

## Mini-Comment

Although there have been several store closings along Acton's downtown section, it is encouraging when longtime restaurateurs such as the Royal Cafe show their faith in the future of the downtown by making expensive renovations. The interior of the renovated cafe is most attractive. Other stores who have renovated recently include I.G.A. and A-B Supermarkets, Milady Boutique, Acton Pharmacy and Moss Hardware, which has a new gift shoppe on the premises which is sure to please customers. Several of the other downtown merchants always keep their premises attractive for shoppers and are pleasant places to deal.

Shoppers generally will regret to see the Family Store closing its doors after nine years in business in Acton. They are the second clothing business to close their doors in the last few weeks. The Esquire Men's Shop packed it up recently and that store is still vacant. Now with the Acton Community Credit Union moving to a new location on Queen St. the downtown will not be quite the same. Some of the unoccupied stores are being reopened with new businesses. The former finance company offices at the corner of Mill and Elgin Sts. has a new tenant, Chiropractor R. M. Telford. The store, immediately in back, once occupied by Davis Jewellers will soon have Watson's Music Store moving in but this will leave another downtown store vacant.

The changes are indicative of the unsettled condition of the downtown, where once a business move was an occasion. Looking back over the years it is not hard to remember when the downtown had a theatre as well to bring people there. Of course, there are many new businesses in other parts of town which have added much to shopping enjoyment.

The Ontario Safety League opines that as you grow old inevitably you become bald and lose your grip — especially if you are a tire.

We've had our share of freak fatalities and happenings this year and the bowling alley fire and silo collapse at the flour mills can be added to the list.

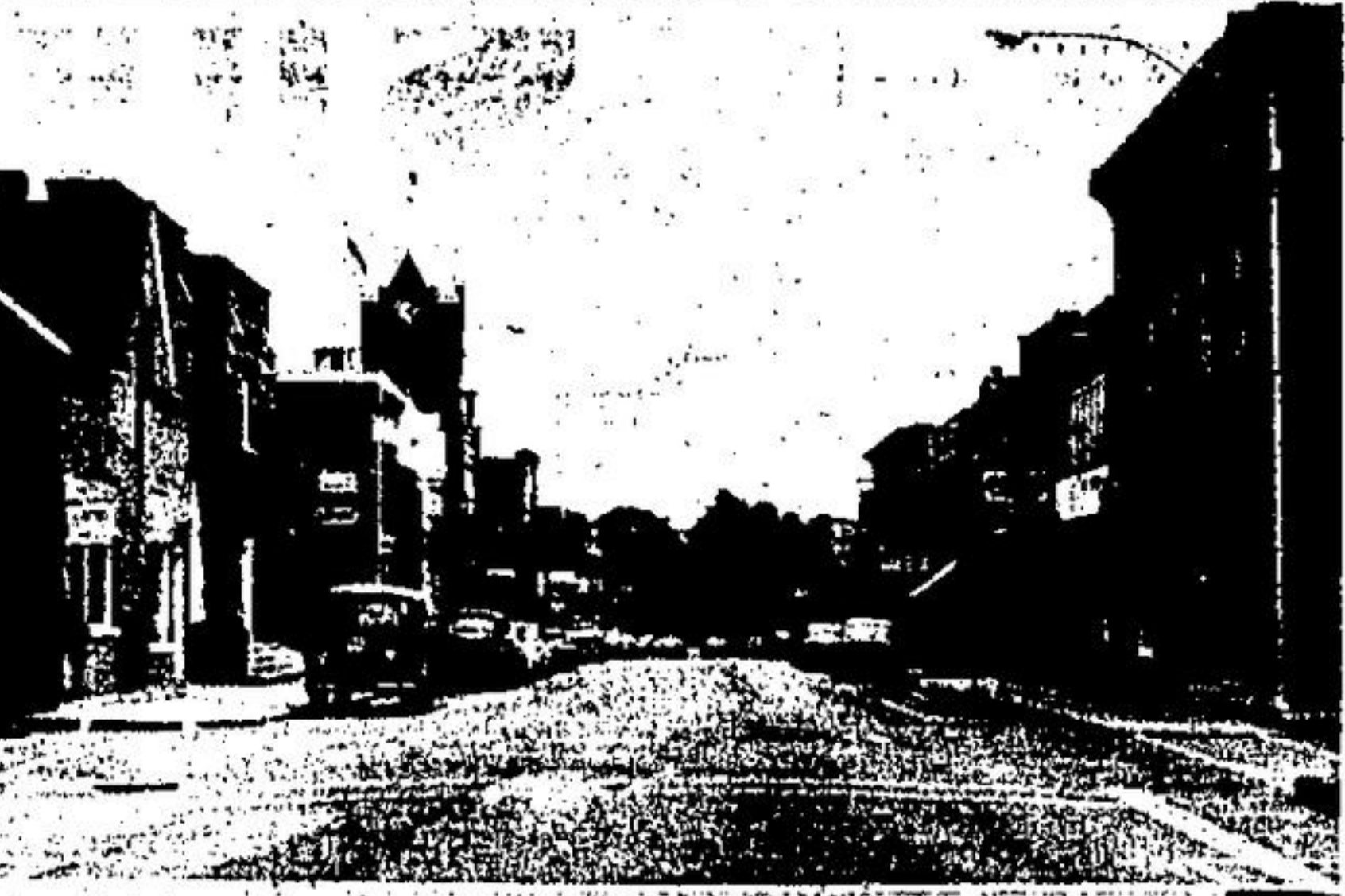
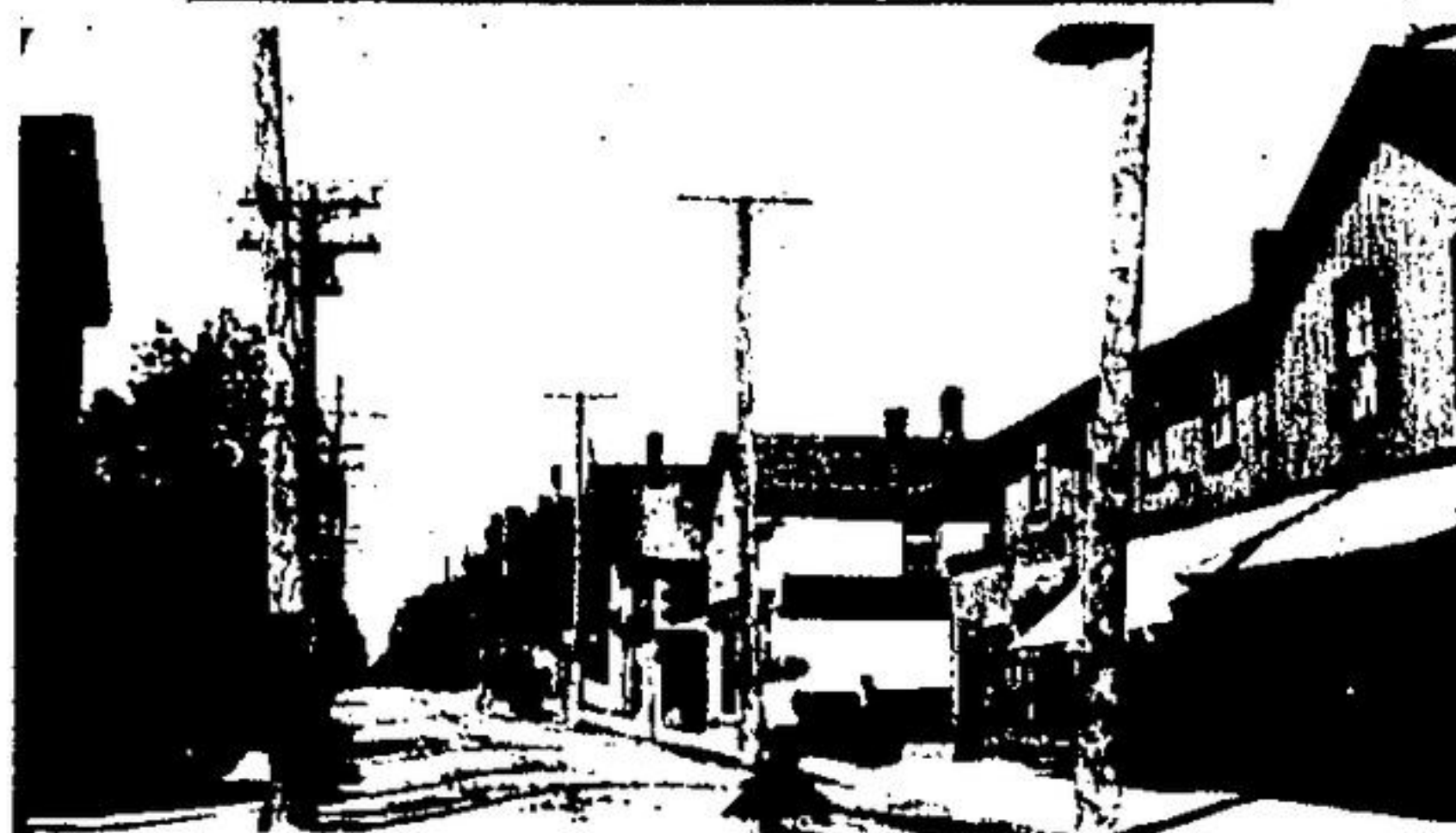
Acton Citizens' Band acquitted themselves well at the C.N.E. again this year. Although the band won no awards they gained high marks which were only seven behind the leader in the class. It is worthy of note that the Acton band is one of a few from small communities without high school instrumental programs and year-round paid direction. It is a feather in the cap of this town when the band can compete against communities which have these advantages and give them keen competition. And certainly a credit to the directors.

Two quarry owners have said this newspaper is guilty of bias in reporting on pits and quarries at Nassagaweya council. Bosh. It's the old case of shooting the piano player because he is playing the music. Reporters record what happens at a meeting and their personal feelings do not enter into it at all, unless the article is on the editorial page. That's where this newspaper's opinions appear.

Thank you for the many expressions of congratulations for the three awards this newspaper won in the Canada-wide newspaper competitions. This newspaper is a community effort and it is the combined work of many hands and minds that leads to awards.

## Free Press Editorial Page

4 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, August 30, 1972



THE SPOTLIGHT has been on the downtown business section lately so it is interesting to see how Acton's main stem has looked in the town's early years and progressively until it achieved its present look. The pictures are from the Free Press historical collection and the most recent (Monday) is at the bottom.

### OUR READERS WRITE:

### He put away his wheels

My friend has bought a pony,  
I know just how he feels,  
To change the pace of this rat-race,  
He's put away his wheels.

He's living in an era,  
Where the pace not too fast,  
No income tax, with heart attacks,  
And things were made to last.

His nag is quite a jumper, though,  
It sometimes clears the fence,  
Then leaves a trail of horse's tail,  
And keeps us in suspense.

He sits upon the animal's back,

And plays a huge guitar,  
He rides along and sings a song,  
He doesn't need a car.

He saves on car insurance,  
No tires, and things to bust,  
He sits up high, while trucks roll by,  
And keeps out of the dust.

I envy all his dreaming,  
And wish him lots of luck,  
I give a sigh, as he rides by,  
If he keeps the MUFFLER shut.

Victor Smith  
R.R. 2 Rockwood.

## Work important human value

It is popular today to look for more leisure as the cure-all for society.

It's stupid to believe there is any inherent virtue in labor," the line goes: "leisure is the thing—the more of it the better."

Labor Day is a good time to question this assumption.

Automation, fortunately, has removed a great deal of drudgery and saved us, collectively, an immense amount of time, but work has tremendous human value that no amount of leisure can replace.

Even in a highly specialized, mechanical society, where one's role is to provide only a part—often a tiny part—of some process, rather than sharing in the whole operation, a job has importance that far transcends the pay cheque. It "keeps the wolf of insignificance from the door," provides the worker with the knowledge that he is a necessary strand in the total fabric of the life around him.

Ask any invalid, any unemployed person, any older what they miss; though they'll phrase it differently it

will almost certainly be the sense that they are now outside the mainstream of society, onlookers rather than a part of it.

Currently a great deal of thought and money is going into an attempt to help them recover their sense of worth.

Leisure is precious, but it is the icing of life, not its solid food. Working "to get ahead" in the old competitive sense may have lost some of its motivating power, but work that secures one a place in what Khalil Gibran calls "life's procession" is a valid a value as it ever was.

## Time to move on arena

Residents tend to view statements about the condition of the community arena with a grain of salt but the most recent pronouncements by an engineer at Parks Board last week should be noted carefully.

The engineer claimed the arena is unsafe during periods of high wind and it would cost \$20,000 to fix. He told the board that wind analysis was not included in his firm's original report on inadequacies in the building which understandably raised a few eyebrows.

We have dealt with the arena before in articles of some length and don't propose to repeat them, since arguments advocating the allocation of more funds to the community centre

seem to raise hackles on some members of council. We do not want to resurrect any of the old antagonisms. However, we would be remiss indeed if we did not again propose that both the Parks board and council take a hard and realistic look at the arena.

There may be a lifesaver in the fact that the arena has been designated as the town's centennial project but quite likely nothing will be done until 1973. That leaves an entire season of use in between. In addition both the centennial commission's plans for the community centre and the town's must be co-ordinated in order to avoid duplication.

We think the engineer's report is

important enough also to consider calling in another engineering firm as a consultant, especially if there is any doubt about the validity of what has been proposed as there was the last time the issue arose.

Now is the time to thoroughly investigate all phases of the building and determine the direction which should be taken, so that any doubts about the safety of the building can be erased.

We would hope this would be done to avoid interrupting any scheduled events and the approaching ice season, if at all possible, and to avoid any alarmist talk that the structure could topple at any time.

With the best intentions in the world to do so, I never quite get around to answering all my mail. There always seems to be some domestic or other crisis that interferes.

In almost every case, the letters I get are both friendly and interesting. The exceptions are business letters and bill collectors. Form letters and promotional letters I don't even read: just tear them once across and toss into the logical depository—the garbage pail.

Anyway, this column seems to get around quite a bit, and the letters pile up, and I keep making new resolutions to answer them and the pile keeps growing. If my wife would leave me for a month, and I worked eight hours a day, I could clean them all up and start a new life, relieved of guilt and shame.

Just to give you an idea, here's a cross-sampling. Just got a card from The Bobsey Twins, Regina and Kath. Postmark: Venice. They're two former students. When they were in Grade 13, and I couldn't find a boy to clean up the estate, they took it on, and did the best job I've ever had done. Unlike boys, who don't get into the corners, they crawled into the bushes and dragged out leaves with their bare hands. They garnered 40 plastic garbage bags of leaves and twigs. I gave them their pay and an illegal beer and we've been buddies ever since. According to the card, they've covered seven countries in three weeks and are now heading for Spain. Poor old Madrid.

Here's a letter from R. F. Stedman, County Wicklow, Eire. An excerpt: "Your column holds for me a note of sanity in a mad world and ranks in my mind with Greg Clark." Double thanks, R. F. Greg Clark is about six tiers above me, but I appreciate the sentiment. Mr. Stedman went to high school with my older brother and sister.

Just grabbed another one from the heap. Holy smokes, it's dated Feb., 1971. Thomas A. Smith, Rouleau, Sask. He noticed a reference in the column to Calumet Island, in the Ottawa River, where my mother was

## Bill Smiley



born. He was born there too and remembers Smileys in Shawville, Que., where my dad once ran a store. It's a long, interesting letter from a real oldtimer who went west in 1910, at the age of 17, went overseas in World War I. Mr. Smith, I hope you are well, though you must be 80, and I'll write a proper letter.

Here's another, from White Plains, New York. Holy Old Hughie! Dated June 24th, 1969. It's from A. Leslie Hill, Captain, Army Nurse Corps, U.S. Army Reserve (retired). Born in Fergus, Ont., three score years ago, graduate of Kingston (Ont.) General Hospital, served in World War II and Korea, and read my column to a group of Negroes in the laundry room. How about that? Letter ends, "Thanks for your column, dull or not."

Here's a self-addressed envelope from Mrs. Walter E. Dorsett, Smiley, Sask. But I can't find the letter. And another one from Gordon Fairgrieve, publisher of the Observer, Hartland, N.B. He has a subscriber called Bill Smiley, who lives in Massachusetts, and asks that I drop him a line. I will, Bill and Gordon.

A note from G. R. McCrea, publisher of the Herald, Hanna, Alta. He agrees it's a mad, mad world, has been 40 years in the newspaper "game", started at \$5 a week, and recalls with nostalgia: "For \$5 in those days you could take your best girl to the local dance, buy a mickey of rot-gut rye, and still have money enough to buy the gal a lunch at midnight, and some left over for a

package of roll-your-owns on Monday. Boy, was that ever livin'." Thanks, G. R., for a grand letter.

From a lady in Bowmanville. She thanks me for my salute to the housewife, and has some good advice: "I have learned, slowly, never criticize what someone's doing unless you have tried it yourself." And it turns out the lady lived next door for eight years to the lady who wrote me a beautiful letter from New Zealand.

In a column this summer, I compared my wife to that bird, the flicker. Ron Cumming writes from Port Elgin, comparing husbands to bobolinks. "Before marriage, the bobolink has a beautiful, slick, yellow-striped suit and sings a mate-enticing Bobolink-a-link-a-link. After marriage, in late summer, he dresses in dull brown, and his song is merely a dull 'clunk'. As a middle-aged hubby, I keep seeing a parallel."

Whoops! It's not all sweetness and light. Just reached and read two letters giving me hell. I must have written a snarly column about teenagers back in 1970, for one of the letters is dated then. One is from a teenager, unsigned, blasting me in no uncertain terms. The other is from a senior citizen, Mrs. Jessie Slater of Bracebridge. One pungent comment: "You must be a Dagwood at home, and a rotten father. How else could you have such a mixed-up family?" Well, Mrs. Slater, my mixed-up daughter happens to be living in Bracebridge right now, and I've a good notion to call and tell her to go over and give you a good punch on the nose.

I'm kidding, Mrs. Slater. Kim wouldn't step on an ant, if she could avoid it. She's a delightful, compassionate, beautiful and intelligent young woman, who is no more mixed-up than you or I.

And I'm no Dagwood. When I put my foot down around here... I break a toe.

Well, all I wanted to say was that you meet a lot of interesting people in this business.

## Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

50 years ago

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 11, 1952.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 7, 1922.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, September 9, 1897.

The assistant deputy minister of agriculture for the province of Ontario, J. Carroll, will officially open the Acton fall fair being held this year on Friday and Saturday in Acton park.

The Acton local of the United Packing-house Workers of America voted Tuesday night to accept an offer by the Beardmore company that followed negotiations. Important points in this offer was a seven cent an hour increase for female employees and a five cent an hour increase for all male employees.

Five northern municipalities bowed out of assessment equalization on the opening day of the Oakville and Burlington appeals against a county equalization by-law passed earlier this year. That is, they bowed out provided Bronte does not register the only opposition today. Equalization is necessary because Oakville and Burlington objected to the share of county expenses they are required to bear. At the opening of the hearing in the court house, Milton, Wednesday morning, Judge D. N. Robinson suggested the five northern municipalities withdraw since he felt they were not concerned with the appeal as stated by Oakville and Burlington.

Local police, like those all over Ontario, have kept alert this week for any signs of the four bank robbers who escaped from the Don Jail in Toronto. With many clues proving false, one had the gang somewhere in the Brampton district.

New linoleum flooring has been laid in the library recently.

Present indications give reasons for relief from anxiety about the serious shortage of coal this coming winter and also remove all possible grounds for fixing fancy prices for wood on the part of dealers.

The strikes are now practically over, and when the anthracite miners begin to dig coal the operators will find plenty of cars on hand to take care of the output.

Announcement is made by the Canadian Post Office Department that a C.O.D. service, in connection with mail matter will be established in Canada, whereby charges due the sender up to \$100 may be collected from the addressee and remitted to the sender by Post Office money order.

Since the beginning of the year about 20 barns in Halton County have been destroyed by fire, many of them containing the season's crops, livestock, and implements. The number is said to be a record breaker for the first eight months of the year.

The trustee board had filled the coal bunkers at the school building last spring and has 60 or 70 tons there—enough to keep the ten rooms at the school comfortable until next spring.

To all school pupils who had grown tired of long summer days the ringing of the school bell Tuesday morning made sweet music.

Acton carpenters and builders are crowded with work. The Georgetown Lumber Company is also taking contracts here now.

The long continued dry spell interfered with fall seeding.

A royal visit to Canada will probably be made next year. It is stated that the Duke and Duchess of York have accepted Sir Wilfrid Laurier's invitation to visit Canada next spring.

The Marquis of Salisbury's latest proposal for the settlement of the terms of peace between Turkey and Greece has been accepted by the powers. The powers desire to insert dates in the treaty of peace but the British ambassador, Sir Philip Currie, suggests that they leave the dates to be determined by an international commission.

The fine weather in this area of the past week has enabled farmers to complete their fall seeding.

The garden party held in aid of the U.P. church, held at W. N. Scott's last week was a huge success with receipts totalling over \$200.

The industries of our village have been languishing of late. The attractions of the Industrial Exhibitions at Toronto have proven too much for the employees.

The crop of plums hereabout is the largest ever grown here.

The most successful Civic Holiday celebration that Erin has ever had was held last Friday in Stanley Park. The crowd which gathered resembled in numbers Erin's well known Fall Fair. It is estimated that 2,000 were present.

Today the steamer *Marrinac* will take from Montreal for the London market a quantity of Canadian tomatoes, pears and peaches in cold storage as an experiment.

**THE ACTON FREE PRESS**  
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My friend has bought a pony,  
I know just how he feels,  
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He's put away his wheels.

He's living in an era,  
Where the pace not too fast,  
No income tax, with heart attacks,  
And things were made to last.

His nag is quite a jumper, though,  
It sometimes clears the fence,  
Then leaves a trail of horse's tail,  
And keeps us in suspense.

He sits upon the animal's back,

And plays a huge guitar,  
He rides along and sings a song,  
He doesn't need a car.

He saves on car insurance,  
No tires, and things to bust,  
He sits up high, while trucks roll by,  
And keeps out of the dust.

I envy all his dreaming,  
And wish him lots of luck,  
I give a sigh, as he rides by,  
If he keeps the MUFFLER shut.

Victor Smith  
R.R. 2 Rockwood.

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