

# They mayor's right on this one

**W**e've expressed dismay at Mayor Larry Campbell's ham-fisted handling of Vancouver's Olympic bid. And we've questioned whether he might be morphing into that which he has condemned with COPE's bullying tactics: "There's eight of us and only two of you," he reminded the outnumbered and outgunned NPA duo at a recent council meeting.

But to give credit where it's due, the new mayor's steadfast resolve to establish a safe-injection facility in Vancouver is worthy of praise — even with a new timetable.

Throughout the campaign, Mr. Campbell maintained he'd open a site by Jan. 1 if elected. Although he no longer expects to meet that target — he says the facility will be functioning by late February or early March — we see no reason to condemn the delay, particularly given the uphill battle he's faced.

Despite stiff opposition from some federal MPs and police officers, Mr. Campbell has pushed ahead in his attempt to fulfill his promise. He has secured the assistance of a number of

groups that will help establish the facility, including the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, and the Centre for Disease Control.

The main reason for the delay seems to be Health Canada, which recently issued guidelines for the sites after concluding that the facilities would be legal only if they're part of a scientific study.

This week, Mr. Campbell attended a meeting at the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse to finalize those guidelines. Health Canada now says it'll accept applications for safe injection sites next month, and it'll take up to 60 days to process an application. Hence Mr. Campbell's statement that a site will be operational by March.

Although representatives of five other cities were at the meeting, others plan to wait to see what happens in Vancouver before proceeding. So Mr. Campbell's courage in pressing forward, and his ability to work with the feds and the province, are hopeful signs not only for the future of our city, but also our province and our country.