

Editorial ? Is the Sunshine List really necessary?

It could be argued that we, as taxpayers, have a right to know what our tax dollars are going toward, and that could include what certain people are being paid.

On the other hand, it could be seen as a case of the public nose being stuck into places where it has no business being.

This comes in light of the release last week of what is commonly known as the Sunshine List, the list of public sector employees in Ontario who made more than \$100,000 last year.

There could be arguments of the public's right to know, considering it is well-known that public-sector employees enjoy certain benefits that we in the private sector might not, such as better pension benefits, medical plans and job security. But how far should that go? Why is a person who makes \$95,000 a year entitled to more privacy than one who has passed the century mark?

Those of us in the private sector are generally secure in the knowledge that only a few people know what we make. Most of us don't even know how much our bosses take home, and there's very little call for that to change.

As well, the threshold for the Sunshine List is probably out of date.

The number of Town of Caledon employees who made the list this year has more than doubled.

But Chief Administrative Officer Douglas Barnes made a number of points at Tuesday's meeting of Town council. Possibly the most telling one was that the list has been around for 17 years. If the threshold had been increased by \$1,000 per year over that period (which would have represented a very conservative inflation rate of less than one per cent), the number of Town employees making the list would have been reduced dramatically.

There was a time when we would have listed all the Town and Peel Region employees making the list, along with all those employed by the two local school boards. We don't do that now for the simple reason that there are just too many names. If we listed them all, there wouldn't be room for anything else in the paper, and that includes news, pictures and Claire Hoy.

If the list was intended to be an austerity measure brought in by the fiscally frugal government of Mike Harris, it's pretty clear that it hasn't worked.

So maybe it's time to scrap it.