SUBMISSION ON RURAL DRAINAGE

Historically rural drainage schemes were devised for land reclamation. Often they were administered by local government and financed jointly by government and the private landholder. However in time due to various reasons these schemes have lapsed and rural drains have been overloaded with regard to capacity and neglected owing to lack of responsibility of all parties concerned.

Overloading has occurred because certain landholders use the system but do not contribute to the upkeep.

1) Repeal of the drainage act

2) Repeal of the drainage act

3) Local governments have abdicated its responsibility for rural drainage by handing it to CMA's.

4) Lack of awareness by CMA to understand the need for rural drainage and its importance.

All rural land should be rated for drainage. After all, good drainage leads to better soil structure and hence productivity. Drainage rates should apply to total area of farm for this reason and not just low lying areas as all excess water contributes to runoff. Maybe even the Shire councils should contribute as they could rates give a reduced service to the rural dweller as compared to the urban dweller.

The rates collected be spent on either to drain land or allow the landowner to conserve the runoff of his property. He create a wetland and be given a credit towards his rates by his action. Rural drainage needs good laws so that legal action by can be taken against those who cheat the system i.e. illegal draining. Money recouped by fines be spent in the drainage system where the offence occurred.

New drainage laws should ensure that the landowner can maintain his existing drains either by mechanical or chemical means. Maintenance should be carried...
out with regard to (i) preventing erosion by having a buffer area of vegetation along banks 
(ii) preventing the choking of streams by certain flora - eg ram's-horn, water-cress and pond weed.

Government should ensure that its departments are aware that other parties than their agencies have a role in the management of any scheme. Management of estuary openings is vital to most drainage schemes and hence landowners should be included on the management boards of drainage schemes and be included in the management boards of drainage schemes and be included in the community.

Submitter: P. Damian O'Brien
Glenview

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