

THE GEORGETOWN HERALD

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 Reg. Broombhead Harold Davison
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The Editor's Column

IS WAR-TIME HOUSING THE ANSWER?

From time to time we have talked about the housing shortage in Georgetown, public meetings have been called, the town council has discussed it and the sum of all decisions has resulted in no action. Now once again with the appearance at council last week of Mr. G. Spry, representing Wartime Housing, the problem is in the limelight. We understand that a deputation of interested citizens will appear at a special council meeting tomorrow night to argue the pros and cons and to urge council to take some action.

We are frankly at a loss to know just where we stand on the question. Our only acquaintance with a "wartime house" is second-hand — that is by photograph and by the information revealed by Mr. Spry. From this, we judge that the housing provided is adequate, though leaving much to be desired. Particularly we note the lack of a basement and furnace and do not see why this could not be provided.

The rental scale which is apparently not subject to change is also somewhat out of line with prevailing rents in Georgetown. \$30 is high for a 6-roomed house, which many veterans would require for their needs, and \$27.50 and \$22.00 for five and four roomed houses are also somewhat above other rental values.

The big stumbling block, of course, is that of location. Wartime Housing requires the town to supply the land and sell it to the company at \$1. a lot. It is preferred, though not required, that the land be in one or two large blocks — this to simplify building operations and to aid in landscaping and planning. If this latter is to be done, there are only a few locations available and most of these consist of farm land within the municipality. If the owners of this were not of a mind to sell, investigation could be made of farm land bordering the town with the idea of incorporating it in town limits. Here we would have a further problem of extending the boundaries of a town which is already too big geographically for its population and raising costs of sewage, water, pavement and other public services. If land were to be purchased in smaller pieces, there are many of these available at a price — a very high one. And here one bumps up against the unwillingness of an owner with, say, a \$6000 house not wishing to have one half this value erected next door.

Extremists will argue that the erection of 25 wartime houses will mean creating a future slum district in Georgetown. We do not agree with this argument, though we would not go so far as to say that we would be creating a Forest Hill Village either. The houses would be adequate and as well-built as many privately built homes where cost is higher. Definite advantages to their upkeep is the government plan to redecorate when a change in tenancy occurs and to provide paint every three years for the tenant to do his own decorating.

The cost to the town is something which must be considered. If property can be purchased, we should estimate that the cost will be at least \$200 a lot, or a total of \$5000 for 25 units. Costs would certainly not exceed double this figure. On top of this must be added costs of levelling the lots and provisions for town services. For this the town gets a fixed tax rate of \$24. for a 2-bed-room house and \$30. for the larger, plus \$1. a house yearly for street lighting. When the 15-year agreement ends, the town also has the option of purchasing the houses in bulk at a price of \$1,000 a house.

These, as we see them, are the main facts about the problem. There is no need for writing at length about the need for housing of some kind. We can think of at least twenty-five people right in town who are desperately in need of a place to live. Whether Wartime Housing is the solution is a question which will have to be decided soon, or else it will be too late this year to go ahead with any plans.

WE'VE HAD IT!

Our hockey season came to rather an abrupt end last Thursday night and the Papermakers have hung up their sweaters for another year. Too bad when we were just on the edge of the championship, but somebody has to win and somebody has to lose. Now we know how they feel in Fergus and Port Elgin and Owen Sound. We can't altogether agree that the best team won. In fact we'll go out on a limb and say that we think Owen Sound had the edge on both Preston and Georgetown and if we were to be defeated, we would have liked to see the Lumbermen take it.

The Thursday game was a tough one to lose. Per- haps the delay and the few seconds allowed Georgetown to feel the rink had much to do with the psychological effect of a disputed goal at

a crucial moment. Added to this was the superlative checking of the Preston Vets who play a rugged brand of hockey which we had almost forgotten since Fergus bowed out.

However, though we won't say the BEST team won, we'll say that a GOOD team won and we hope that they will go on, and take the last two series from London and Bobcaygeon. Now, with several columns to fill up with something other than hockey news, we begin our yearly wondering as to where the news will come to replace it, during the lull between hockey and baseball.

We're going back on a promise to unmask Elmer at the end of the season. The little fellow has been a source of great interest in his anonymity and he prefers to aesteve and come out incognito again next year. He's called 'em right and called 'em wrong, but he's never failed to cause a lot of comment, so thanks a lot, Elmer.

AN EXCELLENT REPORT

We hope that everyone will read the report of the Medical Officer of Health which is always presented in such a concise and informative manner. Dr. C. V. Williams always exceeds his requirements when it comes to giving a yearly report on health conditions in Georgetown and shows that his interest is far ahead of the small monetary consideration of the job.

He has been a champion of everything which will benefit the town — sewage, improved educational facilities, immunization against disease — and this year adds a personal note favouring sterilization of the feeble minded. This of course is a national rather than a municipal problem, but national opinion is the sum total of individual opinion, and we commend Dr. Williams for his stand in this matter and hope that other doctors will side with him in his vision of a healthier race of Canadians.

We also note his reference to the work undertaken for a one-year period several years ago by the Lions Club, of conducting a dental survey in the public school. This excellent work is often referred to and we should like to see the Lions Club or some other public-spirited group take it up again next year. Teeth are so important to good health that it is unfortunate to allow our children's well-being to suffer because of carelessness or lack of finances.

AN ACTIVE SUMMER

There are so many plans in the offing for celebrations this summer, that once again we can't help but snicker at the city folk who think nothing ever happens in a small town. The Girls Pipe Band have booked a Victory Day at the park in June, and arrangements are being made by a committee in the Glen for a big celebration in late June in honour of war veterans from the village.

The Lions Club have planned a three-day Dominion Day celebration in the park and the Recreational Council are taking over the park on Civic Holiday for a sports day. Plans are also in the making for the centennial year of Georgetown Fall Fair. Add to these the rural garden parties, and the opening of Huttonville Park next month and it looks like a full summer of entertainment for a place where "nothing ever happens" according to our city cousins.

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