

Free Press Editorial Page

Rough bite

That potential \$100 hike in the average tax bill looks a little rough. The tax hike of about \$9 that will be going to the services provided by the municipality of Halton Hills is awfully slim when you stack it up against the \$77 for education and about \$27 for regional costs. We can remember when the old "county rate" was a drop in the municipal tax bucket and when school boards came, cap in hand, to the local municipality for a meagre hand out to keep the heat on in the classrooms. That's all changed now. Everybody sets their own rate and the only time it gets added up is when the bill is delivered to the taxpayer. We don't argue that this is all wrong. Sometimes we know school boards were made to grovel in their attempts to get the kind of tax dollars it required to upgrade standards. We don't remember the county ever having to do that, but there were always some very outspoken representatives at county council from the local municipal-

ities who had a strong hand in what was, or was not, being spent before the rate was set. It is important though, under our present system, to remember that although the tax bill comes from the local council, there are a couple of other fairly big pockets to fill from the bite that is put on the individual taxpayer. And before too many get very uptight perhaps we should consider the value obtained for the tax dollar which is sometimes forgotten amidst the grumbling. Those services like fire and police protection, the maintenance of the sewer and water flows, the cleaning, plowing and maintenance of the streets, the garbage collection and a host of other often forgotten services that are part of our day to day life, are paid for by tax dollars. Taxes are inevitable, but they are also an annual source of grumbling. Maybe we should think a little more positively about them and the annual pill wouldn't be so hard to swallow.

See the police

Next week is police week. The Halton Regional Police are planning some opportunities for you to become more familiar with their work and displays, outlined elsewhere in this issue, are scheduled for Acton on Monday and Tuesday. If you miss those it's Wednesday and Thursday in Georgetown and then Friday and Saturday in Milton. The OPP are also holding open house at their offices with an opportunity to see something of their work from the inside. All of us know the police on the other end of the parking ticket or

the more serious "bust" but this is a chance to see that the work they do on behalf of the community, in safeguarding it, is handled by real people with a very important job to do. Why not make it a point to drop in for the events planned this week. Your participation could provide a little more assurance to the police that we really are behind them in their very important work. And in that visit we will all learn a little more of some of the difficulties they face in being right beyond the shadow of a doubt. Let's all observe police week.

A new season

The Acton Rams, the town's lacrosse entry in the Junior C Central Division are looking good in their two pre-schedule games and we wish them well as they open their season tonight in Dundas against a new league team the Bengals. It was in 1971 they last earned the championship in the league, and with a win and a tie in the exhibition games this year, we can hope

they will be able to move smoothly through the schedule. The team provides a focus for the community during the summer months when the hockey season fades into history and with new sweaters and helmets, a little paint in their colors at the arena and a fresh start it looks like some good entertainment. All the best Rams in your season.



Blooms, blossoms and rivulets speak of Spring.

(Photos by Steven Dills)



Sugar and Spice by bill smiley

You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

To these old adages be added another, closely related. You can't create a fluent, sparkling, bilingual cosmopolitan out of a dull, middle-class, middle-aged civil servant.

I'm glad to see that some semblance of sense has seeped into the senility surrounding the approach to bilingualism at Ottawa.

Keith Spicer, the grand poobah of bilingualism, appointed by the Trudeau government to wet-nurse one of its favorite babies, has finally reached a conclusion that an average 12-year-old could have arrived at, without undue mental strain, in about 15 minutes.

He decided, and had the courage to admit, that the government program for creating bilingualism in the civil service was luss ackwards.

Some unkind people might say that Ottawa civil servants have always spoken with a double tongue, even when they had only one language, and why have them speaking doubletalk in two?

Instead of pouring millions into converting stodgy civil servants into connoisseurs of French language and culture, Mr. Spicer concedes, the money should be spent in the schools, teaching French to children. Great thinking, Keith. Anyone with any knowledge of learning a second language could have told you that two years ago.

Ordinary, every-day common sense and experience shows us how true this is. Take an average family of immigrants to Canada, German, Italian, whatever you like. The parents have great difficulty in learning English, and retain a strong accent all their lives.

Their children, even though their only language is their native one when they arrive here, and even though it is spoken almost exclusively at home, are completely at ease in English within a year or two. To hear them chirp and prattle away in the idiom, you'd never know that they weren't born and bred in English-speaking Canada.

For an adult, learning a new language is horribly hard work. And for a bureaucrat or civil servant, it must be doubly difficult, because their minds are constitutionally unable to admit anything new.

French-Canadians who want to get somewhere in Canada, whether it's in business or politics, learn English because they have to. Whatever the pundits say, this is primarily an English-speaking country.

Most French-Canadian cabinet

ministers are at least adequate in English. Some politicians, like Pierre Trudeau and Claude Wagner, speak English beautifully, far better than most of their Anglophone peers and opponents.

But when an Anglo politician speaks French, however atrociously, we look upon him or her with amazement, as though it were a sign of genius. What hypocrisy, in a country that is, theoretically bilingual. (I still wince every time John Diefenbaker strays into what he fondly believes is French.)

As you may have gathered, I have strong feelings about bilingualism. Unlike a great many Canadians, I am all for it. But the government's approach to creating that blessed state has been at best a farce, a charade, at worst a swindle of the taxpayers.

Of course the beginnings must be with the children! On the surface, the study of French in our schools has been encouraged by government. In fact, the moneys for a practical, realistic approach to learning French have been held back from the schools and poured into that bottomless pit at Ottawa.

French has practically been abolished as a prerequisite for university entrance. As a result, and because learning it requires some real effort, students shy away from it and look for "bird" courses.

Result, French classes in our schools have shrunk deplorably. This, despite the fact that French is being taught better, and in a more lively, interesting, and realistic way, than ever before. (I studied French for five years in high school, three in university, and can barely proposition a girl, let alone order a meal in French.)

O.K. Let's start all over again with our bilingual program, and forget that painful failure in Ottawa.

Start teaching it to kids in grade 1. Keep it up. Make it a prerequisite for university.

OUR READERS WRITE:

More views on barbarism

174 Poplar Ave., Acton, Ont., April 29, 1976.

Editor: Regarding "Views on Barbarism" on the editorial page on April 28, 1976—I will answer the question with which you ended the article, namely "This is barbaric?" Murdering a helpless human being while he is in his mother's womb most certainly is barbaric, even when it is done in "clean surroundings."

I ask you a question—Have you ever had a valid and detailed description of what actually takes place at those "quite safe procedures" done by medical experts in "clean surroundings"? I repeat, it most certainly is barbaric. Murder has a way of being barbaric, no matter who does it, how young the victim is or how clean the surroundings are.

Yours truly, Mrs. Catherine Barrett

Of this and that

The month of May is Mental Retardation Month and readers may notice the symbol in local advertisers' messages encouraging you to support the Flowers of Hope campaign. It is certainly a worthy project and support in the past has provided some welcome opportunities for those who could benefit from compassion and understanding.

Nearly 30 names are used to describe ground beef. Is it any wonder the shopper is sometimes confused? The Federal government plans to allow only three designations based on the

percentage of fat in ground beef. They are Regular if it contains 30 per cent fat or less; Medium if it contains 23 per cent or less and Lean if it contains 17 per cent or less. Look for the new regulation by July 1.

It is encouraging to see that six Christian denominations have found it possible to co-operate in production of common materials for use in a mission study called "Canadian Concerns: Christian Response." The congregations are Anglican, Disciples of Christ, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United Churches.

The Free Press Back Issues 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, May 3, 1956. Roddy McDougall, 16-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray McDougall of Woodbridge and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. William Cooper, Main St., Acton won the gold medal for trumpet solo in the 19 and under class at the Peel County Music Festival at Brampton.

Gracie Fields charmed an audience of 1500 in Milton arena Tuesday night with songs and jokes that have made her a world famous comedienne. Many from Acton and district heard the 57-year-old English entertainer who has been performing for 50 years. The appearance was sponsored by the Rotary club of Milton.

Tomorrow evening at a special ceremony in Niagara Falls, Wayne Currie of the first Acton Scout Troop will receive from Lieutenant-Governor Breithaupt his Queen's Scout badge. Scouts from the entire district attend this impressive Queen's Scout recognition ceremony each year.

The Bell Telephone Company has published a list of communities where dial systems will be installed. Rockwood's date is set at December 1956; Brampton's at April 1957, Guelph as December 1956. Acton is missing.

Over 250 clubs are expected at the North Halton district cuboree at Acton park on the afternoon of Saturday, June 9. There will be two packs from Acton (a total of about 56 boys), two packs from Milton, one from Erin, one from Hillsburgh and three from Georgetown.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 5, 1926. The greatest industrial strike in the history of Great Britain commenced on May 1.

The loyalty of the citizens of Acton and vicinity to Acton Citizens' Band is always demonstrated when the band puts on any event but the crowd that packed the town hall on Wednesday evening for their benefit concert and old-time fiddlers' contest broke all records. In fact it was considered the biggest crowd that ever assembled in the hall for a concert. Charles Wilson also gave black-face recitations, Miss Jessie Galbraith gave several numbers, and Misses Lottie and Hazel Mason gave a piano duet that called for a vociferous encore, and this request was supplied with a number by the Misses Mason and Messrs. Ray Agnew and Rudolph Spielvogel. The other local artist was Master John McGeachie and his dance numbers were one of the delights of the evening.

Mr. H. Shortill was awarded the first prize cup for fiddlers, Mr. Wm. Mason the second prize cup and Mr. Nickell a box of cigars.

The service at Rockwood United church Sunday morning was so well attended chairs had to be brought from nearby houses.

Mr. George Musselle will commence delivery of coal oil from a motorized truck next week. He is a young man deserving of patronage.

The Chamber of Commerce held a lengthy discussion on the possibility of a rest room and public lavatory for Acton. President James Symon kept the members' attention stirred up with a variety of subjects.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 1, 1876. At a meeting of Base-Ballers last Wednesday evening the club was organized and the following officers elected: O. Lozier, President; Jos. P. Allan Vice-President; Thos. Kennedy Captain; Fred. H. Storey, Secretary; D. McMahon, Treasurer; Directors James Nicklin, J. P. Allan, Isaac Francis, T. Kennedy, A. Nicklin.

It was resolved that the club should be named The Pastime Club as formerly. A resolution was passed strictly forbidding the practice of swearing and the use of any profane or immoral language on the practice ground. Elizabeth, the wife of Christopher Swackhammer, departed this life on Sabbath, the 23rd April at the age of 47 years and eight months, leaving a husband and nine children to mourn her loss. She lived for the good of her household, sacrificing herself for their comfort and well-being. Messrs. C. and G. Hynds, two enterprising young men, have secured part of the post office building which they have had fitted up for a jewelry and watchmaking business.

Mr. Campbell has rented the stone hotel at the corner of Mill and Main Sts. to Mr. George Gibbs of Ballinafad who will shortly take possession. The hotel has recently been painted and papered throughout and the stabling has been almost entirely rebuilt and enlarged.



FIRE COMPLETELY destroyed the Kennedy Block and threatened the entire business section of Acton on a bitter cold night in February, 1936. Firemen fought the stubborn blaze for six hours while water, sprayed from their hoses, formed a sheet of ice on everything including themselves. The next morning there was a foot of ice on Main St. The building was serving as a barber shop and plumbing shop with apartments above when the fire broke out. It had previously been Kenney Bros. shoe store as well as a hardware store and a 5c to \$1 store. The section above the store had housed the Masonic Hall (Walker's Lodge) until about 15 years before the fire when it was converted to living quarters. At the time of the fire the building was owned by J. W. Kennedy of Georgetown. The Superintendent of the Public Utilities Commission informed the commission "90,000 gallons of water had been pumped for the Kennedy fire. That equals one and a half times the quantity in the overhead tank. The pump at the spring was started at 3 a.m. to keep a supply of water on hand in case any other fire broke out." These pictures of the 1936 fire aftermath were loaned by the Alderson's.

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