

OUR READERS WRITE:

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IN HALTON AND PEEL

Realizing that over exposure can breed apathy, I beg your indulgence while I sing one more chorus of the "Wedding March" in an effort to assure a harmonious marriage between Halton and Peel. (I guess I should also sing a line of row-row-row your boat -- for those who think I'm only interested in rocking it).

As your council is presently drafting correspondence to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, confirming our position on this subject, I am hereby soliciting any constructive suggestions from individuals or organizations who would like to comment on Acton's future political requirements.

Only by incorporating the collective opinion of interested Actonites can we hope to achieve maximum benefits from the proposed legislation.

To fully comprehend and appreciate the importance and vital necessity of reorganizing municipal governments into larger regions of administration, we must first be willing to objectively analyze the inefficiencies in our present system. In considering revolutionary changes during the last century in most aspects of our social requirements, I think we all must wonder if the present municipal structure that was established by the Baldwin Act in 1849 could be an effective means for servicing the needs of the people in 1970.

I assume that the Baldwin Act was based on the premise that one of the components of a viable democracy is strong local government. Due to complications arising from industrialization of former rural communities and growth of suburban populations, most local governments could not adequately handle the responsibilities

originally established by the Act. Therefore, over the past decades, the provincial government has been forced to diminish the powers of local government by taking direct or indirect control of most of the important functions of municipal government, thus reducing many towns and city councils to administrators of provincial policy on local matters.

This concept truly violates the basic principle of democracy at the municipal level of government, but due to the inability of these smaller units to cope with the ever increasing pressures for more services and greater efficiency, the provincial governments have perhaps taken the only alternative available under the present system.

This alternative consisting of a wide variety of councils, boards, committees and provincial departments with overlapping jurisdictions and boundaries must result in conflict and waste of time and resources. Due to the fact that some smaller municipalities receive a higher percentage of various per capita provincial grants than larger municipalities (Ref.-Annual report of Municipal Statistics) we can conclude that the province is partially subsidizing inefficiencies and thereby removing part of the incentive for small units to merge into larger and more effective governments.

A quick review of the chaotic grant and rebate structure will testify to the enormous cost of administration at both levels of government that must reflect itself in an ever increasing tax rate.

Before town and city council can accept the responsibilities taken over by the province and the permission to tax accordingly, a structural change resulting in strong local government is imperative.

In reviewing the proposals of the Minister of Municipal Affairs pertaining to regional government for Halton and Peel as outlined in "Design for Development Phase Two" it is quite evident that the Regional governments are going to receive some of the responsibilities that the province has acquired over the years and will therefore bring power of advocating and implementing local policies, closer to the people.

Mr. McKeough's proposal are by no means complete and as he has stated, are at present primarily of a tentative nature; however, they do have the potential of forming the nucleus of a very effective government in Halton and Peel, provided each municipality accepts

the minister's invitation to continue presenting recommendations that will complement the general principles in "Design for Development Phase Two", to promote legislation that will best serve the interests of the residents in their own respective communities.

Although I definitely feel the maximum benefits from regionalization will be derived from a Halton and Peel amalgamation (as compared to Halton alone) I will not attempt in this brief presentation, to elaborate on the pros and cons of either concept. Certainly each proposal has distinct advantages and disadvantages but to this date I have not seen any significant counter-proposal to the minister's recommendation of Halton and Peel in January 69 and hope he will not alter this part of his initial plans when he drafts final legislation.

In spite of the obvious advantages obtainable at the provincial and first tier stages of government through regionalization as outlined above, I agree we must be concerned with implications at the second tier level which will, on the surface at least, seem to have the most direct effect on the lives of local taxpayers. Although I recognize that the Minister's latest proposal for Acton's local government (that is, a combination of portions of Esqueness and Nassagaweya and all of Acton resulting in a population of approximately 11,000) is probably his only alternative, considering pressure for retention of identity (?) etc., I must confess moderate disenchantment with it.

I fear many of the problems that this area is presently struggling over, will find a slower solution than if the initial suggestion of Area 4 - population approximately 24,000 is adopted. Some of these problems, ranging from the inefficient and therefore costly procedures resulting from not being able to employ the full time services of a town solicitor, engineer or professional planner, or our inability to take a positive approach to urban renewal and public works expansion programs due to limited assessment, could still be a reality when our new town is formed.

Hopefully, if these problems do exist, our first tier Regional Board will grant us partial relief by providing economical consultant services or by other indirect subsidies, until the area matures with adequate assessment and population. Even considering the above

problems (which as I stated above Acton is forced to live with anyway), I am confident we are taking a definite step forward that will eventually eliminate these and other questionable aspects of our present administration, that might otherwise have plagued us for years to come.

Although I feel past and present administrations have done their best within the circumstances provided, I sincerely hope Mr. Kerr's comment that Regional government for Halton and Peel could still be 18 months away, is merely a gesture to satisfy some ultra "pro status quo" contingent.

To briefly support my opposition for a county-wide plebiscite on the question Regional Government in Halton or Halton and Peel yes or no, I do not feel the collection of a percentage of yes or no's warranted a \$16,000 expenditure. (Approximate cost of proposed plebiscite).

As an alternative I suggested the money be spent (if it had to be spent) on the distribution and compiling results of a detailed questionnaire on all related principles of Regional Government, thereby collecting the views of people who are willing to investigate the provincial government proposals and offer concrete constructive criticism.

Any individual who feels slighted by not having the opportunity to vote on this question is hereby encouraged to write Mr. McKeough or extend your opinion to Acton's council who I'm sure will consolidate all information received and attempt to incorporate it in their letter to the minister.

My thoughts as presented in this brief "request for comment" are not necessarily original and could serve only to outline a few general ideas on the validity of the principles of Regional government. Each municipality will have its own unique problems to solve and new policies to develop that will promote this higher standard of local government in our counties.

P. E. Marks

P.S. "Change is inevitable but change for the better is a full time job."

Percy French was Irish, begorrah!

(Editor's Note - As sure as the 17th of March rolls around each year, The Free Press receives a St. Patrick's Day contribution from Mrs. Catherine Graham, R. R. 1, Limehouse, which we are pleased as punch to print since those from the old sod add a dimension to the world of letters we'd be loath to miss. Begorra, the Saint's day falls next Tuesday, less than a week before the first day of Spring.)

PERCY FRENCH, IRISH POET

Dear Sir:

Ireland has produced many writers down through the centuries, some famous, some not. Percy French was himself not so well known as a poet, but his songs will live forever.

He was born at Clonquin, County Roscommon. There was great simplicity about this man that gave him direct contact with people of all classes and creeds. He was the perfect example of a human being who didn't give a button whether people regarded him as a gentleman or a tramp. Perhaps he was ahead of his time.

He knew Ireland as well as he knew the palm of his right hand, and had genuine sympathy for Ireland and her people. He wrote about the enduring things of life, fun, laughter, courtship, generosity, wit and rural intrigue. Friends and relatives wrote Percy French and told him to grow up, and take an interest in politics, whiskey, race meetings, foreign securities, etc. but "I am still the small boy and shall remain so," he said.

Percy French was a frequent visitor to our part of County Down. He was a great friend of the local doctor, Dr. Floyd, who just died about two years ago, a very old man. There is a granite fountain to his memory at Newcastle, County Down. Of course, he made the Mountains of Mourne famous, (Newcastle lies at the foot of the Mournes) in this song:

"THE MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE"

O Mary, this London's a wonderful sight,
With the people here working by day
and by night.
They don't grow potatoes, nor barley, nor wheat,
But there's gangs of them digging for gold in the street.

At least when I asked them that's what I was told,
So I just took a hand in the digging for gold.

But for all that I found there I might as well be,
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.

There are beautiful girls her, O never mind!
With beautiful shapes nature never designed.

Don't be starting them fashions now, Mary Machree,
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.

I wonder what he would say about the fashions of today?

Perhaps his best known poem is "Come back Paddy Reilly, to Ballyjamesduff". Ballyjamesduff is in County Cavan, the ancestral home of the O'Reilly's. It is said he wrote the poem on a bet, that although he could rhyme almost anything, he couldn't work in Ballyjamesduff in rhyme. He did.

Now most new born babies appear in a huff,
And start with a terrible squall,
But I knew I was born in Ballyjamesduff
And that's why I smile on them all.

The baby's a man now, he's toilworn and tough,
Still whispers, come over the sea,
Come back, Paddy Reilly, to Ballyjamesduff,
Come back, Paddy Reilly, to me.

There is a story told, once when Percy French was visiting the late King of Sweden and began his antics, the king laughed so much, he fell off the royal chair. He used to play tennis with him.

Percy French was an engineer and got his degree at Trinity College. He once poked fun at a slow railway journey he took through County Clare. The railway sued him for impertinence and brought him to court.

He was late for the hearing, and rushed in hear the judge ask, "Why are you late?" Says he, "The train wasn't on time."

Case dismissed.
One last anecdote... an example of his poetical conversation: "Are you right there, Michael, are you right? Do you think we'll get home before the night?"

Catherine Graham
R. R. 1,
Limehouse

Yours truly,
COPA
Bill Pepler

Rosslake strip puts area on map

The Editor,
The Acton Free Press

Dear Sir:

I congratulate you for giving space in your February 4th edition to describe the plight of your local area citizens who wish to use the Rosslake airstrip in order to join your community to the air crossroads of the world.

It is a great pity that more of the good citizens of your town do not realize that at no cost to the taxpayer or public purse the Rosslake airstrip is putting your area on air maps all over North America.

The people that would speak out against the community airfield in 1970 are of the

same type of mind as those individuals who spoke out against the coming of the automobile back in the early 1900's because "... these noisy horseless carriages spoiled their peace and tranquility".

Just as the automobile replaced the horse and buggy as a more efficient method of personal utility transportation, for practical purposes the private aircraft is superseding the car as a superior mode of personal transportation. Those who speak out against a community airstrip speak against progress.



Let's Play Bridge

by bill coats

One advantage that I see in duplicate bridge is the comparison of results with other pairs. If you are playing rubber bridge and reach a game contract and are defeated, there are several thoughts that could go through your mind. Did you miss a play that would give you the contract? Did the opponents defend particularly well? Was it just the lie of the cards that beat you? You may never know at rubber bridge but at duplicate the results will tell you.

Let us look at this hand from the Acton Bridge Club. West dealt with North-South vulnerable.

NORTH S-3532
H-A 8752
D-93
C-A9

WEST S-94
H-9643
D-1074
C-543

EAST S-1076
H-K1
D-KQ65
C-KQ106

SOUTH S-AKQ8
H-Q10
D-AJ82
C-872

THE BIDDING:
WEST Pass
NORTH 1D
EAST Pass
SOUTH 1N.T.

Pass 2D
Pass 2S
Pass 4S
All Pass

Opening lead 10 of diamonds.

There are several paths that the bidding could take but they all lead to a game contract for North-South. I am sure that every East would open the bidding in the third position in spite of the fact that he holds no aces. South might double the opening bid for takeout, in which case North would bid two hearts and may reach game in hearts.

One point about North's two diamond bid. This is not a cue bid. This is the Stayman convention used over a no trump opening bid. Usually Stayman is a two club bid. However when the opponents open the bidding and your partner overcalls one no trump showing 16-18 points, a bid in the opponents' suits asks partner to bid a four card major suit if he has one. South bids his spades and North carries on to game.

As you look at these cards you may be surprised to find out that no one

Tom Van Sickler named to committee

Tom Van Sickler has been appointed to Esqueness township committee of adjustment.

Council passed a resolution appointing Mr. Van Sickler to the committee effective April 1, at their regular meeting, Monday night.

Mr. Van Sickler replaces Don Matthews who resigned.

If you're a driver between the ages of 20 and 40 - watch out! The Ontario Safety League and the Canadian railways say most accidents at railway level crossings involve drivers between the ages of 20 and 40.

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SPAGHETTI SAUCE 2 lbs. \$1	SHAMPOO 2 lbs. \$1
SPAGHETTI & MACARONI 3 lbs. \$1	BATH OIL 2 lbs. \$1
CROSSE & BLACKWELL 4 lbs. \$1	HAND LOTION 2 lbs. \$1
PEEK FREN BISCUITS 3 lbs. \$1	WILKINSON BLADES 2 lbs. \$1
IGA HAMBURGER BUNS 4 lbs. \$1	WHITE TUNA 2 lbs. \$1
CHERRY TURNOVERS 3 lbs. \$1	PEANUT BUTTER 1 lb. \$1
GRAPEFRUIT 15 size \$1	TOMATO JUICE 7 lbs. \$1
JAFFA ORANGES 6 lbs. \$1	PINEAPPLE 3 lbs. \$1
CELERY 2 lbs. \$1	IGA CATSUP 5 lbs. \$1
TOMATOES 3 lbs. \$1	ASSORTED JAMS 5 lbs. \$1
McINTOSH APPLES 4 lbs. \$1	IGA PET FOOD 10 lbs. \$1
FRENCH FRIES 2 lbs. \$1	TOILET TISSUE 2 lbs. \$1
APPLE PIES 2 lbs. \$1	KLEENEX TOWELS 2 lbs. \$1
MORTON DINNER 5 lbs. \$1	IGA BLUE DETERGENT 2 lbs. \$1
RICH'S COFFEE RICH 4 lbs. \$1	CHEESE SLICES 3 lbs. \$1

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EXTRA 2% TAPE WITH...
EXTRA 2% TAPE WITH...
EXTRA 2% TAPE WITH...
EXTRA 2% TAPE WITH...

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