

Editorial Page

It's Now or Never

The Community Centre Fund campaign is proceeding at a very satisfying rate. Publicity on all phases of the campaign has been issued and a very favorable attitude towards the project is developing in the area. Letters have been forwarded to local organizations and speakers are now attending meetings to explain the project and answer questions.

Service clubs have been approached and members have been asked to sign their pledge card for their own personal gift. The response has been most gratifying. This pre-campaign personal pledging is being done by the municipal council members, the Central Campaign Committee, the Fire Fighters' Association, the Lions, Y's Men and Rotary Clubs. These are the only pledges that have been requested and these are only the members' personal pledges, and are not club pledges.

The only amounts to be announced are the averages from each of these organizations which can be used as a guide to help each citizen determine his own personal pledge. No individual personal contribution will at any time be published. The club averages, so far determined, indicate the success of the campaign is ensured.

One old chestnut that has been dragged out in practically every discussion has been the "swimming pool". We think it's about time to realize that this is water under the bridge.

This one subject has been in the minds of every member of the committee since the

community centre idea germinated. The policies set by the committee have been designed to insure that circumstances do not arise which would result in a situation which confronted the swimming pool committee some years ago.

The first policy adopted was a money back guarantee. The committee felt it necessary to make this a major point of the campaign. If sufficient money is not raised to complete the whole project—building and ice installation—all money collected will be returned to the individual contributors—100 cents on the dollar.

The second major point is "Now or Never". In the light of the money back guarantee no individual should have any reservations about pledging to the best of his ability. There is no point in qualifying your pledge with some statement such as, "When the building's up I'll think about it." This is not a pledge. And this will not build a community centre. The only way the campaign will be a success is for every citizen to contribute to the best of his or her ability.

When the canvasser knocks on your door remember he is a neighbor and a friend interested in the betterment of the community. It is not his job to high pressure you into a pledge you cannot meet. Only you can determine how much you should pledge. He will try to answer any questions you have and thank you for what you can give. Meet him with a smile.

Wasted Assets

In Canada, as in the United States, one out of every three high school students drops out before finishing schooling and starts working. Some indication of the enormous long-range cost of this appalling annual wastage of potential skills is given in a recent survey conducted by the United States Department of Labour.

The report, "School and Early Employment Experience of Youth", is based on the records of some 26,000 students in seven different states of the U.S. It shows why the proportion of "drop-outs" is so high and what happens to them as a result after they leave school, compared with those students who stay on and graduate with their high school diplomas.

The evidence is overwhelming that the "drop-outs" earn much less than do the graduates, invariably end up doing unskilled or—at best—semi-skilled jobs, are less liable to gain promotion and advancement—and more liable to suffer unemployment. If parents and teachers are looking for ammunition with which to deter premature school-leaving they have a veritable arsenal here.

Nor is this all by any means. The delayed penalties of dropping-out will soon become even stiffer with increased automation making greater demands than ever for skilled and highly-trained workers. And as the post-war babies enter the labour force in rapidly growing numbers it will be those who are best qualified who will secure the best jobs and the best rewards. Many "drop-outs", indeed, will be lucky to find any kind of regular employment.

Economic necessity is often pleaded in extenuation of premature school-leaving. But

this report confirms what many educators have long maintained—that this is far less true than is generally believed. It was seldom given as a reason by those students covered by the report.

Much more common were "dissatisfaction" and "boredom" with school or teacher or both. (This may be taken by some as indicating a low I.Q., but while this was indeed often the case, the record shows that many of the early-leavers had I.Q.'s which were just as high as those who remained to continue their education.)

Probably the most potent of all factors influencing the would-be "drop-out" is the urge to start earning and spending his or her own money. Long-term advantages are sacrificed in the process and both they and the nation are vastly the poorer as a result.

Most parents, no doubt, would say that they would much prefer that their children should complete their education, but they are all too often overcome. The solution would seem to lie in the direction of the earliest possible instruction by parent and teacher alike (but particularly parent) in the inestimable advantages of a finished education.

If the child is encouraged early enough to appreciate what is involved—if he or she is given a true sense of values and taught to love learning and reverent knowledge—there will be acceptance from the very beginning of the need to remain at school until graduation.

Now is not too soon for parents with children of school age to apply themselves to this end.

Sad Trend

"Are you reading any book now or have you read any in the past week?" This was the question recently put to a representative cross-section of adult Canadians by Gallup poll interviewers.

Of those questioned, only 26 per cent answered "yes" compared with 31 per cent in 1953 and 40 per cent in 1945. Thus, on the basis of this survey, three out of four adult Canadians were not reading a book of any kind in this particular week, suggesting that most—if not all—of them are regular readers at any time.

For a country with a literate population this proportion of non-book readers is so high (and is rising so fast) that one wonders how much higher it can get. True the experience of Canadian libraries in recent years would

appear to belie the trend evidenced in post-war opinion surveys on book reading. There are more libraries today in Canada than there ever were and more people are making use of them. This, however, has to be related to the 50 per cent increase in population since 1945 (from 12 million to 18 million).

It is all too probable that the opinion surveys are broadly correct, more's the pity. For all the other diversions that have made their appearance and compete for leisure hours, good reading remains the hallmark of the civilized man, the fount alike of profitable relaxation and pleasurable anticipation, a source of endless satisfaction.

And it is as true as ever it was that the man who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the man who can't.

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"Angler's Paradise"



—Photo by Esther Taylor

Sugar and Spice...

BY BILL SMILEY



Things are tough all over. Unemployment is creeping night-mares in Canada. The law situation is confused. The blacks are rising in Angola. And there's hell to pay in Cuba. And do you know something? I don't give a diddle. Normally, these circumstances would be of the utmost concern to me. But at the moment, I couldn't care less. Let them all go to it. I'm too busy getting ready for Opening Day.

To the non-fisherman, this may seem puerile and irresponsible. But Drake had his game of bowls before going out to clobber the Armada. And I'm going to enjoy one more Opening Day, even if I emerge from the bush at the end of it to find that Canada has declared war on Castro.

What is Opening Day? What does it signify? Well, on the surface, it is merely a day on which about a hundred thousand Canadians pour into the wilds at daybreak, seeking the lives of a few thousand trout. In the process they alleviate their aches, catch more colds than trout, and straggle home exhausted but happy. However, there's a great deal more to it than that, underneath. It's a response to an atavistic impulse as compelling as that which makes a wolf howl at the moon.

During the winter, this very wilderness under the tranquillizers of overheard homes, television, and big games. The trout fisherman looks and acts like any honest citizen. He is no more fiery than the trout itself, buried in mud at the bottom of a stream, sleeping the winter away. But when the raw winds of April blow, and the ice breaks up, look out. The rain-bow swarms up the streams to spawn. The voracious brown plover, the savage and primitive sturgeon and eel. By Opening Day, it has swelled to a lust that will be appeased by nothing but the blood of six inch trout.

Opening Day has, for the trout fisherman, the significance, the symbolism, the grace and passion that the bullfight holds for the aficionado. Here, there's no use going on like this. I'll try to reconstruct the ritual of Opening Day for you, and perhaps you will see for yourself. First of all, it must be approached with the proper feeling. You don't just pull on some old clothes and burgle into the bush with a fishing pole. Nothing of the sort. No more than you'd think of rushing up to the first attractive woman you saw and embracing her rudely.

What you do is start driving into the country about three weeks before Opening Day. Every time you see running water

er, you stop. You drag your wife out of the car and eagerly exhort her to "just look at that water!" All she can see, poor soul, is a muddy little stream. But you know perfectly well that that hole below the bridge is boiling with speckled. And you will bet any amount that there is at least one huge rain-bow, or maybe a pair, lurking behind that big log which you are sure would be there if only the water were clear.

That's the way you work up to it, gradually. You just go out into the country and spot all the places where the trout are as thick as flies. This saves a lot of time on Opening Day. And of course, you keep it to yourself. You don't want a whole crowd of those fellows from the city jammed around you while you're catching your limit. The night before Opening Day, for the fisherman, is like the night before her first big dance, for a maiden. The air is electric with excitement. And while you're getting your gear together, some of the chaps drop in, just to see if you are all set.

And no, they can't stay a minute, because we have to get up at four, so we'll be right at the pool at first light—well, maybe a short one, and make it light. And first thing you know, it's 3 a.m. and you haven't started looking for your waters. Three hours later, you tot-

ter out of the house, feeling as though you'd been clubbed. But the cold air hits you and your savage, primitive instinct begins to surge again. And you sneer down the street at the darkened houses of all the little, soft people who are still in bed.

And you race for the stream, blood pounding, through the raw, dark morning. With the heater on high. And you slip up that back road and park a quarter mile from the pool so nobody will follow you and spoil that first glorious cast. And you stumble through the bush, careless in your hurry to be the first, and alone. And in the dark, you tear your pants and go in over the tops of your waders. But the wild exultation drives you on, indifferent to discomfort.

And you feel your way along the little path, past the big stump, until you know the pool is just ahead. And you stop there and breathe deep in the darkness, and you feel good, and alive. And carefully, by touch, you put your bait on. Then the black turns to gray, you advance cautiously to the pool's edge, and prepare for your first cast of the season, feeling like a king.

G.A.D. About

Thirty Fickle Years

As I look back over the past years that the covered arena has been in use, I think of many happy times and some disappointments along the way. In those days, we must remember, that there was no artificial ice of any sort. The supply of ice was hauled from the ponds and put in storage, packed in saw dust. Those were the days of the ice-man with delivery about three days a week. One must have had to have cold weather. There was no oil or gas heating in these parts at least. Times have changed. Automatic refrigeration has come to most homes and business places. During the years, artificial ice came to the cities fast and has been spreading to the smaller communities.

Now, dotted throughout the countryside, there are ice surfaces that are not dependent on the whims of one Canadian winter. The next season starts right after the fall fair season ends and goes right on into spring. We seem to like our winter activities better. We do not like our ice sports to have so many interruptions. There just isn't time to finish hockey playoffs in the natural ice season. The result is that the big game receipts go to the arenas with artificial surfaces. There cannot be time to arrange carnivals and be sure of having suitable ice. For 30 years we have had fun with the limits of our years.

Last year, time took its toll and the roof of the curling rink

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

BACK IN 1941

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, May 1, 1941.

Fire of unknown origin destroyed one of the outbuildings at the park, Sunday afternoon. Its isolation from the other buildings made the danger of fire spreading unlikely and no alarm was sent in.

A 19-year-old cyclist, Ray Harding, died of injuries received when he was knocked off his bicycle when in collision with a motor car east of Acton Sunday evening. Accompanied by a friend, the two lads were cycling home. The car was driven by Corporal Mulker of the Netherlands Regiment, stationed in Stratford, and was proceeding west at the time the accident took place. The young man was thrown into the ditch by the impact and suffered terrible head injuries. He died as attendants were lifting him into the ambulance.

Following the resignation of R. M. McDonald from the council position, Acton council Tuesday evening made arrangements for H. F. Fox of the town work force to handle the duties on the grounds of the cemetery.

Acton entries in the Halton Music Festival last Thursday and Friday made a splendid showing in the competition and came home with several trophies and awards. All entries in the festival received high praise from the adjudicator and the music teachers were singled out for additional congratulations. The Tuesday affair attracted a large audience and everyone expressed their appreciation of the fine performance.

Students at Acton Community School raised over \$100 for the Greek Relief Fund during their tag day last Saturday. The girls were on the streets from early morning until dark and their efforts were as willing as the donations of the people. A letter of appreciation from the chairman of the committee was received by principal M. Leach and read to the students at the school.

BACK IN 1911

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, April 27, 1911.

Mr. Jeremiah Bell has his portable saw mill in action and according to all reports, is doing a thriving business. The equipment does a good job and many citizens are fascinated to watch the operation.

Mr. Basil Johnstone met with an unfortunate accident Monday evening while attending his horses. One of them kicked him in the face, inflicting a deep cut below the eye. The wound required several stitches to close but he is fortunate the injury was not more serious.

Walker Lodge staged a delightful "At Home" evening last Thursday in the town hall. Over 200 guests, members and wives were present to enjoy the excellent evening including a delicious dinner.

Trout fishing starts next Monday and according to some of the reports, a number of ardent fishermen will be playing hockey from work to enjoy their favorite sport.

A number of real estate changes have taken place recently and one of interest is the sale by Morris Sars of the Smith property of Morris, Beattie, and Co. for \$1000.

Mr. J. P. Sars, who went to England a little over a year ago, has decided to return to Canada and take up residence in Acton once again. He will have a large pool on the 7th of May and will be welcomed back to Acton.

The Grand Trunk Railway's pattern have been in Acton for the past few days and have displayed two coats of paint on the station. The place is a very attractive one and is well kept.

Last Wednesday evening, a meeting of the organization of a Boy Scout troop in Acton was held at the home of Mrs. J. P. Sars. On Saturday the boys in their respective parties will drill and practice and have a very successful camp.

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