit from its existence.

This waterway is a part of our National Heritage much similar to other parks under Federal jurisdiction.

It is our hope and request that you will support this resolution to maintain and operate this important asset to Eastern Ontario under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government and not adhoc private hands.

Honourable Robillard:

The Council of The Corporation of the Township of South Crosby strongly request that the Rideau Canal System be maintained and operated as it is at "present" under the Federal Government as an Historical Waterway.

Yours truly

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH CROSBY

Myrna Stearry, A.M.C.T.  
Clerk-Treasurer

enc. Letter to the Editor, by Mr. Donald Warren

cc: Jim Jordan, M.P., Leeds/Grenville

Honourable Marcel Masse, President of the Treasury Board, Esplanade Laurier,  
East Tower, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, 140 O'Connor St., Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0R5

Honourable Peter Adams, Chairman of the Ontario Caucus, M.P. for Peterborough,  
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario.

Rideau Canal Parks Canada

Mr. Donald Warren

**- ORIGINAL SUBMITTED IN HANDWRITTEN FORMAT -**  
**(On file with the Regional Clerk)**

Chaffey's Lock, Ontario,  
June 2, 1996

Council of Township of South Crosby,  
Elgin, Ontario, K0G 1G0

Dear Members:

It appears that the Rideau's status as a Canadian Heritage Canal is in jeopardy, and it is in danger of becoming just another recreational waterway.

Indeed, I understand that the funding from Heritage Canada has been further reduced and they have rated it a "most affected department" which translates into its grants being reduced even more than some parks and heritage sites.

It is almost a betrayal of what we fought for between 1967 and 1972 when we succeeded in placing it in Parks Canada's hands for protection.

The federal government has already indicated its desire to turn the Rideau's operation and maintenance over to an "agency", run by the present employees for a three year term. After that term, the tenders would be opened up to the general public.

Deny it as they may, in my vocabulary it means "privatization". Experience would suggest that the lowest tenders would be accepted.

Either of these moves would take away from the consistency in operations and maintenance currently in force, or result in a vast increase in the already top heavy bureaucracy to see that new inexperienced operators adhered to a set of standards yet to be announced.

In either case, this would be to the detriment of the canal system. Although at the moment, all changes seem to be on hold (hopefully because of public pressure), it won't last long.

Few people are as aware as Municipal Councillors of the Rideau's value to our part of Eastern Ontario.

The Rideau is the most unique waterway in North America kept in excellent condition and operating much as it did....

....in 1832 when it was officially opened by Colonel By. Even its manual operation has been maintained.

Its uniqueness is known world wide. In fact, through the efforts of the Friends of the Rideau it is under consideration as a World Heritage Canal. Normally, it takes the international organization which makes the final decision five years to reach a conclusion. Two years ago this committee met at the opinion at Chaffey's Lock - representatives from all over the world. There will be three more years before we will know the result.

I believe if the government goes ahead with its plans, we can kiss this honour for the Rideau good-bye.

Those of us who live along the Canal, and the thousands who share it with us during the summer, are generally aware of the tremendous engineering feat it was to carve this Canal through the early 19th Century wilderness. Jones Falls Keystone dam (at the time, one of the four largest in the world), the clever idea of building a causeway across the west end of the Big Rideau Lake, thus raising the water in a new lake (Little Rideau) high enough to prevent the high costs of excavating the cut through hardpan at Newboro, the additional dams, lockmaster's defensible houses, block houses and magnificent locks with their state of the art stone workmanship, attract engineers from all over the world to visit them.

Furthermore, the Canal forms the backbone of our economy; especially in that area between Kingston and Merrickville. There is not a business in the Rideau Corridor that does not in some way profit from the boaters, day visitors and cottagers who flock to the Canal every summer. Elgin, Newboro, Westport, Portland and smaller hamlets at each lock are particularly vulnerable to any changes that may occur.

Not only do local businesses, municipal governments, and citizens in general profit from the activity generated by its presence, but federal and provincial coffers benefit also. They profit in increased income tax, G.S.T. and provincial taxes from an area which would be depressed without the Waterway. Furthermore, hundreds of our young people through the years have profited by working on the locks and local businesses associated with the locks to further their education.

In this part of Eastern Ontario it has helped us to become moderate “haves” rather than “have nots”

I find it hard to believe that the Canal would operate more economically as an “Agency” or “privatized”. The men and women, generally citizens and taxpayers of our townships, who operate the locks and service the Canal are not highly paid when you consider their years of experience and their expertise in dealing with valuable boats and flustered boaters.

In fact, a large percentage of these people work on a part time basis, and even full time employees have wages which puts their yearly income close to the accepted Canadian poverty line. These intelligent front-line safety conscious people who love this area, frequently come from families who have been associated with the Canal for generations.

Where can we find better interpreters of the Rideau Corridor communities?

It seems to me, that the government’s plans will upset the delicate balance that now exists on the Rideau, and could well hurt us all.

Certainly higher user fees must be considered, but governments must be reminded to keep increases reasonable. There is already some indications that this year’s fee schedules are hurting the boat traffic and turning people away.

Between 1967-72 when the Rideau was taken from the Department of Transport and placed under the jurisdiction of what is now the Canadian Parks Service by a Federal Order in Council, we have had relative peace and prosperity along the Canal.

Now, that is in danger of disappearing. During those years we rose up in opposition to turning the waterway into a Coney Island Park through "electrification". The responsibility is up to us to remind the government that such a national treasure should not be destroyed because of periodic financial problems, but should be maintained and operated in its time tested way as a symbol that our great country does respect its past.

Hopefully, South Crosby, which played a leading role in the struggle to keep the Rideau a heritage waterway in the late 1960's will consider coming to its rescue again, and perhaps, lead other corridor townships to follow their lead in protesting to the federal government the problems outlined here.

What is occurring appears to be a high profile political decision so I suggest any resolutions you may pass be directed to Madame Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Heritage, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, with copies to your local member and to the Honourable Marcel Masse, President of the Treasury Board, Esplanade Laurier, East Tower, 9th Floor, 140 O'Connor St., Ottawa, K1A 0R5.

As the Ontario Caucus of the Liberal Party in Ottawa has shown some interest in our cause, I also suggest that the Honourable Peter Adams, Chairman of the Ontario Caucus, M.P. for Peterborough, House of Commons, Ottawa, be informed. Because of their numbers in the House of Commons, they could be valuable allies.

I know that your support and the support of other Rideau municipalities would be valuable to this endeavour.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by  
Don Warren*



## Outline Rideau Crisis 96

### Objections:

- 1) That this unique, North American Heritage Canal, well and carefully preserved down to its manual operation, appears in the process of being downgraded to recreational canal status.
- 2) That the Ministry of Canadian Heritage is dubbing the Rideau “a most affected department”, and is cutting its grants more than some other Parks’ holdings.
- 3) That the Canal is to be turned over to an “Agency” for three years, and then its operations “privatized”, or opened to public tender after that period - feel that this path will be disastrous to a historic waterway - lack of consistency, emphasis on profit taking - Coney Island atmosphere, etc. - inexperienced low priced canal operators responsible for locking millions of dollars worth of valuable boats each high season day can be extremely dangerous to boaters - present operators experienced, disciplined, safety conscious and not overly paid (many are part time).
- 4) That the government’s contemplated change will result in the Canal’s chance of becoming a world Heritage Canal with all the prestige this would entail - a real boost for Eastern Ontario tourism and additional spin off to all governments. (*sic*)
- 5) That increases in fees for locking, mooring, camping, etc. are becoming too rich for an ordinary citizen’s blood, and he is forced to go elsewhere leaving the Rideau to the economic elite - a rich man’s paradise!
- 6) That a thorough investigation of the Canal’s operation was carried out by the Neilson Commission in the 1980’s and they found that no real financial gain would be made by privatizing - why is it so essential now? What will be the cost to this magnificent canal system?
- 7) That those of us who struggled from 1967 to 1972 and eventually had the Rideau through Order in Council placed in Parks hands for protection now feel betrayed as they race hell bent for election to destroy it.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Help preserve the historic Rideau Canal

Re: "Crisis on the Rideau."

One of Canada's unique, historic treasures, the Rideau Canal, seems about to be gutted by the same government party that in 1972, with a giant public shove, placed it under the control of the Canadian Parks Service. This was to prevent the "electrification" of its locks which subsequently would have resulted in its becoming a watery racetrack for boat traffic.

A more important result of this move was to be the preservation for posterity of the only lock system in North America operating much as it had in 1832 when Colonel John By, on orders of the British government, and the Duke of Wellington in particular, completed with great hardship this pioneer canal through the wilderness. Its purpose was to provide an alternate route to Lake Ontario for war vessels vulnerable to attack if they used the St. Lawrence. The Americans were not as friendly in those days, it seems.

In the 164 years of its existence, it has faced many crises.

In the 1930s a money-strapped government threatened to close it; in the period from 1967-72, it tried unsuccessfully to "electrify" the locks and, hence, remove their manual operation which is traditional, and in the late 1980s, the Neilson Commission did a thorough study of its operation and decided to leave it alone. Any tampering with the Rideau becomes an intense emotional issue to Rideau lovers.

Today, less than 10 years from the last crisis, the present government is prepared to "privatize" the canal.

How is this to be accomplished?

Well, as far as we know, this means putting each lock station or section of the canal up for tender. Although details are few and vague, I understand that the first tenders will be accepted from the displaced canal people. After the first contract is completed, the tendering will be opened to all.

To even consider this route appears to me, ridiculous, especially as this canal is already acknowledged as a Canadian Heritage Canal, and is, to the best of my knowledge, under consideration as a World Heritage Canal.

I think we can all understand to some

degree why increased fees for locking, overnight mooring, camping, parking, etc., may be necessary. Times are tough, but if these additional fees are so high that they will discourage tourism in the Rideau corridor, the industry that this part of eastern Ontario depends almost solely upon, then we in the Rideau Waterway area are in deep grief.

To have the canal's authenticity as a Heritage Canal maintained with different contractors operating each lock, or in control of various sectors of the canal, defies reason. The Parks Service would need almost one watch-dog at each station to monitor that the historical atmosphere of the locks were maintained and that lock safety rules, so important to the thousands of boaters and day visitors, were adhered to. Some saving!

A contractor, regardless of what he may profess, will, for obvious reasons, be interested in making as much as he can from his contract, and to hell with the system.

What is proposed by "privatization" of course, and seems to be the pattern in this crazy society, is that the loaded gun is placed against the heads of the front line servers, in this case, the men and women who physically operate the locks.

### TOOK SUBSTANTIAL CUTS

It may come as a surprise to many that these operators have not received any salary increase in years, and as late as last year took substantial cuts when their hours were drastically reduced.

I suspect there are fewer than 75 of these front line people employed by Parks on the whole canal, and they are in a pay category not much above the poverty line.

These are the real Rideau people, who we as a boating public and day visitors meet on each lock.

These are the people who guide our costly boats into the locks, carefully place us so our property is not damaged, (even rope us in, if we are not capable of the tricky manoeuvring required if the wind is high), who answer our questions freely and intelligently, (they are, because most are local and steeped in canal history, our best interpreters), keep washrooms spotless and grounds well groomed. Very seldom, in

spite of large inquisitive crowds, long energy-sapping hours, and hot weather, do you hear one complain.

Most would have been successful anywhere, but chose the Rideau because many of their families had worked on the canal for generations.

I know there must be hundreds of people, visitors and residents alike who will feel that turning the Rideau into an "agency" just doesn't make sense.

When I first heard the term used, I was rather baffled as to what it meant. However, an American friend, who has been an ardent Rideau admirer for years, soon put me straight. "It means numberless bureaucrats and uncontrollable nepotism," he retorted. I might say that if I were a politician, I might add that it would be a real opportunity for political porkbarreling as well.

In conclusion, with an unknown number of different, often self-serving contractors operating the canal, I see little hope for its continuing to be the unique, well-managed, historical waterway it is now, and has been for the past 24 years under the Canadian Parks system.

It seems to me, that this canal, a microcosm of Canadian history, given without charge by the British government to Canada, a canal designed to protect Canada for the first few years of its existence, a route through which thousands of immigrants on open barges reached the Great Lakes in the 1840s, which carried produce and timbers on its waters until the turn of the century and now forms the economic backbone of that area between Kingston and Ottawa, deserves better treatment than it is now being given.

I would hope that those who feel as I do, will contact their members of Parliament to urge them to reconsider the "privatization" or "agency" concept (whichever you prefer to call it).

If we act promptly, I believe we may still be able to salvage something from the contemplated mess.

Otherwise, to misquote a line from an old song: "You won't know what you've lost 'til it's gone."

Don Warren  
RR 1, Elgin

Information for Council

BRUGLER & LEVIN

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

10 SOUTH WAYNE STREET

P. O. BOX 870

LEWISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 17044-0870

(717) 248-4871

I. D. NO. 25-1188423

ROBERT B. BRUGLER

(RETIRED 1983-DECEASED 1994)

NORMAN L. LEVIN  
JEFFREY L. SNOOK  
ALLEN J. LEVIN

ORRIS C. KNEPP, III

May 24, 1996

The Honorable Sheila Copps  
Minister of Heritage Canada  
Government of Canada  
Ottawa, Canada

In Re: The Rideau Canal

Madam:

Three generations of my family have visited the Rideau during a span off more than forty years. In that time I have watched successive administrations first neglect, then recognize and, finally, preserve and promote a unique cultural, economic and recreational facility. Now I seem to have a seat for the spectacle of an administration actually proposing to kill the Canal to "save" it.

1. The canal system is unique. I - like many Canadians, U.S. residents and others - visit the Rideau to enjoy the company of wonderful people, the attention to the history of the area, its beauty, the slower pace of life and (of course) the fishing and boating. All of this is within a day's drive of my home. Better still, it passes through Ottawa - one of my favorite cities.

2. The canal system is fragile. I'm not thinking only of the ecosystem. The whole character of the system - and its attraction to tourists - is its heritage. The locks could not be abandoned and the lakes cannot safely be drained. So, too, most of the canal can't be turned into a mass commercial recreational facility. The only masses who could afford to use it would no longer be attracted to it. (I, myself, have fled from the "rural" state and federal lakes of Pennsylvania because the commercialism of "privatization" has destroyed their charm.)

3. The employment of thousands of people depends directly upon the existence of a working canal. Perhaps half of those jobs are dependent upon the specific attraction of a hand-operated canal and consistent parkway or corridor maintained to a uniform standard - not a 200km party marina.

4. People do speak of the user fees - some of which have become confiscatory. But, absent the benefit of the attraction

BRUGLER & LEVIN

of the canal as a parkway, the user fees will eventually evaporate.

4. When people speak of altering the administration of the canal they rarely mention the local, provincial and federal tax revenues generated by its presence. They don't seem to dwell upon the extra tax revenues generated when non-Canadians buy property (directly or because of inflated land prices); or the savings to municipalities which don't then have to provide services to them for eight months each year.

5. I have never heard anyone discuss the value of the rents generated from government ground leases. Most are grouped around lock stations. Virtually none of those leases would be as valuable without a well-run heritage canal.

6. I've seen several proposals to "privatize" operation of the canal. That might work only if the principal function of the canal were financial profit. It seems to me that the real purpose of "privatization" is to cut the payroll. Each lock station would then be run by a private contractor who, it seems, could only make a profit by cutting costs or increasing revenues.

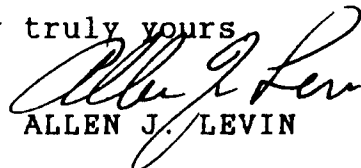
Costs can't be cut by much. The lock staff are not that well treated, now. And the boats using the locks are much too valuable to trust to the untrained. Revenues could only be improved by increasing traffic through that contractor's lock - or by raising fees. Since most of the locks are co-dependent for traffic, the fees will go up, the service and maintenance will deteriorate, the traffic will decline and the system will be back to the same sorry state it was in twenty-five years ago.

Why can't the government see the real value of the Rideau Canal as a national treasure. Parks Canada has done an admirable job with its mandate, thus far. If you can't see the danger, then consider the possibility of cutting the Trans-Canada Highway into segments between interchanges, and privatizing it. In five years it will be a lonelier place than an abandoned airstrip.

As do many others, I spend time and money in the Rideau corridor each year. If our enjoyment is taken from us, our money will be taken from Canada.

One suspects that whoever conceived this proposal has never had employment in the real economy.

Very truly yours



ALLEN J. LEVIN

21 May 1996

Minister of Heritage  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, Canada

Dear Madam Robillard,

As annual visitors to Chaffey's Locks, my family and I have learned of the Canadian government's initiative to "privatize" the Rideau Canal lock system and view this with trepidation. My husband, who will soon make his 41st annual pilgrimage and our daughter, who is of the sixth generation of our family to summer in Chaffey's enjoy and treasure the professionalism and kinship of the lockmasters and their well-trained staffs.

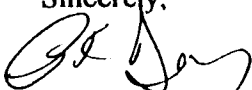
Daily, on our vacation to this wonderful place, we stroll down to the locks, chat with the staff and watch the vessels pass. We also benefit from their professionalism and adherence to safety when we lock our boat through. We would sorely miss these encounters if they were either contracted out to faceless people who do not share in this rich tradition and know the history of the canal as well as these people who are sometimes holding the job that their great-grandfather held or (God forbid) electrified.

As a member of the United State military, I am somewhat familiar with privatizing and from what I have observed, the job always goes to the lowest bidder, who may or may not be the best qualified. Sometimes it is the very people who have been doing the job all along, sometimes not. From my perspective, however, costs always rise (overhead, etc.) and either a new contract is let or we begrudgingly pay the higher cost to keep the "best qualified" person in the job. In any case, any cost savings that may be realized by privatization will be forfeited in the loss of heritage and tradition.

From an historical and tradition perspective, I feel that the best qualified people for the Rideau Canal are those who have been raised to do it and enjoy it. It is truly a pleasure to see the same people (our friends) year after year when we visit.

We beseech you to not destroy this historic waterway and cultural heritage by privatizing the locks system.

Sincerely,



Patricia K. Day  
P.O. Box 790  
Bath, ME 04530

## A motherlode

**A**s a result of federal budget cuts, Parks Canada facilities in our region are about to see the effects of privatization of some of their services and an increase in fees.

While taxpayers agree that federal departments must find more efficient ways of conducting their business, the current direction at our heritage sites will leave most people scratching their heads.

Raising fees that will drive away cash-strapped customers and business and privatizing the people who keep the facilities operational are short-sighted solutions that leave the system open to charges of elitism, if not future failure.

Both the Rideau Canal and St. Lawrence Islands National Park have announced major fee increases for 1996.

On the Rideau especially, fees for boaters and the so called "rubber-tire" market are rising or are about to be better enforced.

Government mandarins in Ottawa have long suffered from the belief that people who use the facilities of Parks Canada have bags full of money from which they can magically draw each time the government raises fees.

Likewise, they do not appear to have any knowledge of how business operates. Each time they raise levies for shoreline users the same customers must also cough up more money.

Boaters along the waterway are about to get hit from two directions. First, the canal fees are going up and second, the people from whom they rent dock space are getting hit with large fee increases.

Governments, both federal and provincial, have hit upon a new motherlode to replace taxes.

While they gladly, and often, spout that they have not raised taxes they continue to add usurious amounts to fees they charge for everything from dock space to pieces of paper that regulate anything and everything.

This time though, as tourist operators have warned for the past decade, they have probably shot themselves in the foot.

For while governments continue to spend unwisely creating policies that are out of touch with reality, taxpayers are tapped dry.

There is no more money.

The Rideau Canal will now begin to see a decline in tourism from which it will not recover until public expectations catch up with fees being charged. Beginning this year, only the wealthiest will be able to afford to use our public park system.

In another bold move Parks Canada is about to begin privatizing its workers.

Unfortunately, it has chosen the wrong people to start its privatization program.

Skilled tradesmen and maintenance staff are the people who keep the parks functioning. They are the people who keep the doors open for business.

Yet their jobs are on the line.

Will this bode well for future generations of the type of skilled tradesmen needed for heritage jobs?

Gate builders and blacksmiths needed to maintain the Rideau are not dime-a-dozen, off-the-rack tradespeople. And it is a similar story in other Parks Canada sites.

In our multi-media, multi-disciplinary era, it is the bureaucrats and interpretive staff who can more easily be replaced or whose roles can more easily be re-defined by new technology, partnerships, and expanded thinking. Their services, which up to now have been free to the public, are the ones that should come with a price tag. Properly handled, they could be the motherlode.

Both these moves by Parks Canada smell like elitism.

## Rideau Canal a great feat of engineering

I would like to echo Don Warren's comment that the Rideau Canal is one of Canada's unique treasures ("Prevent gutting of Rideau Canal," May 7). His letter also provided background information and described some features of the canal that may not be as commonly known as we might think.

This is unfortunate, as the 202-kilometre canal has been in operation for more than 160 years and is considered one of

the greatest engineering feats of the 19th century.

One of the best ways to get to know the Rideau Canal is to visit one of the many lock stations in this area. Jones Falls, in particular, offers a variety of sites and facilities along a good walking path.

Another opportunity to get additional information on the canal is at the upcoming Kingston Regional Heritage Fair on May 23-24. The Kingston chap-

ter of the Professional Engineers of Ontario, in conjunction with Canadian Heritage Parks Canada, are featuring an information booth on the Rideau Canal as an example of our local engineering heritage. A working model lock is expected to be on display to help illustrate the lock's operation to visitors to the fair.

Cameron Smith  
Kingston

## Thanks to Whig-Standard for helping save the day

Thank you, Whig-Standard, you saved the day. Your appeal for storage space on behalf of the annual Hotel Dieu Auction, to be held on Oct. 26, resulted in a most generous response from Tom and Theresa Duffus of Duf-

fley Investments.

We also have been blessed again this year with the services of Alicia and Barry Gordon of Gordon Auctioneers and Mark Line of St. Lawrence Moving Systems.

So we're off to a great start. What a paper!

Gail Murray  
Chair  
10th Annual  
Hotel Dieu Hospital Auction  
Kingston

Quebec's chief electoral officer is laying charges against 18 people and organizations that participated in last October's pro-unity rally in Montreal.

Pierre-F. Côté says the 18 as-yet-un-named companies and individual broke Quebec law because the service they volunteered weren't declared a election expenses by the No campaign.

The unity rally, he says, "undermined democracy in Quebec as a whole."

On the other hand, the 29 deputy returning officers and two Yes-side observers who've been charged with tossing out thousands of valid No votes are seen as no threat to democracy.

While Côté "regrets the loss of certain individuals' right to vote," his report ruled the rejection of up to 12 per cent of No ballots in four Montreal ridings an isolated incident with no impact on the fairness of the referendum.

As Quebec Liberal leader Daniel Johnson put it: "Mr. Côté thought it was an affront to democracy to have people marching up and down the streets, but not to steal the votes."

— Edmonton Journal

### CAMPUS NOTES

### C O L U M N

Whig - Fri May 17/96

## Is nothing sacred?

I was moved after reading the letter from Don Warren about the Rideau Canal which appeared in *The Recorder and Times* May 9.

Just another example of the attitude by government and big business today: "Change for the sake of change." Is nothing sacred any more? Our heritage, traditions, customs, natural resources, etc., seem unimportant to the "leaders" of today.

We are proud to be Canadians and I'm sure are the envy of most of the world. Yet we seem intent on destroying what has put us in this lofty position. As a young country we do not have an abundance of history to relate to and be proud of. At a time when we are struggling to stay together as a unified country let's not take another step towards loss of identity and purpose.

Big business usually represents the selfish interests of few while government is mandated to protect the interests of all. It is true that government has mismanaged many programs over the years but have we not learned something from our mistakes?

George Ashby  
Aurora