

Free Press Editorial Page

Darcy on the hot seat...

Darcy McKeough, the cartographer from Chatham who's been busy remaking the map of Ontario for regional government, is on the hot seat.

As the Minister of Municipal Affairs he's the target for shafts aimed from parts as far apart as Moosonee and Windsor. Any approbation which would normally come from those who cleave to the same political party is being drowned out in the sea of protest. Even those who are convinced regional government will alleviate some of the planning and fiscal problems which distress the province, are having trouble being heard.

There are not many ministers who would trade portfolios for the one marked Department of Municipal Affairs. Or its sister ship, the Department of Education, where Bob Davis is at the helm.

Take Halton County as an example. Darcy wants to remake the old county over, streamline the antique system of balkanized municipal boundaries into less costly, larger units and join them all up with Peel, where a similar process is taking place.

An impartial observer might think this was reasonable if he didn't consult anyone involved in the land transaction or take into account petty jealousies and rivalries between the municipalities involved.

Rural communities were

incensed, however. Nassagaweya and Esqueving townships foresee regional government as proposed by the Department of Municipal Affairs as being the end of local autonomy and identity. Neighboring towns and villages, they claim, will swallow them up and obliterate traditions and roots which go back to the time of the pioneers.

Neither township has any major debt and the ratepayers certainly don't want to start paying for excesses piled up by other communities.

The smaller towns are disturbed for reasons along the same lines. Most of them have been careful with tax money. They look with horror at the spending of larger towns and cities without realizing in many cases that it is the per capita debt which is the true indicator.

Small towns generally figure the larger places see regional government as a means of finally acquiring land and dictating policies to neighboring communities they have coveted for years.

Small town and rural representatives have not been remiss in letting Mr. McKeough know they don't particularly care for his brand of map making. About the only thing most municipal representatives from Halton are agreed upon is that the county should stand alone as a unit of regional government. Let Peel look after its own problems, they concur.



EASTER SONNETY AND FRIEND TRACEY Relaxing at Holmes' Milton farm

Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Last week I wrote a column which must have made faithful readers believe I was either taken with drink, or breaking down mentally. It was full of joy and good spirits, looking on the bright side, and revealing silver linings.

It's a great relief to me, and it must be to you, to go back to normal. Last week was a brief mental aberration. This week, I'm back to my old sane, snarly, misanthropic self: the man my wife calls "Old Stoneface."

What I propose to do today is act as your alter-ego, the brooding, dark self that is hidden behind your bright, sunny exterior. I'm going to let you take out your aggressions, vicariously, through mine.

I'll list what I despise and detest in our society. Send in your own special beefs, and we'll keep the column going for months. Everybody hates something.

There is no particular order to these items. My venom extends with equal virulence to each.

First. Non-returnable bottles. I know. The old ones were bad enough, cluttering up shelves and basement floors until you had a car-load. It was a half-day's work to take them back to the store and haggle over them, because the store said they didn't sell this brand or that.

But you could get rid of them. And for kids, they were, in many instances, their sole source of income. Many a Saturday I spent as a boy, searching ditches for miles, and coming home with 32 cents for a day's work.

The non-returnable bottle is about as easy to get rid of as chronic arthritis. I demand that their manufacturers give every customer, free, a plastic bucket, filled with a solution which will instantly dissolve the cursed things when they're dropped into it.

The same goes for cans that hold drinks, whether beer or pop. In ten years, you won't be able to step on a piece of nature south of the Arctic Circle without twisting your ankle on an empty beer-can.

Next. Long-distance dial telephone calls. A few years ago, you gave your

number to good old operator, and within a reasonable time, you got your party, or didn't.

On the do-it-yourself plan, with a string of digits as long as your leg, anything can happen. A friend of mine called his son in Montreal the other night. He didn't have his glasses on, and wound up talking to the secretary of the Sheep Breeders' Association in Auckland, New Zealand.

How about zippers? Great invention, but it should have been strangled at birth. What ever happened to the good old button? Every time I tangle with a zipper, whether it's on my galoshes or my fly, there is a moment of sheer, cold apprehension. Often it's justified—and there I am with my galoshes flopping around like a pair of drunken crows.

Politicians. Not all of them. Only those who promise to hold the line on expenses, while providing better services. And then do the opposite.

Taxes. The rich are hit hard, but have enough left to avoid starvation. The poor pay none, or very little. It's the middle-income bird who gets it where it hurts. One of these days, I'm off to Bermuda, where "taxes" is a dirty word.

Social slavery. We know that as individuals, we have free will. But we are strangled with so many regulations and traditions and pressures that our free will becomes a broken-winged bird in a cage tastefully decorated with red tape and ridiculousity.

Love. If there's anything that turns my stomach, it is people who preach love, including hippies, and spend most of their time telling you about all the people and things they hate.

Hate. How can people hate other people? Yet they do. I hate but I can't remember ever hating a person in my life. Lots of people are despicable, contemptible, malicious or just plain boring. But you don't hate them. You pity them. I hate hate, and there's lots of it around.

O.K., chaps. It's your turn. Let's hear from you. This is hate week.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, March 17, 1949.

Just after scholars had resumed their classes at the public school yesterday morning a large section of the ceiling plaster in the main hall fell into the stairway. Fortunately no one was injured. The school building is 56 years old and this hall is the only ceiling portion that has not been replaced by metal ceiling.

Acton Junior Medmen started out from Acton for Penelton Falls in the worst snowstorm of the winter last Thursday. Thanks to Stan Fay Sr., Les McSwain, Ken Blow and Dr. Sigs they made out all right. Acton dated Penelton Falls but then lost the first to South River on Tuesday.

Milton has opened its new artificial ice surface.

Following are the results of the mid-winter piano examinations for pupils of Mrs. Gowdy: Joan Coles grade 8 honors; Lorraine Mullin grade 5 honors; Elaine Hufnagel grade 4 honors; Denise Coles, grade 4, 1st class honors.

The Rotary club has 30 lawn chairs made and ready for painting. Members at their meeting Tuesday enjoyed grapefruit sent from the south by president Amos Mason.

Born—To Mr. and Mrs. Charles Heard, a daughter, Eleanor Emily; to Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Harris a son Ivan Merl; to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Gibbons a third son; to Mr. and Mrs. Jack McMullen a baby sister for three boys.

Well-known Osprings resident Willms John Jackson passed away following a severe stroke.

The Ontario cabinet have raised their salaries by \$2,000. No wonder taxes must remain at such a high level.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press March 13, 1919.

The medals won by our high school students in the essay competition on the Victory Loan were received last week and were presented to Duff Wilson, Stella McLam, Isabel Elliott, and Willie Stewart. 202 citizens went down by the specials on the electric railroad to witness the hockey club excursion. Beardmore's Acton defeated Beardmore's Toronto 8-2 in Ravina rink. The return trip started for home about 12 o'clock. There was pie and cake and peanuts and no room for a grouch.

The fact most hockeyists seem to be moaning now is that the season is so nearly over and no more ice available here. With the aggregation Acton now has mustered together they are in shape to give a number of their former opponents a good sound

Salt and Pepper

by hartley coles



THE OLD HEAD is buzzing with vignettes this week from flying saucers to puffs (pronounced poofs).

This puff business started back in Ottawa at the O.W.N.A. convention where my better half decided the cleaners' money handkerchief lodged in a suit coat breast pocket was not suitable for an ornament like me. So she used this as an excuse to spend two or three hours browsing through Ottawa stores.

She emerged from one half-price sale with this poof, pardon me, puff. Doesn't matter what you wear, the puff will match it.

Me, I have trouble folding a handkerchief properly. So every female at home base considers it her duty to see this many colored Joseph's coat of a puff matches the ensemble I'm wearing.

When you've got two to choose from this can be quite a chore. So for the past three weeks they've been tearing the thing out of my pocket, refolding it and stuffing it back in the pocket again.

It's a good job old Nasser is busy over there in Egypt or I might end up like Joseph did when he was sold into slavery because of all the colors in his coat.

But so far I haven't met anyone who is jealous of the thing. Most of my pals just figure I'm a sloppy eater.

BEEN BACHIN' IT for almost a week now. Wife's been over to Guelph to have a part removed. I've been tearing over there every night to see her and superintend her recovery.

Doctor told me there'd be quite a change in her but I got quite a jolt Monday. Rushed into her room to announce my arrival. Stopped up short. An elderly lady looked back at me.

What a change, I thought, from one operation. Rushed to the nurse.

"Oh, we moved your wife to another room this afternoon," she said.

Medical miracles, baloney!

DON'T BELIEVE in flying saucers yet?

DRUBBING. With Gardiner, Durno and Gordon Beardmore on the forward line and Malow and Torrance Beardmore on defence and Kennedy in goal it makes an excellent combination.

A covered rink would be greatly appreciated.

A fine new organ has been installed in the Church of Christ Disciples at Everton.

Mr. N. P. McLam, who was obliged to close his blacksmith shop because of ill health, will be able to open again in April.

The roof of the old Methodist church shed at Limehouse collapsed under the weight of snow.

Harold Wiles will re-open his ice cream parlor this week. A deputation of ladies waited on the members of the Lawn Bowling club to ascertain their views on ladies bowling.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, March 15, 1894.

The new fire company was called out the first time on an alarm of "fire!" on Tuesday evening about half past nine; a blazing chimney on the house occupied by Mr. A. E. Wright being the cause. The fire was soon extinguished without the aid of the company though the ladders were placed ready for use if required.

Under command of Chief Cameron the boys did their work exceedingly well and with a little more practice will handle their new apparatus like veterans. The improved toll attached to the town bell is a complete success, and the difficulties experienced heretofore are now entirely overcome.

There were 84 births, 16 marriages and 52 deaths in Esqueving in 1893.

A firm from London have erected a very fine metal sign for Messrs. W. H. Storey and Son on top of the east wall of the Canada Glove Works. It can be read with ease by passengers enroute on the G.T.R.

Itch on humans and horses and all animals cured in 30 minutes by Woolford's Sanitary Lotion. Sold by J. V. Kennanvin, druggist.

A few days ago a deputation called on Sir Oliver Mowatt to ask him to give women the vote. He said he was personally in favor of it but could hardly hope to live to see these hopes realized as many even in his own party were opposed.

Kelly's store, Acton—men's wool pants \$1.25.

Everything is in readiness for the opening of Parliament tomorrow at Ottawa. There are only four new members. This being Lord Aberdeen's first year it is expected the proceedings will be more than usually gay.

Wasting talent...

So you can see the dilemma Mr. McKeough is in. He's going to be cast as the villain no matter what course of action he charts.

However, the government's decision to proceed with regional government does not seem to have been influenced by the criticism. A statement in the budget last week reaffirmed the province will go ahead with plans to regionalize Ontario.

According to the budget report, regional government policy will complement and support Ontario's other reform programs. The strength of the new regional unit the government believes lies in three directions:

- 1. A geographic area large enough for proper physical and economic planning.
2. A population large enough to achieve economies of scale in the provision of public services.
3. A financial base adequate and diversified enough to support a reasonable level and range of services.

The Minister set March 7 as the date for briefs from the municipalities involved in the Peel-Halton plan. He promised that any suggestions to improve his plan would be considered in the final legislation, expected to be passed in 1970.

Much inconvenience...

The news is going to break any day now that the Canadian Transport Commission will be holding a public meeting to remove the agents from the railway stations affected by the proposed Guelph master agency plan.

According to reports M.P. Rud

Whiting has received, from the Commission, it will be up to the C.N. to prove there will be no inconvenience to the public in Acton or district if the agent is removed.

That, of course, is a lot of nonsense. The last meeting in Acton demonstrably proved there has been much inconvenience to the public for many years as the railway gradually cut off railway services. The last straw in the gradual "phasing out" was the removal of all the agent's functions, including the telephone, and supposedly supplying the same service from Guelph.

The latter part of the railway's actions have been well advertised, unlike the earlier cut-offs.

Of course, the inconvenience to the public has been offset by the fact that other means of transport were available and people are using them.

However, with the increasing amount of traffic on already congested roads passenger service could be on the upswing if a service was available. As it is now only one train stops in the morning going east and the other stops in the evening going west.

Does the railway want people to use the bus?

The ridiculous part of the entire plan is that it is all being done in the name of economy.



AQUATIC CLUB on Fairy Lake is shown in this old picture, used for a postcard. Charlie Landsborough lent it for this series. More pictures would be welcome.

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