

# The Georgetown Herald

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### Progress at the Post Office

The forthcoming mail delivery system for Georgetown, announced this week by Halton M.P. Sandy Best will put the town on a par with our rural neighbours who have always been one jump ahead of townfolk in this respect.

While not particularly necessary in the older parts of town there has been increasing agitation from the eastern subdivision areas where residents are a mile or more from the post office. Originally there was some talk of establishing a sub-office to serve them, but no such plan materialized. The need for this is now lessened, and subdivision residents will be particularly happy to read the news in this edition.

Increasing town growth is reflected in another news item which reveals that the Bell Telephone dial exchange building is slated for an addition and that the company is planning to have capacity for double the number of phones now in use. In this respect, ruralites were given some of the advantages of town living a few years ago, with elimination of many of the old party

phone lines and some of the long waits necessary when operators handled the calls rather than the dials.

There are those who miss the old phone system, despite the acknowledged improvement in service. And there will be those who miss the daily visit to the post office too. Picking up the mail has been a small town ritual for generations, and the post office has been a combination social club, and business centre for as long as the oldest residents can remember. News is exchanged, car deals consumed, new babies admired and old friendships renewed while people picked up their mail at the office.

But one cannot live in the past and some good things must be lost in the name of progress. The old post office, like the old phone system, is becoming outdated in a town the size of Georgetown. And practical advantages will far outweigh the nostalgic reminders of an era which must disappear.

### Deficit Budgeting Dangerous

We are still somewhat confused by the federal finance minister's budget in which Mr. Fleming seemed to be proud of the fact that he was only anticipating a national deficit of six hundred million dollars this year. It is smaller, admittedly, than a few of the previous deficits, but we cannot subscribe to the theory that a deficit should ever be anticipated. Particularly so in what we are assured is one of Canada's most prosperous periods of history.

Certainly one doesn't have to know much about economics to realize that an individual cannot spend more than he makes for any protracted period of time. And surely a country, like a man, must hew the line as closely as possible if it is not to end up permanently in the red.

Present-day governments, whether they be local, provincial or federal are subjected to tremendous pressures from those who elect them to office. And it is human nature that those who are most vociferous about wanting more benefits are equally critical when taxes rise.

There can be only one future answer, we think. Some government is going to have to get tough and make us pay as we go. If we are willing to increase our taxes and have all the services we want, well and good. And if we don't, there will have to be a new approach to election promises — to decrease some of the services we are demanding and leave more spending power with the individual.

It's hackneyed but true, you can't have your cake and eat it. If you do, it's borrowed cake, and your neighbour will some day get tired of lending.

### A Professional Show

Four times the Rotary Club has presented a minstrel show and four times it has been a solid hit.

The Show Boat revue, which played to packed houses for four nights was a worthy successor to past editions — a treat for the audience and as close to a professional production as one could expect in a small town.

There can be nothing but praise for the performers — the end men, some of them making

their first appearance on the stage — the singers, orchestra, stage and lighting crew. Costuming was clever, skits and gags of the type one expects to find in a minstrel show, with liberal sprinkling of local names bobbing up in the jokes.

We predict many more successful seasons for the Rotary minstrels and thank them for providing such a fine evening of entertainment.

### \$300 FOR CAMP FUND IN LIGHT BULB SALE

Many dark rooms and the future of the 2nd Georgetown Scouts and Cubs were brightened considerably on Saturday when sixty-six

scouts and cubs blitzed the town with their Lamps for Camp light bulb selling campaign that illuminated their treasury by \$300.

The boys canvassed Georgetown and Stewarttown only so that they would not infringe on projects of neighbouring Scout troops but the limited selling area had little effect on their sales. At the completion of their door to door canvass the number of bulbs totalled 3,200. Proceeds from the lamp selling go to the summer camp fund. The parents of some of the boys assisted in the project by making their cars available for transportation.

## Controversial Corner

By Ian Cass

At the present moment, much of southern Ontario is in the grip of a "gas" price war which will probably be more vicious and durable than any we have seen in the past. No doubt many motorists will view this situation with glee, at the same time making sure that their gas tanks are always kept well-filled at 32 cents a gallon; this is understandable. However, a closer look at the problem from an impersonal point of view reveals a situation which benefits nobody in the long run, and which reflects no credit on the oil companies involved.

The principles and practices of fly-by-night, under-the-counter retailers are frequently found to be outside the law. When such operators are convicted in court, people hold up their hands in horror as they read of the fraudulent activities involved. I suggest that many of the methods used by large reputable organizations in promoting the sale of their products, while they may be within the letter of the law, are morally unsupportable and completely lacking in social or personal integrity.

In many business organizations, one of the most valued qualifications in an employee is loyalty; loyalty to the boss and to the company as a whole. This is particularly true of the larger corporations and, to a certain extent, is understandable. However, loyalty as a two way business and must work both ways to be successful. With this very noble thought in mind, let us examine the relationship between the oil companies and their service station lessees — although the lessees are not oil company employees the association is almost the same.

When an oil company builds a service station, they do so with the intention of leasing it to a responsible operator who can put up the required amount of cash — this amount varies between \$4,000 and \$60,000. The lessee of course is tied closely to the oil company in that he may sell only their brand of gas, oil, tires and batteries. In other words, he has a contractual allegiance to the oil company and, as a member of the company's sales team, he is entitled to expect legal support from the head office. Does he get it? Frequently the answer is no, he does not.

This is well demonstrated in the old familiar story of John Doe who leased a service station, paid his cash deposit, and worked like a horse for two years building up a reasonable business with a good steady trade. One morning he was a little disturbed to learn that another gas station was being built half a mile down the road, he wasn't too worried at that because a different oil company was involved. Three months later another gas station was built opposite the first new one. Who built it? Why, the same oil company that supplied John Doe, of course. The company that put him into business had put a competitor right on his doorstep.

It is futile for oil companies to attempt to justify this practice on the grounds of increased demand, because demand is obviously not the criterion used in deciding when and where to build. In fact it is very difficult to understand why build the service stations built in southern Ontario during the past four years, were ever built at all. These sometimes wonders of the policy is not one which considers four gas stations essential at every paved intersection.

Estimates vary regarding the most efficient and economical ratio of motor vehicles to service stations in a town such as ours; but four hundred vehicles per station is a frequently quoted figure. On this basis, Georgetown needs six service stations at the most, in fact there are eighteen. The most unhappy part of the whole miserable setup is that these surplus stations, which serve no useful purpose, are paid for at \$20,000 to \$30,000 each by the average motorist, who is paying so dearly for gas that oil companies can afford this sort of nonsense.

The oil companies say that they must meet the opposition — phony. Our old friend John Doe was giving good service before, and company X was well represented in this respect. Now company X has two service stations, but I doubt if it sells more gas as a result. Competition is a great incentive to provide good service, but competition can be pushed too far and then the gimmick ads, and the bonus give-away creeps in. When I go to buy gas, that's what I want, I'm not interested in free shirts, glasses and beach balls. I go to a store to buy those. What I want is the best gas at the best price. It seems quite reasonable to suggest that if the oil companies would stop playing with giveaways, stop trying to make gasoline a cocktail of additives (publicized at several million dollars a ton), and stop building unwanted gas stations we could all have the gas — without a price war.

It is very difficult for someone unconnected with the trade to find out exactly what causes a price war, but one thing is certain — there could be no price without the active participation of the oil companies. If all the major oil companies got together and formulated an agreement on fair trading practices, and were determined that their distributors operated within the terms of this agreement, gas price wars would vanish overnight. If the ethical standards of some oil companies are such that they will supply one dealer with

By way of a postscript, it is to be hoped that our councillors will not lose sight of their responsibilities regarding the future construction of service stations in this town. A few dollars extra tax revenue is very fine — heaven knows, we need it now, but issuing further building permits for service stations, when some of our present operators are hard pressed to make a living, would be most irresponsible and short-sighted.

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