

The campground is full

BRIAN LOCKHARTFROM THE SECOND ROW

If you have ever decided to go camping without a reservation during a long weekend in the summertime, you might see a big sign that says, 'Campground full ? No campsites available' when you arrive at the gate.

You may ask whoever is running the place to let you in because you won't take up a lot of room.

But they won't let you in and let you just pitch your tent on some corner of the grounds.

The same thing happens when you arrive at a hotel looking for a room when a big convention is in town.

'Sorry, we don't have any rooms available. They are all booked,' says the hotel staff.

You can plead with the concierge or the front desk clerk, but they can't rent you a room they don't have and they won't look the other way if you slip them a \$100 bill and let you sleep in the lobby or a broom closet.

In fact, adjusting prices based on supply and demand in the hotel industry is very common. If you are planning to rent a room in the city where the Super Bowl is taking place, that \$ 150-a-night room will now cost you a lot more because the hotel knows demand for that room is going to be very high.

So people either pay the higher price for the room or forget about visiting the city altogether.

I have now heard all the major political parties say they plan on building more houses, especially in Ontario.

This claim has now gone from the provincial level to the federal level.

But wait a minute ? when did the government start building homes?

I don't recall the province or the federal government ever creating a new subdivision. It's not their responsibility to build homes.

There are plenty of new subdivisions out there, but they all have signs that say something like 'Acme Home Builders ? Come see our model homes.'

I've never seen a sign that said, 'This subdivision was designed and built by the Ontario government ? Come see our model homes.'

The province, or feds now, only facilitates new developments by allowing them to happen.

If you think your municipal government has anything to do with it, you're mistaken. The municipality may have something to do with planning, but the province trumps a municipal government.

Your municipal government only exists at the pleasure of the province. The province can eliminate an entire town or city council at will.

I recall having a conversation with the mayor of a town about a very unpopular development that was going to happen. No one wanted this new subdivision that would drop hundreds of houses, jammed close together, in a semi-rural area with widely spaced houses and big lots.

The residents already living there did not want the tranquillity of their street to be clogged with new traffic on a property that was previously farmland.

When I questioned why he was allowing this to happen, the mayor shrugged and said, 'The province said it's going to happen, so it's going to happen whether people like it or not.'

The mayor had no control over development in the town he was elected to lead. None at all.

The call to build new houses is not the answer. The damage has already been done.

With so many people arriving on our shores and needing a place to live, the cost of housing has risen dramatically. For some people, the dream of owning a home in their hometown has disappeared.

Real estate prices never go down. Building another 1 million homes doesn't mean real estate will become affordable again.

No builder is going to develop a property and sell homes for \$300,000 when the guy down the street is selling homes for \$800,000. If you can't afford to buy a home now, you won't be able to afford to buy a home if they actually do build 1 million more houses.

Everyone knows the reason for the increase in housing costs, but no government seems willing to talk about it or provide a solution. They are too afraid they will be labelled as 'anti-immigrant.'

We have more people arriving than we have room.

Both the provincial and, especially the federal governments have to get a grip on the situation.

They are trying to solve a problem after the fact, rather than using careful planning ahead of time.