

Editorial Page

Informed Voting

Trafalgar Township councillors are studying a suggestion to grant a \$10 tax reduction to households in which eligible voters cast ballots at the municipal elections.

The suggestion, made last week, has been referred to the finance committee and to the Oakville-Trafalgar amalgamation committee.

It all seemed so incredible we could hardly believe such a suggestion would be given more than passing attention. Perhaps it will die at the committee stage. In the meantime it may have stirred some serious thinking.

Municipal voting never seems to set any great records for attendance at the polls. In the last Trafalgar election 21 per cent of the electors cast their ballot. This illustrates the extent to which voters exercise the freedom not to vote. It is indicative of apathy that is dangerous.

It is startling to think that in this democracy we are all so supposedly proud of, the almighty dollar should have to be introduced as the incentive to vote. Surely that

takes us only steps away from the situation now being exposed in Quebec, where tax dollars were being used to buy influence and eventually votes.

There are penalties imposed and inducements offered in other countries for voting but these appear no more acceptable to us. A forced vote is not necessarily an intelligent vote or an informed vote. It is simply action taken for immediate return, either exemption from penalty or to earn an inducement.

While voting records in any municipality seldom show an encouraging interest by electors, votes are not held to accumulate statistics. They are held to elect citizens to positions of responsibility. Experience has shown that the apathetic section of an electorate does not resent elections controlled by a minority until some crisis develops. Then of course the electorate becomes aroused.

It is unfortunate but true and a \$10 tax inducement to voting would not necessarily lead to any more effective voting than we have at present.

Worth Study

Announced changes in the secondary school system, effective in 1962, that will provide three distinct branches, is encouraging not only for the student whose interests may not be solely academic but for the general public as well who are seeing an increasing number of drop-outs and unemployment.

Hon. John P. Robarts has announced that secondary schools will be encouraged to organize into three distinct but equal branches (1) arts and science, (2) business and commerce, (3) engineering, technology and trades.

Within each branch there will be an interesting and challenging five year program ending in Grade 13, through which students may proceed to higher education and training.

Each branch will offer, as an alternative for those whose aptitudes and ambitions do not tend toward advanced education, a four year program ending in Grade 12, with a distinctly practical emphasis which will lead its graduates more directly into the field of their life's work.

In September 1962 pupils entering Grade

9 would be interviewed and counselled and choose one of the three branches in which to enrol. At the end of Grade 9 successful pupils will be free to transfer from branch to branch and after Grade 10 it will be possible within certain limitations for pupils to transfer from branch to branch and program to program.

Objectives of the program are to make school more interesting and rewarding for students; elicit maximum achievement from greater numbers of students at all levels; educate and train a much larger proportion of young people thoroughly and to a higher degree and thus help Canada to meet the challenges of today's increasingly complex social and economic setting.

Naturally the plan will depend on good counselling, good teaching and co-operative ambitious students. It will upgrade technical training that has for too long been looked on as a poor cousin of straight academic study.

We sincerely hope the local board will study the suggested program thoroughly to determine if its implementation will be practical and useful in this area.

Happening Here

Other peoples in other places may let their governors push them around but, any Canadian will declare, that sort of thing just can't happen here. However — and let there be no mistake about it — that sort of thing is happening here. Public officials, elected and appointed, trespass on private rights to a degree that earlier generations would have found intolerable. How attitudes have changed is the subject of a thoughtful editorial in the *Financial Post*, which discusses the recent seizure by the government of British Columbia of the assets of the British Columbia Power Corporation.

The take-over of B.C. Electric by the B.C. government is remarkable because of the degree of apathy with which the public has witnessed this exercise of naked power. Particularly in the decades since the beginning of the last war, the public seems to have become numb to government decree no matter how drastic, no matter how confiscatory, no matter how great an infringement of what were, until recently, generally regarded as private rights.

Punitive succession duties, towering income taxes, and state regulation of many aspects of business activity have apparently accustomed the Canadian of 1961 to tolerate, or not to be surprised at, almost any act of government. A mere half century ago, the overwhelming Canadian view was "What's mine is mine." By 1961 it would seem that the prevailing view is "What's mine is what government lets me have as left over."

Accompanying this very profound change in what the public seems willing to let government do, has there been any increase in public opinion about the selection

of people to whom it entrusts power? Of that we see no evidence. We do see a great deal of cynicism in government; and an increase in bureaucratic folly as bureaucracy continues to grow. Because of the enormous efficiency of the tax system, we do see governments able to make prodigious handouts to particular segments of our society — and to collect rich political dividends therefrom.

"It has long been an axiom that Parliament can do anything but turn a man into a woman. It has long been a principle of democracy that majority opinion rules. All history shows there is no turning the clock back. But for all men of affairs, the B.C. take-over is instructive. It is a very powerful illustration of how far public opinion in this country has moved in only a few decades; of how drastically political and economic concepts have changed among the public at large; of how much today's individual is enhanced by the government he helps elect."

MUSICAL TRIUMPH

"I admire that last piece you played, Professor. It had a sort of wild freedom about it, you know a sort of get up and go that just suited me. Was it a composition of your own?"

"Madam," responded the eminent musician, "I was putting a new E string on my violin."

A wealthy Texan returning from England was asked by an artistic friend if he'd picked up a Van Gogh or a Picasso.

"Naw," said the traveller, "they are all left-handed drivers over there and besides, I already have three cars."



—Photo by Esther Taylor

Sugar and Spice...

BY BILL SMILEY



Remember, a couple of weeks ago, I was telling what a wicked place The City has become. And of the dreadful pitfalls into which a steady, reliable chap from a small town can stumble, particularly if he's at the dangerous age? I promised to continue the confession of my wild adventures that night, in the next week's column, but I couldn't bring myself to do it.

After serious thought, however, I've decided it's my duty to reveal the perils and the pitfalls that exist, in the hope that you may be saved, should your foot slip from the path of righteousness, as mine did.

You'll remember that, torn by what I know, what strange and wretched desires, I had already been clipped at a honky-tonk piano joint. And then been shorted at one of those wicked foreign movies in which the actors seem to think sex is funny, not sinful, as we all know it is.

Well, I escaped from there, and had determined to go straight back to my room and read a pamphlet called *The Teacher's Superintention Act*, in an attempt to pull myself together.

But I fell. It was a warm, seductive, summer night, remember. Just as I walked past this narrow old house, it happened. The door was open, young people laughed and talked in the dimly lit hall, and from the depths of the house, faintly, came a sweet song and the tinkle of a guitar.

I couldn't help it. I turned and walked straight in. I must have thought I was in another incarnation, as superior on a street in Marseilles or Shanghai, rather than a staid thoroughfare in what was not long ago the dirtiest city in Christendom.

A lovely, handsome, young fellow barred my way and asked me, pleasantly enough, if I was a member. When I shook my head, mouth open, he suggested I might like to join. If I could have been the Lorenz Leghorn for all I cared. Looking over the modest fee, I almost knicked him down as I hastened through the door, anticipating mystic rites, cabalistic ceremonies, exotic dancing girls and, if necessary, a pipe of two of opium.

It was dark inside. On a small, lighted platform in the middle of the room, in the centre of the gloom, stood a very pretty girl, with deep red hair and white skin and white teeth that gleamed as she sang.

Sad songs and love songs and old songs and funny songs she sang, picking them out as dimly and as strongly as she picked out the accompaniment on her guitar. And that was my introduction to *The Purple Onion*, and the world

of folk music, blues and jazz that comes to life in The City when everything else is going to sleep.

On the surface, these clubs — there are half a dozen of them in The City now — look like dens of iniquity. They are shabby, dimly lit. There is exciting music, and in some, home-made poetry. They are full of kids in their early twenties. The atmosphere is intimate. They stay open late, late.

And yet, it's a curiously innocent world. Let's take a look at *The Purple Onion*. First, the audience. Here, three pretty Japanese girls listen intently. Over there, five young fellows, huckle the singer, prodding her, between songs. Near them, two young married couples, sipping onion soup. A big, salved blonde girl sits gazing into space.

What about the atmosphere? Well, the wildest drinks served are hot apple cider and a youthful nightmarer called coke-a-lute, which, believe it or not, is coke and milk, mixed. The entertainers joke with the audience, and there's no snuff. The waitresses smoke on the job, and demand cash for coffee. A fellow with a beard and a babe with long black hair struggle noisily in the tiny kitchen, looking like two people washing up after a party.

Let's have a chat with that girl singer, who's just finished a set of songs. There's no dressing room to retire to, so she sits down and drinks coffee. Let's chat with her. It's a nervous-looking young fellow, in horn-rimmed specs.

She's Karen James, 21, folk-singer by choice, Canadian by residence. Nonagenarian Spanish ancestry. She's poised, intelligent and knows what she wants to do. Her ideal of the good life would be that of a strapping singer, wandering from town to town. But she concludes that that is impossible for a girl, especially one

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Back in 1941

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, Sept. 11, 1941.

In the annual tournament on Saturday for the Ladies' Golf Championship of Cedar Crest Golf Club at Georgetown, Miss Dorothy McPherson of Acton won the shield emblematic of this feat for the year. This is the first time the shield has come to Acton and friends here congratulate Miss McPherson on her fine game.

Haltoun Junior Homemakers brought back high honors from the Exhibition with their entry club-dram demonstrations. Verna Webster, Molly Curtis and Dorothy Siegel won top honors in the home economics competition. Other Haltoun members were successful in winning a number of awards in the craft competition.

While harvesting his potato crop this week, Rev. J. B. Chalmer dug up a potato which had grown in a perfect V shape. It is on display in the Free Press window for anyone doubtful to see.

The Acton Fall Fair next week promises to be one of the best to date. Directors have engaged a large midway for the amusement of the kiddies and other features of the fair and exhibit promise a most successful event again this year. The Tuesday evening arena show will undoubtedly make a packed house.

A native of Acton and one who had the distinction of being in business here the longest time, John Kenney has moved to Guelph where he will make his home. He has sold his home on Church St. to Mr. V. Davis of Galt.

Little Judy Beer, June Hepburn and Barbara Nelson board the bus to help the "toy children" in London, England, hospital when they netted \$341 in a booth sale. The youngsters sold cold drinks, magazines and stickers to the neighborhood children.

A number of employees from Mason Knitting Mills enjoyed a weekend rest at Lumberton last week. The gathering had fine weather and everyone enjoyed a sunbath and several games before the food was consumed.

Back in 1911

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, Sept. 7, 1911.

Last Wednesday evening about eight o'clock the motor car of Mr. Fred H. Storey was totally destroyed by fire. Mr. Storey was in Guelph that evening and Mr. Macklin, engineer of the glove works, took out the car. After driving about town for a little while, he went to a supply of gasoline. It was nearly dark and it spilled. Macklin then got into the car. Before starting away, he lit his pipe, carelessly throwing down the match.

In a flash, the car was enveloped in flames which shot about 20 or 30 feet in the air. The fire brigade was called out and subdued the flames, but not before the car was a total ruin. The machine was a 30 horsepower Hovershott and was a show car built for exhibition at the Toronto Egg last fall. It was valued at \$2,350 and extras added by Mr. Storey brought the value up to \$3,500.

The after midnight service of the street lighting system the past two weeks has been appreciated by citizens driving home from the fair by the late train. An all-night service will be much appreciated when we get Hydro-Electric connections.

Schools opened on Tuesday and the enrollment for both continuation and public schools amounted to 247. A number expected to enroll have not done so to the fair but are expected to do so very shortly.

At a meeting of the trustee board of the Methodist church last week, the resignation of Mr. William Williams was tendered and because of very tangible reasons, was accepted. He has been in charge of the choir for the past five years. Mr. N. E. Moore was appointed to this position with Mr. J. C. Hill his assistant.

During the thunderstorm Saturday evening, following strike in the postoffice but after a careful investigation, it was found that only slight damage had occurred and was repaired immediately. Streets were flooded during the downpour and some homes had water in the cellars.

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