

# Free Press Editorial Page

## Review on regions

Regional government may not necessarily be here as an irreversible fact. There will be a review of regional government in Niagara.

Regional government was established in Niagara in 1970, and the council there decided a couple of months ago it was time for a second look.

An independent commission is headed by William Archer, a former Toronto councillor. He'll

study political systems and administration, the boards and commissions...how things work.

Perhaps a study of this kind will be instituted in Halton some time.

At least one of the candidates for office finds not too much concern about regional government, as he meets the people these pre-election days. Our complaints, he finds, are mostly about the operation of things, and not about the basic restructuring of government itself.

## Youngsters change time

Acton and area youngsters are now changing their tune from "no more pencils, no more books" to "it's off to school we go".

And the morning rush hour "vacation" for motorists is over! Commuting to work during school days, particularly just after classes open, offers safety hazards not encountered in the summer.

Once again, the Hamilton Automobile Club has launched its "School's Open" campaign designed to remind drivers to be extra alert for children making their morning commute to local schools. Colourful "School's Open—Drive Carefully" posters are posted throughout the four counties of the club to reinforce the message while motorists are on the road. Bumper stickers and placemats also carry the message.

Motorists are urged to exercise the "Drive Carefully" slogan with special emphasis when confronting these school related traffic

conditions:  
—reductions in speed limits in school zones  
—crossing guards and safety patrols helping students cross streets

—children on bicycles  
—children crossing unguarded streets  
—children walking on roadways  
—youngsters darting out from between parked cars

—toddlers on their way to school for the first time  
—parents stopping to let children off in front of schools  
—school buses stopped to load or unload pupils

Motorists are also reminded of the new school bus law that went effect September 1 (Monday). Traffic in both directions is required to stop for a school bus with flashing red lights regardless of the speed limit, in town as well as in the country.

## Our commonwealth cousins

Our commonwealth cousins from almost 40 countries are eligible to vote in the Ontario elections, if they have lived in the province for a year.

Some of those from non-Commonwealth countries such as Eire (the republic of Ireland), South Africa and Bangladesh are also considered British subjects.

And those who are associated with the United Kingdom and Canada in the Commonwealth are Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Botswana, Ceylon, Cyprus, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaya, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Nyasaland,

Pakistan, Rhodesia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Southern Rhodesia, Swaziland, Tanganyika, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Western Samoa and Zambia.

The magic of names!  
Do the children in school know where all these commonwealth countries are? Better still, do their parents know?

Isn't it strange that we see nothing of them on television, read little in our papers, while we're flooded with American news? All these countries share a Queen, yet we seldom see her on TV or in our newspapers.

What's the reason?  
Don't we share more than a right to vote?

## 1400 gallons for you

Canada uses 1400 gallons of water every day for every man, woman and child, says a new book out, Canada Water Year Book 1975. Environment Canada did the research that reveals the whopping figure.

Don't feel too guilty about wasting water, though. The book says 50 gallons a day per person is for personal use. The other 1350 are

for manufacturing, cooling, municipal services, agriculture, mining and other activities.

Beardmore, for instance, the town's largest industry, came here because there was plenty of water, and there still is.

We use water daily without thinking where it all comes from. But....1400 gallons?

## Of this and that

This week's 50 Years Ago column announces that Bertha Nephew is joining the teaching staff. Just last week the Free Press carried her obituary, as Bertha Buchanan. Another co-incidence was the choice of the picture of the Buchanan home on the front of the Marketplace real estate section of the paper.

The big blue signs at the town's entrance now bear a friendly message, "Hi, welcome to our town." The billboards had been bare for quite a while and the improvement is pleasant.

A damp and gloomy way to end the summer holidays was the rain-drenched weekend just past. It's enough to make everybody happy to get back to work and school.

The park was nearly deserted each day of the three-day Labour Day weekend.

The government won't approve compulsory seat belt legislation, so people must legislate themselves. Seat belts have a proved value but they're of no use at all unless they're used. That means always.

A little harder to legislate for our own families would be lower speed on the roads.

### OUR READERS WRITE:

### Campaign time

During the election campaign we can't promise to print letters to the editor dealing with the campaign.

The Editor



AS STUDENTS, TEACHERS, and summer vacationers get down to the hustle and bustle of the working world, mother nature paints her fall picture with rolling hills and fluffy clouds. Soon trees will be

littered with color, temperatures will become moderate, and animals will prepare for the winter. That includes skiers.



## Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Just clearing off my desk before heading to Saskatoon for a convention of weekly editors. Boy, am I a lazy bum! There must be 45 letters stacked here, unanswered.

First of all, there are two piles of letters about the metric-Celsius nonsense. Those who agree with me form a much deeper pile. But, in fairness, those who disagree are much more literate. Does this have any significance?

The more literate letters, are, on the whole, much duller than the emotional ones. They treat me as a backward child, or a senile old man. I am neither.

Sample, from Wm. Gary Wharton, of Unionville, Ont. "There are things occurring (his spelling) in this world that from the sounds of your column you couldn't even begin to comprehend. Things are dealt with on a world-wide basis now and in doing so we need a common unit of measure, weight and volume." And so on.

Baloney! If that is so, why don't we have a common world-wide language, and a common unit of currency? We have neither. The argument holds no water.

On the other side, Earl F. Gilchrist of Perth, Ont., is equally lacking in logic. "The metric system should never be introduced in Canada because it isn't Canadian. I want my children to grow up in a Canadian Canada not a Foreign Canada. Any Canadian that accepts the metric system isn't a Canadian."

Well now, I wouldn't go that far. That means that I could never enjoy English fish-and-chips, French fries, chicken chow mein, lasagna, southern fried chicken, and would be condemned for life to drinking Canadian wine. That way madness lies.

There's a letter from Mr. and Mrs. C. Knott of Rorketon, Man. "The guy that invented this stuff (Celsius and metrics) died so why doesn't it die with him as it sure doesn't make any sense... We are only two out here, but I know there are many more in this area. Go to it Bill, send out petition or whatever it takes to stay as it was before."

A June editorial in the Waterloo Chronicle by Mike Roy is headed Some Facts, Please. He then attacks my "half-baked ideas" about the metric system. He goes on to state a lot of facts about the world's population, makes a desperate attempt to link these to the need for a metric system, and fails. I just take back my remark that letters urging a metric system are more literate than those against.

Here's a long, witty, oft bawdy letter from Harvey Malcolm, a farmer, municipal politician and news correspondent from Janetville for the Bowmanville Statesman. He wants metric. "Have you ever tried from scratch to figure out in the twinkling of an eye with a ratepayer breathing over your shoulder, how many lots 99'x133' or such like can be found in an umpteen acre field?"

No, I haven't Harvey. But I imagine it could be done with a calculator in about three minutes by a teenager of average intelligence. What's the big rush to find it out, anyway? Somebody only wants to make a buck. Let him wait.

B.C. Leaden of Rosedale, British Columbia, says that he often disagrees with me wholeheartedly, but on this, is on my side. In part, he says, speaking of politicians: "They take out money and they screw it all up until you can't tell one bill from another, except for the good old duce, and I suppose they'll soon get rid of that. They shove French down the English throats and English down the French and

now they drop this Celsius bit on us poor long-suffering hasters. What in hell do we want that for? Celsius! Sounds more like a disease than a degree of temperature."

Another brief letter from a Western couple, stamped envelope enclosed, says: "Tell us what to do, write our M.P. or what, and we'll do it." Well, folks, that's a good place to start, but don't be surprised if you get a polite brush-off.

To try to sum up my own feelings would require another whole column, and would just touch on the subject. Firstly, I agree that metric is easier. Any idiot knows that.

But don't try to snow me with arguments that Canada's economic future depends on the metric system. Our economic future, like it or lump it, is tied to that of the U.S. which is not metric.

The metric system should have been introduced 50 years ago. It wasn't. Now is not the time to do it, when inflation is making terrible ravages on our economy. Maybe it's 15 years too soon. We just can't afford it right now.

Celsius is silly. I don't care what the temperature is in Outer Mongolia, or what system they use. I want to know whether it's 10 below or 80 above—Fahrenheit. The U.S. uses Fahrenheit. The radio and TV stations along the border use both. The newspapers report British and continental temperatures in Fahrenheit.

The changes to metric and Celsius seem to reflect that old Canadian tradition, which applies in everything from styles to education.

It goes something like this: "Let's drag our feet for a while, until everybody else has tried this thing out. Then we'll jump in and go the whole hog, whether the thing worked or not."

Heck with both of them. I only hope that when I get to Saskatoon, it's been a good summer (Fahrenheitally speaking) for wheat, and that those fish I don't catch in northern Saskatchewan will not be less than two metres in length.

## Looking back



AN IMPORTANT part of Acton's history is reflected here as members of the Acton platoon of the 164th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force pose in 1916. The platoon is one of eight which made up the Battalion and also included troops from Oakville, Georgetown, Burlington, Milton, Orangeville, Shelburne and Grand Valley.



LOOKING CLOSELY, long-time Acton residents may be able to recognize Acton citizens who were once members of the Acton Platoon of the 164th Battalion of the 1916 Canadian Expeditionary Force. Members of the Battalion are seen as they trek from Camp Borden in Oct. 1916 under leadership of Colonel Donville. The troops are on route to Westinghouse Barracks in Hamilton for winter of 1916-1917, prior to leaving for overseas on April 5, 1917.

## The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press September 8, 1955

A by-law which would shift Saturday night opening hours to Friday night for at least 14 Acton merchants was read a first time in Council Monday night after members were presented with a petition claiming 75 per cent support for the new hours in seven classifications of business listed.

Although neither Janice Baker nor her family has heard anything about it, a list of winners of admission scholarships to the University of Toronto includes her name. The lengthy list of awards released this week indicated that Evelyn Janice Baker of Acton high school had won a Fifth award. The high school is jammed this week with an enrolment of 198 pupils and the new wing still not ready for occupancy. It is expected that the new classrooms will be ready by next week for the overflow crowds in the school. Enrolment and accommodation will then be a match, according to the principal E. Hansen.

Acton firemen were called out Wednesday evening to control an unspectacular but stubbornly burning fire at the western end of the rising Lakeview subdivision. Workmen at the subdivision had earlier in the day been burning off brush and scrub. Considerable smoke was rising from the bush. The fire apparently burned out of control shortly after the supper hour and came close to catching on to a small bush of evergreens before it was put out.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press September 3, 1925

The regular meeting of the Women's Institute will be held on Friday evening, September 4 at 8 p.m. sharp, at the home of Mrs. John Munn, Main Street. A good programme. Everyone welcome.

The Acton schools re-opened yesterday and two new teachers took their places on the high school staff. They are Miss T. S. Craig of Athens, who is the new principal in charge, and Miss Bertha E. Nephew of Kincardine, who takes the position of Assistant, formerly held by Miss Tisdale. The staff of the public school remains unchanged.

Acton Baptist Church was the scene of a very delightful event on the afternoon of August 26 when Rhea Mildred, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Crewson, of Crewson Corners, was married to John Leslie McEachern, of Milton. Rev. J. W. Boyd of Acton, was the officiating minister. The bride was attended by her sister Miss Edna Crewson. The bridegroom was supported by Mr. Alexander McIsaac of Acton.

Last Thursday evening Acton Citizens' Band played for the second time this year at Milton and gave a concert in Victoria Park there. A parade of the Milton and Acton bands and the Boy Scouts was formed and marched from the town hall. Acton Citizens' Band, Mr. Joe Williams, comedian and a Toronto pianist and soloist put on the programme at the park.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, September 6, 1900

A letter from Gunner W. Gould of "D" battery, Second Royal Canadian Contingent, South Africa, to his Acton friends, says he has been in that godforsaken country five months and has at last had an actual engagement. "We left Pretoria with a column of 12,000 fighting men, for the purpose of either surrounding the Boers or driving them back—a regular artillery duel lasted an hour, then all was quiet... we are getting tired of the work and wish it were over."

The public school re-opened Tuesday with the following staff in their places. T. S. Moore principal, Miss C. McPhail, Miss Jean McPhail, Miss Tena Currie, Miss E. McQueen. There was a good attendance of scholars although the Toronto Exhibition has kept a number from being enrolled this week.

When the stump of the big willow, which had grown for nearly half a century at the corner of Mill and Willow Streets, was being removed a few weeks ago, the Secretary of the Old Pupils Reunion committee conceived the idea of securing a section of it and having souvenirs prepared and sent to each of the old pupils. Last week 183 pieces of the old willow were posted out with a printed message.

A team of horses attached to a seed drill became frightened at Grindell's machine shop Saturday and ran at a terrific speed up Mill St. and out the third line. They belonged to Mr. Robert Watson, Fourth line.

The Disciples at Everton are having evangelistic services. Four converts were received last week.

Mr. Hugh S. McDonald sowed a small plot of wheat on the farm of Mr. Robert Sprout yesterday, with grain which he grew in 1869 while working on the Darling farm at Milton.

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