

Free Press Editorial Page

Oil spill emergency

When a tanker trailer overturned last week spilling 9,000 gallons of oil on the street, reaction was prompt and appropriate. The speed with which each department acted was commendable. Within hours, almost all the oil had been cleaned from the Black Creek.

Police, firefighters and the Ministry of the Environment apparently all share the same contingency plans which agree on the correct methods to follow during specific occurrences. Straw dams in streams, for instance, are the

standard practice for oil spills. Halton Hills workmen rushed in to help, building the dams and sanding the oily roadway.

The spill was not terribly dangerous at it might have been. No. 2 oil won't ignite as easily as gasoline.

But it is gratifying for our people here to know that our firefighters, police and workmen, with the assistance of a representative of the Department of the Environment, can cope most capably in the event of such an emergency.

Feed the birds

Esther Taylor made an excellent presentation to council this week, explaining the plight of the birds on Fairy Lake. The works committee will surely now take the initiative back into their own hands and arrange for the birds to be housed, fed and watered this winter.

We only hope the bird watcher's observation is correct and that the numbers of birds is not increasing greatly each year. Too many birds

could result in water unclean for swimming.

The buck has been passed from hand to hand, in hope of finding an expert on the subject who truly knew the right course of action to take. Apparently the answer must be found right here, not in some official's office. Esther Taylor is showing council the right way. The birds are a town responsibility.

Home-town businesses

Shopkeepers find the disruption of the main street, just before the Christmas season, discouraging. They are concerned about the possible drop in business. Retail outlets in general did not have a good spring, and summer is never the best time for profits. The pre-Christmas season is important to

the small business people who run their independent businesses here.

Sure, the parking is poor, the driving is difficult, the dirt is dirty.

But how about a little effort and consideration for these home-town people, who make their living here?

Part of our community

There will be more policing in town from now on, and more of it on foot, hopefully. Halton Regional police chief has assured councillor G. W. McKenzie specific concerns and complaints will be looked after, and that his men want to do a good professional job here as in all of the county.

A discontent, perhaps vaguely felt, expressed itself in different ways. Councillor McKenzie undertook to get to the bottom of some of the statements and he went to the police commission to ask "why"?

The people of Acton do not yet seem to feel free and friendly with the regional police. Only one of them lives in town. Some come each day from as far as Mississauga to work a shift in Acton. There are changes in personnel.

How many people could name their own police officers?

These men are assigned to Acton to work with us, to share in our community. They uphold the laws passed by our elected people. They are doing the will of the general public in maintaining law and order.

They haven't had the best of public relations since they came over a year ago.

Of course they aren't mind readers. They must be informed of problems.

Perhaps it would be a good idea if they could get to know more Acton people who are not in need of police services, too. There are many of them.

Compared to other towns, our crime rate is not bad. (A couple of very serious incidents, such as murders, which put us in the daily newspapers, are unusual.)

Acton is a good place to live, and our police are an integral part of it.



News scoop of the week — Mill St.

The Free Press Back Issues 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, November 8, 1956. Future commercial growth here must incorporate off-street parking, just as Acton's present commercial area must find off-street parking. This is one of the salient assertions put to Chamber of Commerce members Monday evening when town planner P.A. Deacon addressed the season's first general meeting of the Chamber membership. At the same meeting, members later named Frank Terry to preside next year. He succeeds president J. Goy.

Bruce Andrews brought a trophy home from a race meet in Toronto Saturday. He finished third in a two mile road race there, adding to his laurels. There were 23 entries. Mrs. Norm Robertson of Acton just received word from Milton Fair that she has won the Simpsons Special for the most points in ladies' work in the Hall, \$7 special for most points in baking and Christie's special for the most points in hams and jellies.

With a 10 per cent coupon, Darinka Marolt won \$27.50 in the Appreciation Draw by the post office last Saturday afternoon. Runner-up was E. Beerman, who took the regular \$5 prize. Next week's jack pot is up to \$200.

Friends here were relieved to learn that Dr. Paul Beer was able to leave strife-torn Budapest in a private car last week.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, October, 28, 1926.

Acton Municipal Council adopted a rather distinctive crest for use in public documents, correspondence papers and corporation announcements. The following resolution was passed unanimously by the Council: Resolved that the thanks and appreciation of the Council be and are hereby extended to Mr. H.P. Moore for his presentation to the Council of the specially designed crest and coat of arms of Acton, and engravings of same, which places Acton in the unique position of having an individually designed and registered crest.

Sir Harry Brittain, who prepared the English Acton's crest, suggested its adoption by our Council, but changing the oak leaves which support the design of the crest for Canadian maple leaves.

A mock Parliament was organized by the Young People's League of the United Church at their meeting on Monday night, Frank Cook was elected as Premier. The legislature will be composed of Government members, Opposition and Progressives. The members of the league are looking forward to a number of interesting sessions of the Parliament during the winter.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 2, 1876.

Council met Thursday evening and passed the following accounts: Alex McNab \$2.50 for cutting thistles; Thos. Campbell \$2.20 for lodging and feeding traps on the order of the reeve; S. Zimmerman \$29.25 for grading streets and making sidewalks. No other business was done.

For a number of years past a fleshy tumor has been growing on the hip of Mr. John M. Sprowl who resides on the 2nd line of Esquimaux, and it became so cumbersome that he finally resolved to have it cut off. On Monday Drs. Freeman and Cosford of Georgetown and Dr. McGarvin of Acton proceeded to his residence and decided to proceed with the operation without the use of chloroform or other narcotic. When cut off the tumor was found to weigh 4 1/2 pounds, measuring several inches in length. Mr. Sprowl, who is about 65 years of age, underwent the operation without a murmur. He was no doubt highly gratified at being so successfully relieved of the cumbersome protuberance.

By an oversight, we omitted last week to mention that the jury had finally rendered a verdict in the Whiteside case. There was no fresh evidence given, and there being no reason for expecting any further light to be thrown up on the mystery, the coroner announced to the jury that he was prepared to close. Mr. Laidlaw on behalf of the prisoner, and Mr. Dewar, on behalf of the Crown, briefly addressed the jury, after which they retired, and in about half an hour returned with the following verdict: Silvercreek, Sept. 30, 1876. We, the undersigned jury, find a verdict that Robert Whiteside came to his death on the night of the 20th of August last, by violence by some person or persons unknown to this jury. David Cook, Foreman.

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OUR READERS WRITE:

Policing will improve

Acton, Ontario,
Oct. 29, 1976.

Editor,
Acton Free Press.

With your permission I will take the liberty to respond to some matters that have local concern.

Regional Police

Since this concern came to my attention at a recent Chamber of Commerce meeting many hours have been spent in an attempt to resolve it. Supt. Schwantz of Division One spent an afternoon with me in Acton talking to local citizens, I have talked with the chairman of the Police Commission, visited local offices, and talked to many people before I placed their concerns in writing to the Commission and attended a meeting last Thursday in Oakville.

During the discussion with the Police Commission and Chief Skerrett reference was made to the transfer of Staff Sergeant Ward, the re-organization of District 1, the local office left without a sergeant in charge, staff transfers, public relations, communications, citizen responsibilities, and the effect all these matters have on the constable serving the public.

The Police Chief and the Commission recognized that the citizens of this area had reasons for concern in some areas and outlined to me what would be done immediately to improve the situation. We have a Police Force with an excellent reputation and as local citizens we have a responsibility to help them. In future I would ask that local citizens, who have a problem for the police, contact by telephone or visit Sergeant Hilton in the Acton office and ask for his co-operation. Let us unite behind him and his men to uphold the good name of the community.

I will be reviewing the situation from time to time to assess our progress. To help you become more familiar with the police organization Halton is divided into three districts Oakville, Burlington and North Halton. The chairman of the Police Commission is Mr. Glenn Magnuson, Georgetown, Ontario; Police Chief, Chief Skerrett; District 1, Supt. Schwantz (Milton, Georgetown, Acton and surrounding area); Acton Office; Sgt. Hilton.

Any citizen in Halton wishing to contact the police dials: 878-5511.

G.W. "Pat" McKenzie

The story of the poppy

Each November over ten million poppies bloom in Canada. Dotted the lapels of half of Canada's population, this symbol of remembrance makes its annual appearance as it has done each year since 1926.

Although everybody knows what the poppy means, nobody is certain of how it all began; or how the poppy became so closely associated with remembrance of the war dead.

The association was certainly not new when the poppy was adopted in Canada in 1921. At least a hundred and ten years before that time, a correspondent wrote of how thickly poppies grew over the graves of the dead. He was speaking of the Napoleonic War and its campaigns in Flanders.

But a Canadian medical officer was chiefly responsible for this association, more so than any other single know factor.

John McCrae was a tall, boyish 43-year-old member of the Canadian Medical Corps from Guelph, Ontario. An artillery veteran of the Boer War, he had the eye of a gunner, the hand of a surgeon, and the soul of a poet when he went into the line at Ypres on April 22, 1915.

That was the afternoon the enemy first used poison gas.

The first attack failed. So did the next and the next. For 17 days and nights the allies repulsed wave after wave of attackers.

During this period, McCrae wrote: "One can see the dead lying there on the front field. And in places where the enemy threw in an attack, they lie very thick on the slopes of the German trenches."

Working from a dressing station on the bank of the Yser Canal, Lt.-Col. McCrae dressed hundred of wounded, never taking off his clothes for the entire 17 days. Sometimes the dead or wounded actually rolled down the bank from above into his dugout. Sometimes, while awaiting the arrival of batches of wounded, he would watch the men at work in the burial plots which were quickly filling up.

Then McCrae and his unit were relieved. "We are weary in body and wearier in mind. The general impression in my mind is one of a nightmare," he wrote home.

But McCrae came out of Ypres with 13 lines scrawled on a scrap of paper. The lines were a poem which started: "In Flanders fields the poppies blow..."

These were the lines which are engrained in the hearts of all soldiers who heard in them their innermost thoughts. McCrae was their voice. The poem circulated as a folk song circulates, by living word of mouth. Men learned it with their hearts.

In the United States, the poem inspired the American Legion to adopt the poppy as the symbol of Remembrance.

In Canada, the poppy was officially

adopted by the Great War Veterans Association in 1921 on the suggestion of a Mrs. E. Guerin of France. But there is little doubt that the impact of McCrae's poem influenced this decision.

The poem speaks of Flanders fields. But the subject is universal: the fear of the dead that they will be forgotten, that their death will have been in vain.

The spirit of true Remembrance, as symbolized by the poppy, must be our eternal answer which belies those fears.

"IN FLANDERS FIELDS"

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

John McCrae