

Do you need a place to live?

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Christmas is coming and you've received word from 50 relatives and friends, who all tell you they are coming to visit for the holidays.

They don't ask, they just let you know they will all be arriving.

You have a 2,500 square foot, three-bedroom house. Do you foresee a problem here?

What do you do with 50 guests when you don't have room to accommodate them?

You can fit as many people into the bedrooms as you can, to start. It will be very awkward for some of them. The living room can accommodate a few people if someone sleeps on the sofa and others in a couple of chairs. A few will have to make do with a sleeping bag on the floor.

The basement is a good spot for some of your guests. If it's an unfinished basement it will be damp and probably cold ? live with it.

Once you have the house packed, you will have to make arrangements for the rest of the guests.

Uncle Jiff and some of the cousins can have the front porch. It's going to be cold, so bring an extra blanket.

Camping in the back yard is an option, if they remembered to bring a tent.

Finally, you've got cousin Elmer. No one likes him much so you point to the sidewalk in front of the house, and tell him that's all there is left.

Or, you could just tell these people you cannot accommodate 50 people at your house because there simply isn't any room.

The federal government has announced its immigration plan for the coming years which includes bringing in 500,000 people per year and doubling that in the future. And most of them will be coming to Ontario.

The question is, where are they going to go?

We already have a housing crisis in the province. Demand is greater than supply, forcing housing and rental costs to new, ridiculous prices.

I know many people who lament the fact that their children cannot afford to buy a house in their own home town. Many younger people have had to remain living with their parents because they simply cannot afford to get a place of their own.

Many of those younger people have said they don't believe home ownership will be an option for them in their lifetime.

The federal government says a larger population is necessary to keep the country viable. This does not make sense. Japan, which has zero immigration, is doing fine. Nordic countries in Scandinavia have much smaller populations and they are doing fine.

When asked where they expect all these people to live, the federal government has not provided an answer. In fact, they dodge the question every time it is asked.

The provincial government's plan to build 1.5 million homes has been a disaster. The plan to build on environmentally sensitive areas collapsed under pressure from the public, and there is now a criminal investigation underway because it is alleged developers were given secret information as to which land would be open for development.

There are going to be a lot of people forced out of their homes in the next couple of years thanks to variable rate mortgages and rising interest rates.

The interest rates themselves aren't that bad. However, when the cost of homes has risen too much, due to demand, the cost of carrying a mortgage, even at five per cent, becomes unmanageable for many people. The cost of housing has gone up ? people's salaries, have not.

Home ownership should not be limited only to the wealthy.

I don't know why the federal government is trying to bring in more people than we can handle. I don't buy its argument, for one reason ? it doesn't make sense.

At a time when inflation is forcing people to choose between food and clothing for their children, the last thing we need is to see more people unable to put a roof over their head.

Ontarians shouldn't have to go heavily in debt and doll out the majority of their income just to pay for a place to live.

The latest opinion polls show that the majority of Canadian are very concerned about this entire situation. But, of course, the majority are always the one that are silent.

There's nothing wrong with saying we simply cannot accommodate mass immigration at this time.

It's time the government put Canadians first.