

Via cuts could add to highway traffic

by SANDY TURNER

If VIA Rail passenger service is reduced in Niagara, residents who depend on the train to get them to work in Toronto would probably take their cars, putting even more pressure on area roadways, according to Grimsby Mayor Ron Book, a member of regional council.

"In the last couple of years, a lot of people have moved into the area from Mississauga and Toronto, with the knowledge they can use the train (to get to work)," he said during an interview last week. "If they (the federal government) take off the train, traffic will increase and put pressure on roadways."

In Finance Minister Michael Wilson's April budget, a series of subsidy cuts were announced for VIA Rail, with the first cut pegged at approximately \$100-million. As a result, there have been many rumors about train cuts, one of them being the line that services Lincoln and the surrounding area.

"No one has confirmed or denied it," Mr. Book said. "Speculation is what it is."

Mr. Book explained that earlier this month, he received notes on a recent presentation made by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to Benoit Bouchard, Minister of Transport of Canada, concerning VIA Rail.

During the presentation, the FCM — of which Lincoln is a part through the region — warned the minister of long-range negative effects, such as

road congestion, if rail service "should be reduced or eliminated."

In part, the FCM told Mr. Bouchard: "It does not take into account the complex effects which any degree of rail closure will have on other governments and individual consumers who would pay the economic and

personal costs of dangerously overcrowded roads."

Additionally, it was noted that some of the objectives of commuter passenger rail transport are to avoid growth in road vehicle volume, as well as to avoid major road expenditures.

According to the FCM, there are 841,000 kilometres of roads

in Canada, and 66 percent of them are under municipal jurisdiction.

This means places like Lincoln would be hit with the major cost of repairing road surfaces, as well as putting up with increased traffic should VIA get the axe, or be reduced substantially.



People getting on and off the VIA Rail train, with suitcases, briefcases or whatever in hand, is a common sight at the station in Grimsby. As far as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is concerned, it wants this to continue to be a common sight across the country. The FCM is demanding that the federal government hold public hearings across the country before any changes are made to VIA Rail funding.

New minister chosen for Trinity United

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(The following has been provided by Joan Tovenati on behalf of Trinity United Church in Beamsville.)

A new person will occupy the manse at Trinity United Church in Beamsville this summer when Rev. Gerald A. Brown leaves St. Stephen in Burlington to take up pastoral duties here.

Mr. Brown has had an especially interesting career which includes prison chaplaincy and chaplaincy co-ordination for the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services. As well, he has served as a minister in churches in London and Mississauga.

His first priority in his new church will be getting to know the people of the congregation, for, Mr. Brown (who prefers to be called Gerry) believes pastoral visiting to be of the highest importance.

Preaching is another highlight for Gerry Brown. He explains: "I enjoy sharing my visions of God's world as we worship together."

When asked about hobbies, the new minister says, "I enjoy visiting my two grown-up daughters, and my young grandson. I like to get in the odd game of golf, and I can't wait to do a bit of gardening."