

Welcome news . . .

News from the Department of Highways that tenders have been called for reconstruction of Highway 7 between Acton and Georgetown recently was one of the most welcome pronouncements to come out of Toronto in some time.

Since there was editorial comment in these columns about the need for improvement on this stretch of highway earlier, we won't dwell on it, except to reiterate that the volume of traffic is increasing annually and improvement is welcome.

Drivers are going to have to put up with the inconvenience of construction for some time or else take an alternate route. They should bear it cheerfully since the promise of a smooth, wider highway as soon as possible will help to compensate for years when travel on that stretch was not only uncomfortable but dangerous.

If the proposed Golden Horseshoe Dragway is opened this year, traffic volume on race days will increase to an extent no one thought possible in the days when the road was first modernized.

Dragway traffic will take away some of the benefits a modernized highway would confer on the district but we would expect it will not interfere with everyday travel.

It is significant perhaps that improvements seem to fan out from Toronto, rather than approaching from the west. All roads in Ontario lead to Toronto, much like the ancient maxim that all roads lead to Rome.

Acton drivers who use Highway 7 regularly have commented on the increased use of the road by all manner of vehicles, suggesting the traffic flow goes east rather than west in the morning, and reverses the flow in the late afternoon.

Maximum from minimum . . .

It is difficult to comment on the state of the highways without mentioning the deteriorating condition of street surfaces within the limits of town.

There is no doubt that the need for a major overhaul of roads in town is fast coming up, as the mayor pointed out at a recent council meeting. In some areas where council has already made plans to resurface there are more patching than original road surface. One of the worst examples is on Bower Avenue between Willow and Elgin Streets where traffic using post office facilities is extremely heavy.

It is useless to postpone improvements to roads since the problems only compound themselves as roads deteriorate. The taxpayer winds up paying more money over the long run with delay than he would if the needs had been attended to when they became necessary. Not to mention the damage poor roads can do to cars and trucks, which also comes out of taxpayers' pockets.

However, council has a problem to find the money for these projects, without raising the mill rate to unreasonable levels. The provincial government will pay subsidy on only \$42,000 expended on town roads. After that figure it would be strictly up to local taxpayers to bear the burden of the road improvements without a cent of provincial aid.

Consequently it is quite likely that roads in Acton will not receive all the treatment they need this year.

Pressing demands from almost every other source that depends on municipal money will likely mean councillors will once again have to squeeze the maximum benefits from a small orange.

Although education taxes in town could drop as low as five mills, the money it represents is urgently needed in other departments.

No one is more aware of this than the men who sit on council and try to come up with a reasonable taxation figure each year. They are fully aware the town could use a real good injection of new assessment—industrial and residential.

New assessment would solve many of the financial problems that now suffocate improvements. Coupled with the subdividers' agreement it could mean an era of orderly development which the municipality could control.

Instead the town fathers must sit around and wait with bated breath for decisions from Queen's Park which seem to take longer and longer and delay development to the point where neither the developer or the development can whip up much interest when it finally does arrive. The Senior Citizens' development is a good example of this type of delay.

So there are not likely to be any pleasant surprises when the budget is struck this year but we expect council will make the maximum out of the minimum as they have been expected to do over the past several years.

Shame on them . . .

It is difficult to restrain a feeling of disgust over recent developments in Ottawa where Members of Parliament are engaged in setting up their own pension fund.

While it is becoming more difficult for old age pensioners in the hundreds of thousands to get by on a maximum of slightly more than \$100 a month, M.P.'s are voting themselves a pension amounting to \$3,780 after six years' service rising to a maximum of \$13,500 after 25 years.

And the most unbelievable point of all is that the M.P. will not have to wait until he is 65 to collect. He starts receiving benefits from the pension, as soon as he is defeated or when he decides not to stand for re-election.

Stanley Knowles, the New Democratic Party critic, has said that now the members have arranged to give themselves a guaranteed annual income they should do the same for the rest of the inhabitants of the country.

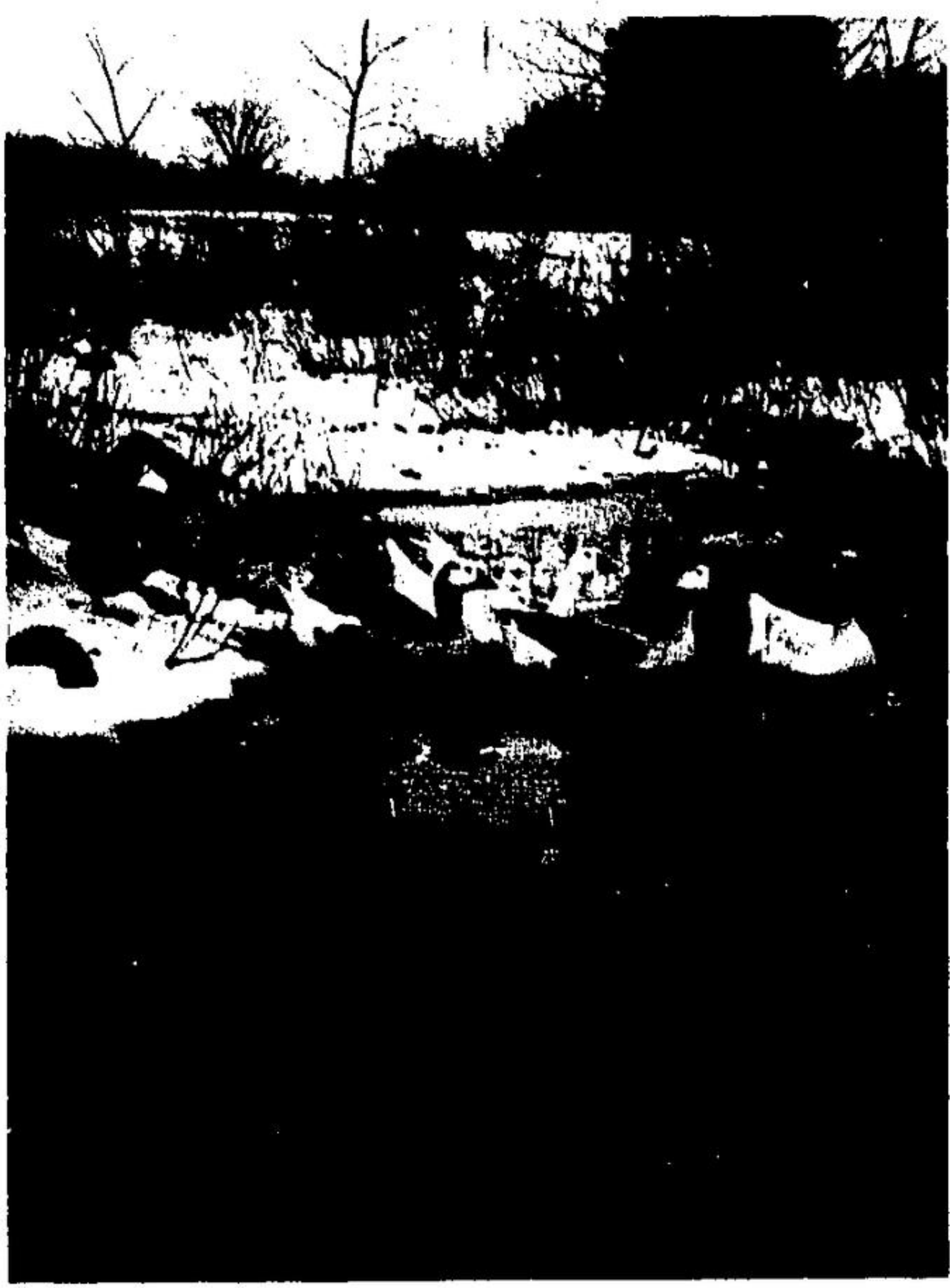
Government policy has been to encourage restraint to battle inflation and the country was starting to rally around. The action within the House of Commons where they obviously don't practice what they preach has knocked that into a cocked hat.

M.P.'s of all political stripes were behind the measure, not just the government side which indicates there is no party lines when it comes to greed.

We would hope that when old

age pension increases do finally come out for review that the M.P.'s will be as generous as they have been with themselves. Almost 800,000 old people in Canada are so poor they are entitled to receive the supplementary security. Yet our representatives see fit to vote themselves a minimum pension almost three times what an old age pensioner will receive.

Shame on them!



**EASTER PARADE**  
Feather finery at a district farm was kind enough to goose step for the Free Press photographer boldly into the spring creek, loosened from its icy winter bonds, by the announcement spring has come. However, outside of some pussy willows which grew on branches, few other signs of the spring season appeared for the Easter weekend.—(Staff Photo)



Sugar and Spice  
by bill smiley

Somebody ought to do something about Easter. It's much too flexible. It's supposed to be a time of rebirth and rejoicing.

But you can't really be swept away by a feeling of rebirth and new life when there is still a foot of snow on the ground and the wind cuts to the marrow.

Sometimes Easter is in March, and the weather is beautiful. Sometimes it's in April and the weather is horrible. I don't know how the date is determined, any more than I know how to fix loose door knobs, how to get outboard motors going when they stop, what to do when a woman weeps, or how to play midwife to a cat.

I'm not knocking Easter. I like it. I love the sackcloth and ashes feeling, and the gloomy dirges of Good Friday, when even the pubs are closed. And there is a joy and triumph in the Easter Sunday hymns that can't be surpassed, I think, even by the Christmas carols.

Easter is also one of the days that keeps many of our churches from becoming extinct. Some primitive instinct brings out the wayward, the fallen, the sinners, and the Easter Sunday collection is the best of the year. You meet old church friends you haven't seen for a year. And won't for another.

This year, we were sent a Manifestation. No, it wasn't from the Department of National Revenue, although it is pretty good at providing such things.

We had a birth in the family, and were privileged to witness the blessed event, an experience which must convince the most hardened cynic that God does see the little sparrow fall.

Our kitten had a baby. This may seem a contradiction in terms, but she is a bare adolescent, yet she managed to produce, with great yowling labor pains, one tiny kitten. I didn't think cats had labor pains, but she did.

Now, I haven't any use for cats, but I was fascinated by the whole procedure. We knew she was pregnant, of course. But lady cats, just like lady women, are rather unpredictable about the exact day, or even week, of the great moment.

She had begun to act a trifle odd, it's true, prowling the house looking for the most inconvenient possible place to lay her eggs. We caught her twice in the fireplace, casing the joint.

But I thought it was at least a week away. She was so spry. When we put her out, she would leap nimbly onto a window sill and sit there glaring malevolently at friendly tomtoms come to visit, or, alternately, at us through the window.

I got home for lunch, from a Saturday bonspiel, and was chatting with my wife in the living room, boring her with the shots I had almost made. Pip was sitting on the best chair in the room. She was acting in a rather peculiar fashion, stretching her legs in all directions. I remarked on it. My wife agreed and went over to look at her. BLAM! Too late. The water sac, or

whatever, had burst all over the brocaded upholstery.

With one fell swoop, I snatched her up and deposited her on a blanket, and bingo, she popped a kitten—something resembling a tiny, dead dinosaur. Child-bride though she was, Pip's instinct worked and she licked and licked until the infant's heart began to beat.

Isn't it remarkable how a cat will clean up the entire mess, leaving her offspring sleek and shining? And isn't it amazing how a mere chick of a kitten, by the act of giving birth, turns into a complacent, mild-eyed, smug mother, nursing by the hour with her motor going on all cylinders?

We were as delighted as she was, and had a glimmer of that feeling grandparents must have when the first grandchild arrives. What really shook me, though, was my wife's reaction. Normally, if anyone drops so much as a crumb, a bit of ash, or a drop of coffee on her precious furniture, all hell breaks loose. And there's her good chair, with a great stain on it, and she tosses it off as nothing.

She became all soft and motherly and was heating milk and tucking in the kitten and lifting it on her hand to look, with the inevitable accident.

Income distribution . . .

Total personal income distributed in Canada last year amounted to \$51,624 million, a massive jump of \$4,422 million over the previous year and a new record.

Who got it? Where did it go? The answers are provided in the breakdown of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and they allow each individual to make his own determination as to the fairness or otherwise of the distribution.

Employees took the largest slice of the personal income pie, \$32,927 million — some 63.9 per cent — in wages and salaries. (This figure excludes social insurance and pension fund contributions.)

Transfer payments — mostly family allowances, pensions and veterans' benefits paid by Ottawa but also including charitable gifts from corporations — accounted for the second largest amount, \$7,242 million, or an even 14 per cent.

Farmers and others in business for themselves took another \$5,444 million — 10.5 per cent — while stockholders and those who draw income from rents and interest got slightly less, \$5,315 million, or 10.3 per cent. Military pay and allowances accounted for the remaining \$696 million (1.3 per cent).

Salt and Pepper  
by hartley coles

An Acton soap opera . . .

CONCLUSION

Maggie Stillegs fell to the ground in a faint when we left her last week at the graveside of the Rev. Just Plain Bill Crane. Fearless Phil had taken her to Belfountain where they walked to a nearby cemetery and found a small red granite stone proclaiming just plain Bill was underneath the sod. But Reverend? There were still many gaps in the story since just plain Bill had left Maggie in the lurch in Acton, disappearing down the Second Line one foggy February Friday.

Fearless Phil had never faced a crisis like this before. Maggie was as white as a sheet, her breathing shallow, pulse irregular. He propped her up against the stone and slapped her face in almost frenzied haste.

Finally Maggie started to revive. Color came back to her cheeks and her breathing resumed its normal rhythm.

Fearless Phil looked at the supine figure and thought secretly how well preserved Maggie was for her age, wondering in the same breath, what she would do now that a search over 30 years old had ended.

When Maggie opened her eyes and indicated she wanted to get up, Fearless Phil took her hand and assisted her to her feet. She seemed resigned to the shocking news received when she read the tombstone. He took her arm and guided her towards the cemetery entrance and soon they were on the road walking back to the hamlet of Belfountain.

Later over strong tea in the village luncheon room Maggie confided to Phil she was all mixed up inside. "I feel awful, but Phil, what happened to just plain Bill? What is this Reverend stuff? How did he die? The stone said it was the result of an accident — what happened?"

Fearless Phil patted her on the arm and said gently, "One thing at a time, Maggie. I know the whole story. Sit back and listen."

Maggie relaxed, the frown on her face gradually easing into a pleasant smile of

acquiescence. Phil leaned back on his chair and slowly started to explain.

When just plain Bill stumbled into Belfountain, a victim of amnesia from a knock on the head, kind villagers took him in and it wasn't long until he was physically strong and able to get about. But he was very restless and the lack of memory made him very irritable. The village people tried to trace other members of the family but as you know, Maggie, I was Bill's only living relative, fearless Phil explained, and they couldn't track me down.

Just plain Bill's agitation increased and he'd skin over to Erin some nights and get a skin full of beer. Then he'd come back to the village and raise oleo margarine with his friends. One night when he was in one of these hell-raising tantrums there was an accident. As a result of it, a young lady died while villagers stood around helpless waiting for the doctor to arrive.

Just plain Bill was never the same again. He blamed himself for the auto crash which happened when a driver swerved to avoid him as he stumbled drunkenly across the road.

He never touched another drop. He started attending church regularly, found a job in a nearby quarry. Money was never too plentiful in the village and environs. What money he made he gave away to those who needed a helping hand.

Nobody was surprised when just plain Bill decided to be a minister except some of his cronies who used to accompany him to the bootleggers! "Maggie, they tell me just plain Bill was the best minister they every had in these parts", fearless Phil said. He returned here after ordination and everyone liked him.

He had plenty of offers to advance in the church but he preferred the simple life in the village and country. His memory started to come back gradually, of the years during the war. He had hazy recollections of a wife.

(Continued on Page B4)

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 30, 1950.

The brethren of Walker Lodge made ladies' night an effort that all will remember. Turkey dinner was served at the Yellow Briar, Brampton. George Musselle led a sing-song. Master Ivan Harris was in charge and the only toasts were given by W. J. B. atty. There were movies, cards and dancing for the 100 attending. Junior Warden A. J. Buchanan and his committee were praised often and deservedly.

The marriage of Betty Margaret, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Britton, to John Calvin McIntyre, took place at the home of the bride March 18. Eleada Britton was bridesmaid and Donald McIntyre the groomsman.

In last Saturday's basketball house league scrimmages, Bob Bruce's Red squad handed the Black team under Philip McCristall a 39-11 shellacking. The senior badminton club got into their stride to defeat a team from Brampton 7 games to 5. Particularly good performers for the locals included Helen Wolfe, Dorothy Hassard, Ken Hassard and Gord Beatty.

A new carpet is being laid in the auditorium of Knox church this week.

At a congregational meeting Wednesday Rev. E. A. Currey, B.A., B.D., was the unanimous choice to fill the pastoral vacancy made vacant by the death of Rev. Louis Pickering. Mr. Currey is presently at Victoria Square.

The March meeting of Rockwood WCTU was held at the home of Mrs. R. O. Jolliffe with a small attendance.

If you think you're hurt by the sewer construction dirt go and take a look at the trench in which the men are laying the pipe.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, April 1, 1920.

The monthly meeting of Acton Women's Institute was a delightful gathering which included a banquet to Mrs. W. H. Stewart and Mrs. William McNabb, both of whom have for years been active workers in the Institute and are now removing from Acton. About 60 partook of the good things. Mrs. George Havill, Mrs. Joseph Holmes, Mrs. M. McLean and Mrs. H. P. Moore proposed toasts. Miss Minnie Z. Bennett, Mrs. William Sayer and the guests of honor replied. Miss M. Claridge contributed a solo and Miss M. Symon a piano selection.

At the meeting of the public library board H. P. Moore was re-elected as secretary-treasurer for the 23rd year in succession. Mr. Moore had said he wished to be relieved of the duty. Several members

spoke of his services and a cheque for \$25 was tendered to Mr. Moore as a token of appreciation for his 22 years of service. Mr. Moore thanked the members and said he had not performed the duties for any monetary consideration. He felt the salaries of the librarians should be increased so the salary of Miss Lettie Scott was increased to \$13 per month and Miss Isabel Elliott to \$7 a month.

Reference was made to the noisy and disorderly conduct of some of the younger patrons of the library and the board appointed Mr. John Cameron, the chairman, to visit the library and inform the offenders that disorderly conduct must cease. Offenders may lose the privileges of the library.

Mr. W. H. Stewart has sold his semi-detached house on Bower Ave. to Mr. John Bruce and removes with his family to Milton where he is close to the shelter in his new position as superintendent of the Children's Aid Society.

Masters Calvin and Findlay Wilson of Toronto are spending Easter holidays in Acton.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, March 28, 1895.

Mr. Albert Laing left last week to make a tour of the populous centres of the state of Maine giving phonograph concerts. The Laing Brothers are very successful with the phonograph and have now three machines at work. Their careful attention to details enables them to entertain the public wherever they go with much satisfaction.

The members of the local Board of Health met Friday in the Council Chambers with members present, reeve Pearson, Clerk Moore and Messrs. W. R. Kennet, Robert Wallace and H. P. Moore. Arrangements were made for the annual inspection of the municipality to commence on the 10th day of May. The desire of the board is to continue the excellent sanitary condition which has characterized Acton in the past.

Judging from the enthusiasm which characterized the meeting held in the Council Chambers on Saturday for the organization of a baseball club for the coming season this game will lead among local athletics in 1895. Officers are Hon. President N. T. Weber; president I. Francis; Vice-president Harry Jeans; secretary George Lawson; treasurer Murray McDonald; manager George Nicklin; captain Thos. Kenney, executive committee W. A. Storey, W. I. Worder Jr., F. Swackhamer, Wellington Smith and James P. Mullin.

The ice men are about through with their harvest for the season. An unusual quantity was taken off the pond this year. The ice on Henderson's pond was about 30 inches thick, clear as crystal.

The cold snap has not affected the price of eggs, 13c and butter 15c.

**THE ACTON FREE PRESS**  
PHONE 853-2010  
Business and Editorial Office

Founded in 1876 and published every Wednesday at 88 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the C.M.A. and O.M.A. Advertising rates on request. Subscriptions payable in advance. \$8.00 in Canada; \$9.00 in all countries other than Canada; single copies 15 cents. Second class mail Registration Number - 0515. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at a wrong price, goods or services may not be withdrawn at any time.

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