

Ed King  
Simpson

# Farm feud hits the street

## 200 protesters march on TD Bank

By CAMERON RENTON

A dispute about the sale of 40 acres of farmland led yesterday to one of the largest public protests in Mississauga's history, with close to 200 people marching against a local branch of the Toronto Dominion (TD) Bank.

Armed with placards, protesters from all walks of life caused a bottleneck in traffic for several miles as they marched from Pleasant View Farms on Dundas St., just east of Dixie Rd., to the TD Bank at Palstan Rd.

The protesters were led by Dave Pallett, whose family is fighting the TD's sale of the land they had owned for 125 years.

The Palletts owe the bank \$2,068,258 (which includes principal, interest and six years' municipal taxes paid by the bank), but argue there was no need to sell their land and that it was sold far too cheaply. If they do not vacate the property by Oct. 1, a sheriff will forcibly evict them.

Joining the march and demonstration were representatives of eight other families affected by the sale. About 25 people who live in buildings and trailers on the land will also be forced to leave.

Tenants in the six mobile homes will lose thousands of dollars spent on landscaping and moving costs, and if forced to leave, they won't be

able to afford new trailer sites in Mississauga and could lose their jobs.

"It's crazy . . . impossible," says Arnold Kreft, who's rented a 1/4-acre chunk of land for 24 years. "None of us can afford to go somewhere else, and if we do move, we'll lose our jobs in Mississauga, because no one wants us here."

Kreft, who suffers from spinal fusion and has had two heart attacks, estimates 15 jobs will be lost because tenants will have to move at least 60 miles away. One tenant is disabled and on a pension; another makes only \$4 an hour when she can find work.

Tellers in the bank stared in shock as about 60 protesters waving anti-TD placards swarmed the office of Norman Huff, the branch manager who sold the land, chanting, "Huff, Huff, Huff."

A loud cheer and applause arose as Pallett stormed into Huff's office and presented him with a petition of 600 names of people angered at the sale of the property.

One placard read: "NORM HUFF- ed and puffed and blew it." Carrying another that read "Churches Urge Boycott of TD Bank" was retired Rev. Fred Wilkes of the United Church, who said, "If they're evicted over this injustice, I'll get the churches of Canada to withdraw our accounts

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# Farm family and others face eviction

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from the bank.

After 90 minutes of demonstrating, Pallett thanked everyone for their support, and the protesters, who came from as far away as Thornhill, Sutton, and Collingwood, dispersed quietly.

In response to Pallett's charges that the land was sold too cheaply, bank official David Rowe maintains the all-cash offer of

\$2.3 million received from Babel Investments Ltd. for the land "may well equal a higher sale price where the seller has to fulfil financing and developing costs."

Rowe admits to receiving a number of customer inquiries over the recent publicity, but stresses that "only two were negative three wondered what was going on and an equal number were supportive of the bank."

"We've provided them with every opportunity to sell the land," says Sue de Stein, manager of communications for the bank. "Besides, we're in a legally binding situation and we have to deliver the land to its owners."

Pallett says if nothing comes of "this parade, we'll have to recamp and go with it again."

"We're Canadians, and the backbone of jobs, and they're (TD) just taking them all away."