

Mini Comment

Although there is much publicity about the expansion plans of the Town of Milton and an anticipated 5,000 to 6,000 increase in population, few daily papers are giving much ink to the tremendous expansion in Acton and area. It is quite possible that Acton's 5,000 population could increase by at least 50 percent and quite possibly more when all the housing units planned are completed.

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We were interested in an article along those lines in the magazine Executive, about Bovis Construction Co. and the president, John Bull, which mentions the new housing development in Acton. "We will merchandise and market that better than other builders have done," Mr. Bull said, predicting that the company can teach construction people something about merchandising. "We've just finished one of the first market research studies ever done before a new development. Before we started, we went out and surveyed about 40 percent of the homes in the whole town. (Acton)."

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Continuing, Mr. Bull said, "The Acton project will have 320 residential units and will increase the population by about 25 percent. It is a sleepy town now of about 4,600 people; by the time we put in our houses it will be, we hope, a growing restless town of about 7,000. We did our market research to find out who had moved there, where they had come from, what they liked about it. We were putting selling propositions from people already there."

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"We had some assumptions, and the real estate agents had some pretty good theories, but we didn't have qualified data. Now we have. We know how many of our prospective new home owners should come from within the Acton area and how many from outside, and where they are going to come from. We might well have launched our advertising against the city of Toronto. Now that we see the data, we know that would have been an error," Mr. Bull told Executive.

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"They are finding in the U.K. that a town may have only 25 or 50 acres that can be built on. If they throw that open and get every house builder in, they are going to get a hodgepodge. So Bovis, with its reputation for new town work, can go to the municipal officials and talk to them about how they visualize the best use of that land and how to integrate it into the total town planning concept. We haven't seen much of that in Canada yet. There is hodgepodge building, very poor planning in most of our smaller suburban areas. Town planning is only now being forced on municipalities by the Ontario Municipal Planning Board," Mr. Bull observed.

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Perhaps this town and its residents were not aware they were being inserted into a construction data test tube when the Bovis company moved in to construct homes. But you certainly can't accuse John Bull of "soft soaping" the industry or the town although he is certainly open to the charge since he is the former vice-president and director of marketing for Colgate-Palmolive. Residents here were not likely aware that Acton is a sleepy town and that the additional population which Bovis brings will likely change us into a growing restless town of about 7,000. However, it is always interesting to hear the opinion of others about your community.

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The heading on the article about Mr. Bull is "What can a Soap Man teach the Construction Industry?" Now we should ask what can a soap man turned construction mogul can teach us about a small town. What may seem to be a sleepy place could be simmering underneath in true small town fashion, but no one would know but the people who live there and take part in all the activities. Bovis indeed has brought a new dimension for co-operation between builder and council, which has delighted the mayor and other members of Acton council. The Seymuck property has been going to be developed for many years by various developers but months of fruitless haggling never seemed to settle anything. It seemed as if developers thought they could outwait and outfox the town fathers and settle for something better than the subdivision agreement hammered out by the town.

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Although it was a sometimes tedious wait and the long hours spent bargaining with developers seemed fruitless, it is evident council and the hydro commission took the right tack, by insisting the agreements to be honored. Along came Bovis and was willing to develop and co-operate fully with all the town's regulations—underground wiring, curbs and roads and money for other provisions such as extra school rooms, sewage and storm pipelines, etc. For the mayor and council it was a welcome change from haggling with other developers.

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Of course, it was no accident that the Bovis group came along to develop the subdivision simultaneously almost with the announcement that GO trains would soon be running a scant eight or nine miles away to Georgetown. The market is here. It is part of the irony of the Toronto-Centred Region plan that the area they chose to expand GO Train service to next is slated for slow development while the Milton area, now slated for more rapid development has no such service. Obviously all the departments of Government do not co-ordinate any better than other organizations.

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We hear so much about pollution these days it is always interesting to hear what other towns are doing about it. Take, for instance, Fink, Texas. The eight citizens of Fink, as a prelude to their eighth annual celebration of National Fish Day, have taken preliminary steps to annex nearby West Fink, extending municipal boundaries two miles. Some concern was voiced that would aggravate their one pollution problem. In view of the celebrations and added population. However, the nearby communities of Pittsborough, Denison and Sherman, Texas, have indicated their boys scouts and war veterans auxiliaries are willing to incorporate Fink's pollution abatement into their recycling drive again. Fink's only pollution problem, in case you haven't guessed, is an occasional excess of empty beer cans. But what problems annexation can cause.

Free Press Editorial Page

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1972



It's glum chum
- the first day
of school

at M.Z., Robert Little

(Photos by Dave Fink)

Reporter's impressions of Acton park

A reporter from the Oakville Daily Journal Record visited Acton's Prospect Park on a recent weekend. His impressions of the park were published.

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ACTON — The crowd still hasn't found Fairy Lake park here.

It is a quiet lake in a beautiful setting where swans and geese feed along the shoreline.

In fact, it is truly a "people's park", only without too many people — a good place to spend a summer afternoon.

Families hover around barbecues that exude a multitude of aromas. There's plenty of room for everybody and no one disrupts your afternoon of rest and sunshine.

There are plenty of things to occupy the children at Acton's park — supervised swimming, a baseball diamond, swings and of course, fishing.

Children lined the banks waiting for a catch.

The beach had its share of children building sandcastles, running girls and people lazing in the sun.

"We've been to Kelso Conservation area a couple of times but we like Acton the best," said Mrs. Yvonne Payette of Hamilton.

"The other areas are too crowded. It's nice and quiet here," says her husband.

The Payettes have been coming to Acton every Sunday during the summers for 10 years.

They, like many other out-of-town users, say they can't find anything else like it in the area.

Like other park users they voice concern that soon too many people will discover the park and threaten the small lake with pollution.

A few users bring canoes and the odd local citizen runs his motor boat, but the lake generally stays the preserve of the swans, geese and ducks.

Acton's park is a large peninsula in the middle of the lake, with fishing off the rocks on one side and swimming off the beach on the other.

Few parks can boast of this quiet harmony between active recreation and quiet relaxation.

Quiet moments on the shore aren't disrupted by the merriment of picnickers above.

If you can forget an Acton subdivision exists further to the north, you could pretend you're in northern Ontario.

Unless you insist on bringing your car inside the park, it costs nothing to use the facilities.

"Most places charge you a couple of bucks," says Ken Mah of Acton. This park offers clean water and few people for nothing, he says.

Has children were avidly fishing by the shoreline. "I'll eat any fish caught from here," says Herb Kinkle of Mississauga, a user of the park for 20 years.

"But I wouldn't eat any fish caught out of the Credit River."

"This is like having a cottage on your doorstep," he says. But like other residents, he worries about how long the park will remain the way it is.

Most teachers do return early

Secondary school teachers who voted 90 per cent against any policy requiring teachers to return to school prior to the official opening, were not so vehemently opposed to the return as they were to the fact the order would come from "above", as they termed it.

"Our teachers in Halton who want to meet, do so voluntarily," said the teachers through the OSSTF executive, "The decision must be solely made by the teachers."

Teachers contend they are professionals busy taking courses and other relevant work through the summer to prepare for the school years and must be free to plan their own activities.

On the one hand it looks as if the teachers have a case. Many of them spend most of their vacation improving

their qualifications. If the Board ordered them to return to school a week early this year, there is no reason to suppose they could not order them to return two weeks before school opening the next year.

On the other hand we think there should be a period of preparation for opening day so that classes can get into their full swing as soon as possible.

Most teachers probably do prepare for school opening several days ahead. Robert Little school principal G. W. McKenzie says his teachers are preparing for opening day several days ahead and he does not have to twist any arms. Most of them are eager to be fully prepared for the opening of school, he says. There is just no way a teacher can come in cold and expect to

be ready for the influx of students. They know it. We know it.

We presume the pattern in Acton schools would be repeated throughout the county. Any teacher worth his or her salt would be fully prepared for school opening.

Consequently, any recommendation from the Board of Education Priorities and Expenditure Committee ordering all teachers to report early for staff meetings would seem to be unnecessary and an overexercise of authority bound to fray touchy teacher-board relations.

However, if the Board has evidence teachers are not co-operating then they should be stepped on individually, and with the full weight of authority, to see professional attitudes are adopted.

Government will miss Darcy

Darcy McKeough, one of the bright lights in Premier Davis' cabinet is out. He resigned Thursday after it was alleged he approved the subdivision of land owned by a company he had a financial interest in when he was Minister of Municipal Affairs in December, 1969.

Leaders of the opposition at Queens Park declared that his involvement in South Chatham Estates constituted a direct conflict of interest. McKeough obviously resigned to stop further fissures from developing in the integrity of the cabinet.

McKeough has obviously done nothing wrong and Liberal leader Robert Nixon says "It has never been suggested that Mr. McKeough has in

any way been guilty of dishonesty. His decision (to resign) substantiates his reputation for integrity."

Mr. McKeough's indirect approval of the Chatham subdivision in 1969 follows too closely on the heels of the disclosure that Attorney-General Dalton Bales had bought land in Markham township at a time when the Government was considering fostering expansion east of Toronto.

The Attorney-General was not allowed to resign but Mr. McKeough must if the Davis Government is to retain its credibility with the electorate.

Darcy McKeough is the victim of circumstances.

It is unfortunate that it has to be one of the brightest and strong-willed

One of those new African nations is kicking all the Indians out of the country. This is an emotional and political, rather than a national decision.

African blacks hate these Asian Indians because the latter are better educated and on the whole, much wealthier than the natives. The reason for this is that the Indians are smart, work hard, and in backward countries, usually wind up in control of much of the economy.

Trouble is, with these Indians in Africa, that nobody wants them. Many of them have British passports, as their grandfathers went to Africa when the territory was under British rule, to build railroads. They're clinging to these passports like life-belts, but it isn't doing them much good.

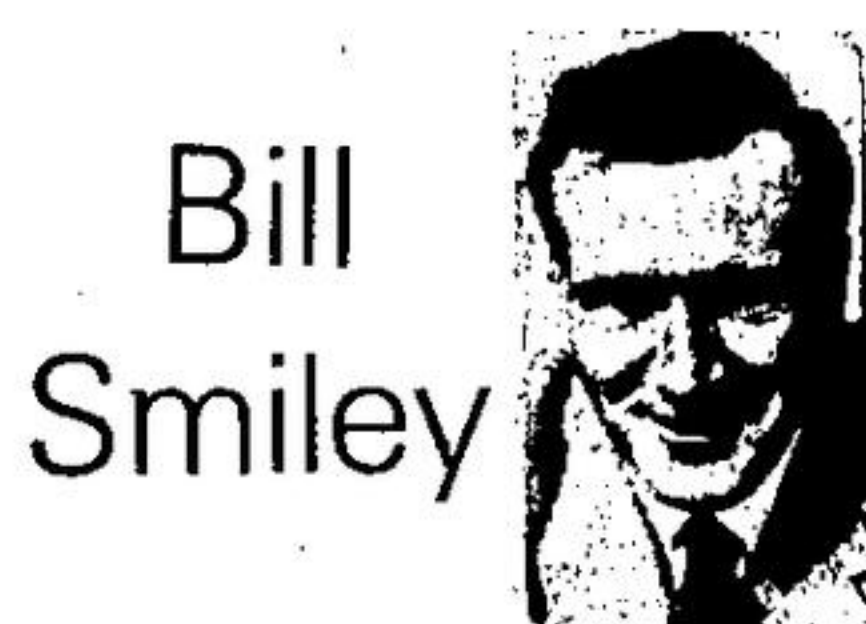
Britain doesn't want them. It has enough racial strife on its hands already, after admitting thousands of Pakistanis, Indians and West Indians after the war. There have been race riots, white against coloured.

India, their homeland, doesn't want them. It already has more refugees than it can handle. Canada has been approached, and, as usual, dithers.

We could do a lot worse than accept a sizeable chunk of these people without a home. They are industrious, peaceable and capable. They wouldn't be coming here as penniless immigrants. Most of them are fairly well off. Many of them have skills and professions we need.

I don't know much about Indians. I have some Canadian Indian friends, but the only Asian Indians I have known well were four chaps with whom I learned to fly Spitfires in England, longer ago than I care to remember.

Perhaps they weren't representative, because they were all from well-to-do families, and all spoke good English. But they were certainly a cross-section of that class, and gave me a good idea of why there is so much strife in India.



You'd think that four youths who had come all the way from India for advanced training would have been pretty close, thrown into the midst of all those Poles, British, Australians, Canadians, and a dozen other species of whites. On the contrary, they could barely stand one another.

There was Krishna. Smallish, very handsome, flashing black eyes that could almost literally flame when he was angry. He spoke such precise and fluent English that he made the rest of us feel like hicks. He was a Christian.

Then there was Ahmed. A lanky kid of about 19, sleepy-eyed, slow-moving, a big grin, and not much to say. He was a Pakistani Moslem.

And little Koori. He was pigeon-chested, weighed about 115, had huge, mournful black eyes, and was in a perpetual state of terror when flying. He should never have been there. One day he and I were sent up to practice dog-fighting in our Spits. I knew he didn't like flying, but not until that day just how deep was his fear. Every time I'd take a pass at him and go, "Tut-tut-tut-tut" like a machine gun, he'd veer wildly off about a mile and call wildly, "Smilee, Smilee, don't come so close." He was a Hindu.

And then there was the inimitable Singh Thandi. Flashing white teeth, chuckling eyes, magnificent silk turbans, under which he bunched his hair, which came down to his tail-bone. Curly black beard. Fastidious as a

model. Kept his beard curly by tying a handkerchief around his jaw at night and knotting it on top of his head.

Singh was a Sikh, another religion heard, from. But he was a pretty lousy Sikh. They're not supposed to drink, smoke, cut their hair, and a lot of other things. He didn't smoke or cut his hair but he could put away about twelve pints of beer in an evening and, except for a little giggling, be none the worse.

But he had his hangovers. He was a crafty devil. When he had a particularly bad head, he'd just stay in bed. When the C.O. tried to give him a blast for his absence, he'd roll his eyes at the ignorance of these infidels, and say politely "Sorry, sir, today is holy day for Sikhs. Cannot fly on holy day." The baffled C.O. had no answer, as these Indian boys had to be well treated.

Singh would have nothing to do with the other "Indians" and joined a convivial little group with Van, a Belgian, Sven, a Norwegian, a couple of Australians and Jack Ryan and myself, Canadians. With the beard, the turban and the silver tongue, he attracted girls like flies. He loved flying as Koori hated it.

Never gorged the time I shared a room with him in London, on a weekend leave. About 11 a.m. we started to pull ourselves together. He got up, groaning, holding his head, and tottered about in his shorts, his great mass of hair hanging down to his derriere (He didn't wear a turban to bed).

There was a knock at the door, one of us grunted, "Come in", and the maid entered to clean the room. At least she almost entered. She took one look, her mouth fell open, then she screamed and ran.

Despite his head, Singh nearly threw up from laughing so hard. "I bet, Smilee, he thought you were shackled up with the bearded lady from the circus." Singh was killed in Burma.

I like Indians. Let's invite more to our country.

Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 18, 1952.

Winning clowns in the children's clown contest Saturday at the Roxy Theatre were Mary Lou Creighton, Johnny Creighton, Blair Hotchen and Billy Greer, who received prizes from nattily attired Ernie Coles, who also dressed for the publicity of The Greatest Show on Earth that played that week.

At the council meeting authorization was granted to remove the top of the tower on the town hall because of its rotten condition. The present pointed tower will be replaced with a flat roof and a new wheel will be installed to operate the bell if necessary. The present wheel is weather-beaten to a rotten condition. The town hall was built about 1881.

Dublin W.I. quilt which won county and area awards is now entered in the provincial quilt competition.

Prizes were awarded by the Women's Institute at Limehouse Gardens Fair, judged by Mr. Pargeter. Among the junior winners were Billy Sanford, David Roughley, Joe Brown, Donnie Curry, Eugen Turner, Thomasine Sutton, Peter Glynn, Trudy Scott, John Brown; ex-students, Ruth Brown, Neil Benton, Kathleen Kirkpatrick.

On September 11 Margaret Brown and Melvin McCullough were married at Knox manse. After a reception at the Royal Hotel in Guelph the couple left on a trip to the west coast.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 14, 1922.

The C.N.E. was as magnificent as its attendance - a million and a third. The outstanding feature of the closing day was a mammoth choir of 2,000 at the grandstand and the Highlanders Band. Beardmore and Co. had a splendid exhibit.

Acton real estate reached high water mark last week when the improved 24 foot lot on Mill St. between the Wonderland theatre and Miss Florence Murray's residence was purchased by Miss Murray from Councillor Frank for \$45 a foot.

The High and Public schools staff has been organized for the coming year as follows: High School - Miss Knapp, principal; Miss James, assistant. Miss James was principal of Rockwood continuation school last year. Public School - Miss Bennett, principal, and Misses Daisy Folster, Muriel Fleury, Olla B. Armstrong, Nellie Anderson, Isobel Anderson and Bessie Gardner.

New hardwood floor is to be laid in the auditorium of the town hall at a cost of \$625. Mr. Worden secured the contract.

One evening last week a number of growing lads who were preparing for a corn roast in the quarries went foraging at a neighboring farm and lo and behold, ran upon a cache of gallon jugs of liquor. Needless to say the farmer had absolutely no knowledge that they were there.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, September 16, 1897.

Much interest is manifested in the re-opening of the Methodist church after extensive improvements.

It is authoritatively stated that services were held in this vicinity by Methodist preachers - Revs. Ezra and Zenas Adams - as early as 1828, nearly 70 years ago but Acton was first made a regular appointment on a circuit in 1834. The late Rev. Lewis Warner was the first settled pastor. Acton was then on the Nelson circuit and the personage was at Hannahsville. The circuit then included all of Halton county and appointments outside its bounds. It took the minister two weeks, preaching every evening and three times on Sunday, to cover his circuit. In this vicinity Acton service was Tuesday evening. The date of Acton's elevation to the importance of a Methodist appointment for regular Sunday services was 1844 from which date the church's anniversaries are computed. The late Rev. Luther Rice was the first pastor. The services were in homes and the schoolhouse and the first church was erected in 1851 which still stands at the corner of Church and John.

It is presently the place of worship of the Disciples. The present church edifice was built in 1875-6.

Mrs. E. Hiltz has completed her new house at Ballinlad and will move into it this week.