

Free Press Editorial Page

Band should be encouraged

Sometimes members of Halton Hills council take their duties so seriously they are insensitive to public-spirited organizations which may not run strictly by the letter of the law, as councillors see it.

A case in point happened last week when members of the finance committee grilled Acton Citizens' Band conductor Dr. George Elliott before they would recommend a grant of \$4,725.

Not that the finance committee of council should not be aware of the financial operation of the band, but we feel they intruded into matters which were not really their concern.

The band has representatives who have always proved to be responsible, intelligent and responsive to the musical needs of the community and seem best equipped to say where funds should best be spent.

Finance chairman Harry Levy said he objected to the way in which money received from the town was donated to someone else who assisted the band. Providing there has been no misuse of funds we think it should be the prerogative of the Band to decide where funds should be spent.

Councillors Levy and Ernie Sykes were concerned that funds taken in by the band were not used to reduce the grant. What they are not considering is the service provided to the community by the

band. Surely it is a feather in any community's hat to have a brass band and a means of teaching children one of the few cultural activities available in smaller places.

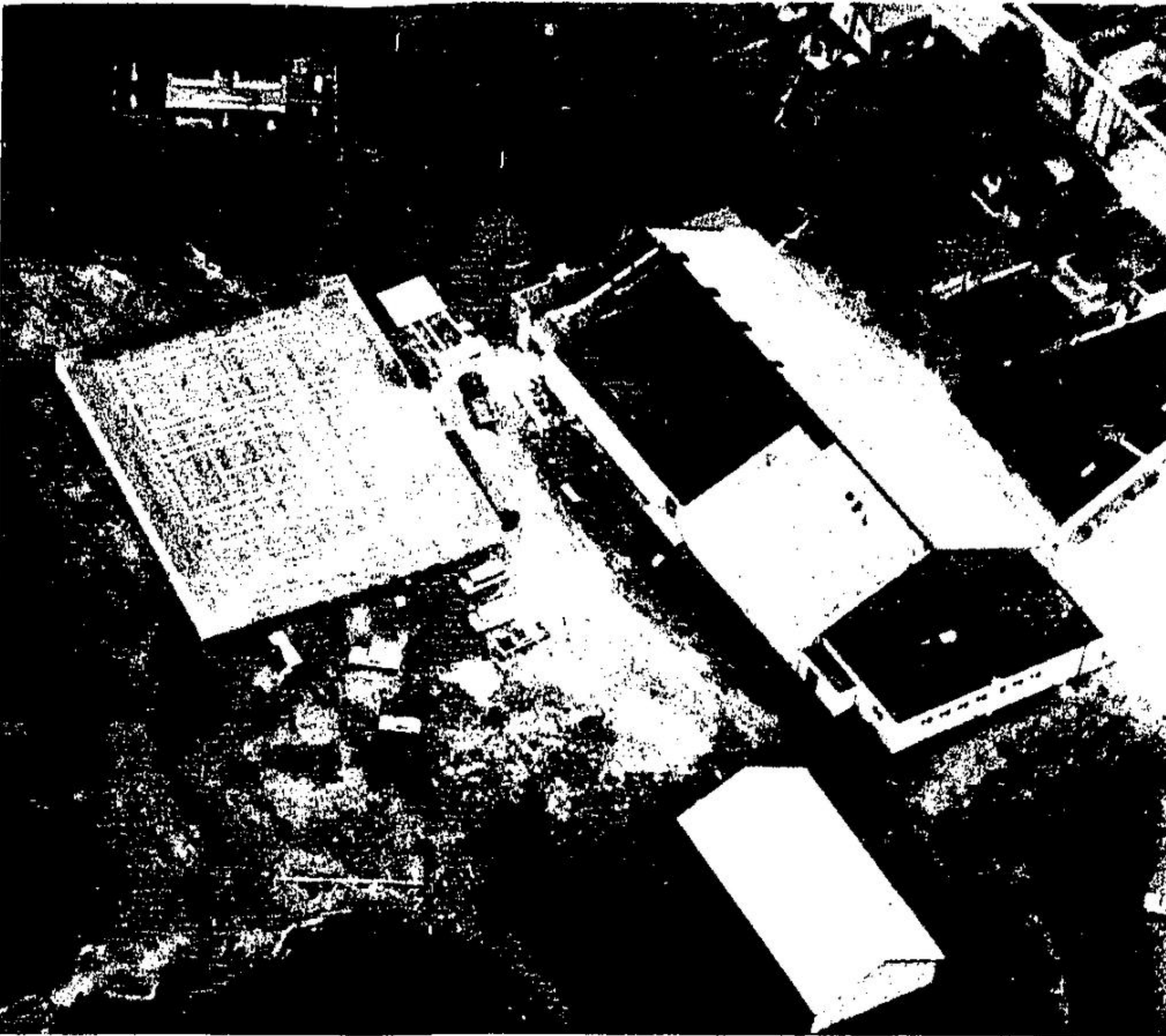
Let's not knock it but give it every encouragement, especially since it concerns 90 members, 85 of whom are from Halton Hills.

The attitude of some members of the finance committee is not only showing lack of confidence in the Acton Citizens' Band but also in the way in which the former Acton Council allowed the band to operate in the past.

Certainly, as Councillor Sykes indicated, the Acton band should be treated the same as any other group within Halton Hills but they must also remember the band supplies its services free to the town after a heck of a lot of hard work and practice sessions. They have a full schedule of events that keep them busy.

According to Bandmaster Elliott it is time Georgetown had a band of its own to fulfil engagements required within the community because the Acton Band does not have the time available. And we wonder if the omission is there because the attitude of previous Georgetown councils has discouraged a band from operating?

Judging from the attitude at finance this is possible.



AIRPLANE TIPPED its wings over the arena and tennis courts so photographer Bill Stuckey could take this picture last week. Workmen have half of one side of the arena roof off in this shot; two people are playing tennis. That's the Pioneer cemetery at the top left, the poultry shed at the bottom right, and one corner of the lake showing at the bottom.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press May 19, 1955

It was Friday, the 13th, when Halton's Member of Parliament Miss Sybil Bennett, had an unlucky car accident. Luckily, however, she was not injured.

George Segestomdo was uninjured although damage to his '47 Chev. amounted to \$300, in an accident on the third line at the fish pond near Acton. Mr. Segestomdo applied the brakes to turn in a lane when the brakes grabbed, causing him to lose control in the gravel. The car entered the west ditch, rolled over, coming to rest on its right side facing south.

Andrew Buchanan, missing from his Acton home for three days last week, was found south of here early Thursday evening by local police. Police said Mr. Buchanan, who had been the subject of a wide search in this area, was located in a bush shack on the farm of W. S. Enright, three miles south of Acton. A party of men had combed bush areas around Churchill, Speyside, and Stewarttown the day before with no success.

After careening 75 feet along a ditch, striking a large rock and knocking it 15 feet, a '46 Plymouth was a total wreck and its driver, Irvin Legue of R.R. 2, Acton, was injured. The accident occurred on the Speyside side road about 8:30 on May 14.

Wilson Altonby added another trophy to his collection on Saturday, when he entered the two and a half mile National Steel Car race at Hamilton last Saturday. While 46 started the race just 26 finished.

50 years ago

Taken from an issue of the Free Press May 21, 1925

There are eleven depressions on the Mill Street roadway, over the trenches where the waterworks services were put in to water takers. There are nine similar ones on Church Street. Mill Street also has a number and other streets in town are similarly blemished. Probably it only requires that the attention of the Streets Committee be called to these places, and they will promptly be remedied. It might be an effective way to get the members of the Council in a car and drive them over these places at 15 to 20 miles per hour.

The summer meeting of the Institute will be held in the Parish Hall on Thursday, May 28 at 3 o'clock. Mrs. H. M. Aitken of Beeton will give an address on "The Golden Age". Everyone welcome. At 2:30 there will be a meeting of the branch, which all are requested to attend as there is important business to talk over.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Reid, of Erin, are retiring from farming, and will settle in Acton. They will reside in Mr. Kerr's house on Knox Avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook, of Meaford, have taken up their residence in Acton. Prior to leaving Meaford, Mrs. Cook was presented with a complimentary address, and a life membership in the Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press May 17, 1900

Mr. Geo. Statham, of Acton, who opened up a bake shop in Koebler's old stand on Monday, has decided to quit the business on account of the oven. He will return to Acton in a day or so and take his father's place in a bakery here.

Mr. I. Coon was badly shaken up on Tuesday morning by accidentally stepping off a load of hay at Mr. James Brown's barn. He fell across the windmill shaft and hurt his side, but is able to be around again.

James Matthews is having a splendid demand now for his new rein protector. An order for 250 was received this week from Winnipeg, and a smaller order from Assinibois.

Dr. F. J. R. Forster, and a number of his most intimate association, including the Sunday School Orchestra, were entertained on Monday evening at the residence of Mr. James Matthews, where the Dr. has made his home during his stay in Acton. A most enjoyable evening was spent. A pleasing event of the evening was the reading of a complimentary address by Mr. E. J. Moore and presentation of a small library of leather bound poets by Mr. R. J. Gurney.

There is nothing so increases a man's desire to work in the garden as the discovery that his wife has misplaced the rake.

Representative from Acton

It's possible there could be a Member of the Legislature from Acton again, if Gary Dawkins wins the Progressive-Conservative nomination June 5 and then the election in Halton-Burlington.

There hasn't been a member of parliament from Acton since the

Hon. David Henderson, and that was many, many moons ago.

Gary Dawkins is actively seeking support these days in Georgetown, Esquesing and Acton.

So far only one other person has stated he will contest the seat, George Gray of Georgetown.

Will miss George Currie

The death of veteran politician George Currie at his home near Ashgrove last week signals the end of the era when politics was really grass roots.

George Currie presided over the meetings of Esquesing council up until he was 80 years of age with an acumen for politics and the business of governing that never seemed to dim.

As a green reporter we remember watching as slick operators from Toronto and other cities breezed into the township council chambers feeling confident they would get their own way over representatives from Esquesing, mostly farmers with little formal education.

We also remember many of the "operators" left the council chambers on the short end of any stick they hoped to sell to shrewd councillors of the township. One of the shrewdest was George Currie, wielding the gavel only when necessary, and getting to the heart of the matter with a minimum of words. He seemed to know everyone by their first name, where they lived and what they did for a living. He was also an affable sort who grappled with both sides of a pro-

blem before coming up with an answer. He went out of his way to be helpful but if he felt someone or a group was trying to put something over on the people of the township he represented, there was no scorn more withering or sarcasm more pointed when he was convinced of fraudulent claims or dealings.

Of course, no politician is always right but there are few instances recorded when one could put the finger on George Currie for not putting the interests of the township first over his own personal feelings.

Municipal Government in this part of Ontario has changed, some claim for the better, but we doubt that it will ever regain the "grass roots" feeling it had when men such as the former reeve, and others of his ilk were in power.

It is a time we will remember with relish because it provided an education into municipal politics. But we'll also recall the fine gentlemen who represented the people at the council tables of Esquesing when political life was simpler and much was done simply for the good of the community.

And George Currie was one of them.



Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

This week I had the chore of sorting through a huge pile of applications for a job on our high school staff teaching English. One job and about 80 applications. That's the way things are these days in the teaching game.

It's a cruel world for young people trying to break into the profession. Armed with their pieces of paper on which it says right there in print that they are now qualified teachers, they sally forth to put into practice their high ideals, their warm personalities, their love for young people, and the results of four or five years of university slugging.

And what do they find? A vast indifference. Nobody wants them. Principals want people with experience. But how do you get experience if you can't get a job? It's an old story in the world of free enterprise, but it's still a sad one for those caught in the vicious circle.

It's exactly like another facet of the system of which we are so proud: banking. If you're broke and need money, a bank won't loan it to you. If you're rich and don't need money, you have to beat off the bankers with a stick.

I couldn't help thinking, as I sat toying with people's lives, of the vast change that has taken place since I began teaching, about 15 years ago.

Those were the days when the great post-war baby boom was hitting the high schools.

Principals were raiding industry for technical teachers, business for commercial teachers.

If you had a university degree, it was as much as your life was worth to walk past a school. A lasso would snake out, you'd find

yourself getting a hot sales pitch in a principal's office, and next thing you knew were standing in front of 35 kids with your mouth hanging open.

Anyone who was not obviously drunk or noticeably retarded had a pretty fair chance of winding up in teaching.

One daily newspaper ran pages and pages of teacher-wanted advertisements each spring, and school boards spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on advertising.

I remember one spring when I could have taken my pick of 28 jobs as an English department head, by picking up the phone.

Those were fat times for the young graduating teachers, too. Armed with nothing more than a puny B.A., they could pretty well pick and choose where they wanted to work and live.

Each spring there was an event which came to be known rather cynically as "the cattle market".

School boards from all over the province would take over a big hotel in the city. Potential teachers would flock in by the thousands. It was a seller's market.

The student teacher walked the halls, checked the signs on doors. If he deigned to knock, he was snatched through the door by a principal, had coffee or something stronger forced on him, generally given the glad hand and usually assured a job, even if "he" happened to be a bald female with green teeth.

Of course, the pay wasn't much then, about \$4,000 to start, but that was worth more than twice as much as it is now.

When I was hired, I wrote a letter applying for the only English teaching job

left in the province. The principal was on the phone the minute he got my letter. He couldn't believe that I had an honor degree in English. Apparently I was the only person left in Canada with such a degree who wasn't teaching.

Just two years later, I had a department headship forced on me. I didn't particularly want it. Ryerson Institute wanted me to go there and teach journalism. The president of Waterloo University wanted me to go there and handle public relations and teach some English.

If I were fired tomorrow, with my honors degree and 15 years experience, I'd be lucky to get a job in Nooknik, teaching English As A Second Language to Eskimo kids.

I checked with five of my colleagues in the English department, who entered teaching during those halcyon years. Three of the five were hired by phone, sight unseen.

Now, we sort through a vast sheaf of applications. Here's a guy with a B.A., M.A., and Ph. D. in English. Discard him. Overeducated, no experience. Here's one with an honor degree, excellent recommendations, just out of teacher's college. Discard her. No experience.

And when we narrow it down to six or eight, they have to show up for a grueling interview (grueling for me too) and have driven 300 miles for it, and drive home with nothing to show for it but a hearty "Thank you for coming."

The whole thing makes me sick. There's a great waste of talented young teachers, many of whom, in disgust, go into some other way of making a living.

There's a whole slew of old teachers still in harness, who are hanging on because archaic regulations make them hang on until they are too old and sick and stupid and tired to be of any use to anyone, merely to draw their pensions.

Surely in a country with our resources, and in an age when the computer can make accurate projections, we can do better than use this outmoded system of supply and demand, which may be all right for the cattle market, but all wrong for human beings.

Our readers write

Proclamation platter of pious platitudes

I wonder how many people read the proclamation stating the month of May, 1975, was to be regarded as Family Day in Ontario?

Apart from running the risk of playing into the hands of the manufacturers of greeting cards by creating this as an annual event and so boosting their profits, can this really have a significant effect upon people living in Ontario? Is our Premier so concerned about the breaking up of the family unit or is this another political trick to promote his image and win votes by appealing to the sentiments of the people?

To readers who are turned off by this letter, thinking I must be an ardent follower of the opposition, let me assure them they are wrong. I question the intention of this Proclamation because I find it difficult to understand how Mr. Davis can have the audacity to put his signature to it when members of his very own Cabinet (his political family) have set such appalling standards to the citizens (adults and children of Ontario) by falling into public disgrace and violating the trust placed in them.

I also question his so called concern about the elements in society which work against family harmony, when his Minister of Education does not have the courage to face the fact, one of the most influential of these elements has in fact been the introduction of programs in the schools such as sex education, liberty of students to choose courses of study and counselling. All of these seemed to be good ideas at the time, but isn't it painfully obvious to the majority of people that this went completely out of control of the parents, and intruded on family standards to such an extent most parents were faced with a steady increase in conflicts with their children?

This same Government have recently set up a commission to investigate the effect of crime films on television on young people. Obviously they are concerned, and I am delighted to see that at long last someone is.

To some extent parents can control the amount of television in which their children indulge and subsequently have to accept the responsibility for their control or lack of control.

One area, however, which seems to be completely out of the control of parents is the school.

Also counselling. A child in today's

system is almost encouraged to confide in his counsellor and discuss intimate details regarding the family situation in his or her home. The intention is, I have no doubt good, but the result is disastrous.

At some time sooner or later, that child is faced with a conflict of loyalty, and possibly an alienation to either family or school. If the family is the sacred unit which has sustained civilized society for almost 2,000 years, why have we suddenly allowed this intrusion to take place?

Is there really a place in our schools for this amateur psychiatry? I would ask Mr. Davis to look to this area in his concern for the sanctity of the family unit.

A proclamation of this type is in itself an insult to the people of Ontario. It is nothing but pious platitudes.

There are many reasons for the break-up of the family unit and I personally am convinced educators and politicians do not have the right to interfere with the standards set by individual families.

Morality and sex education is the responsibility of the parents, and it is not for any cabinet minister to decree that all children will have his or her standards set by any one method.

Betty Eastwood

We're OK, thanks, Bill

While the proclamation of Family Unity Month does have a sentimental appeal, it seems the government wants to do too much for us already, without advising us about our family life. The decree comes from the provincial government, although Tom Hill signed the notice in last week's paper, as the mayor.

"Families are continually seeking more effective ways to combat elements in society which work against family harmony," says the proclamation. Wouldn't it be better for our government to encourage the police to combat these elements, and leave our families to manage their own affairs?

18,000 murders for kids

Studies have shown that the average child spends more hours watching television before he or she goes to kindergarten than he or she would have spent in lectures during four years of college! By age 14 he or she has seen about

18,000 human beings killed on television. And by the time he or she has finished high school, he or she has been influenced by 350,000 television commercials.

These figures give parents something to worry about!

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