

Free Press Editorial Page

In favor, say "eh"

Canadians are a nice bunch, eh? Sure we are, and the "eh" proves it.

A Sociologist, Marian Johnson of the University of Western Ontario told a seminar of Canadian anthropologists and sociologists that "eh" expresses a willingness to accommodate others. It makes our conversation friendlier and folksy and reflects the Canadian character.

"Eh" is common only in Canadian speech patterns.

"People who use 'eh' a lot don't like to be aggressive or impose

themselves on others and I think that goes with the Canadian character," said Ms. Johnson.

In adding "eh" to an order, such as "Wash the dishes, eh" the speaker gives the listener an opportunity to respond either way and reduces the chance of confrontation, she said.

She added that there are several situations, particularly official functions, in which producing an element of doubt as expressed by "eh" would be advisable.

"I now pronounce you man and wife... eh?"

Solutions . . . soon

The importance of the postal service in Canada as a communications link should never be minimized. It is vital to every level of business and to most citizens individually as the link of friendship or business communication.

When there is a disruption in service two things in particular happen. First, business seeks an alternative, and second, citizens generally develop a strong animosity to those who they can best determine to be the cause of the disruption.

MP Frank Philbrook, following an incident in one of the Ottawa area postal terminals, told the postmaster general in the House of Commons "the Canadian people have just about had enough. They are fed up with this kind of irresponsible behavior".

We applaud that kind of straight talk. We cannot attribute the blame for these recurring "incidents" that slow our mails or impede anticipated communication. Presumably there are problems with management and there are problems with workers.

The incident that was the centre of all the distress at Ottawa was the wearing of a disparaging button by the workers, aimed at management. Management ordered the buttons removed or the workers to leave their work. Some did remove the buttons and stay, some left the buttons on and left work. Certainly the incident could be termed petty and even childish.

Frank Philbrook summed it up when he said in the House: "People in my riding . . . are puzzled about all this, as, I think, the rest of us are. They are frustrated because we do not seem to have an answer. After all, we have been at this for several years. They are angry and demanding some kind of action, a resolution of this problem and, of course, they look to the federal government for the answers".

Postmaster General J. Gilles Lamontagne expressed the complexity of the problem: "Some people have a tendency to think that we should be ruthless and more intransigent in our dealings

with our unions. Others feel that we should be lenient and give in, in order to achieve peace at any cost. . . Nothing is achieved by extremes. Dealing with human problems requires a lot of understanding, tolerance and patience. However, one must realize that we have to accept our responsibilities toward the Canadian people who are entitled to an efficient and reliable postal service."

We can accept the complexity of finding the middle ground which would ultimately provide the kind of postal service Canadians keep hoping might return.

In the meantime alternatives will be sought and the postal system will suffer further. United Parcel Service is already in hearings before the Ontario Highway Transport Board, seeking rights to provide an expanded package delivery service in all of the province south of a line running east and west through the northern boundary of Kenora. The solicitor for UPS told the Board, "There can be no question that if UPS is licenced, it will be in direct competition with the service offered to the people of Ontario by Canada Post."

The UPS proposal is to offer next-day package delivery service over wide areas of the province, and delivery to the most remote areas will require no more than three business days.

That is an appealing proposal and it will cost something to implement and expand. With such a service, if it is approved, many businesses will utilize it because of its dependability and Canada Post will diminish if the flow declines. And who wins on this merry-go-round?

Clearly patience with "incidents" and interruptions is close to exhaustion. Frank Philbrook sensed it when he told the House, "I believe Canadians are reasonable people. They want to treat everyone well, including these inside postal workers. But they want these issues resolved soon . . . It is an essential service and the public wants some answers".

Of this and that

Face it . . . repairs must be made at the town hall, where brickwork is loose.

The former village of Crystal Beach wants a divorce from Fort Erie, One of the two Crystal Beach representatives on the eight-member Fort Erie council says he intends to ask Premier Bill Davis to give them back their old municipal status. Lotsa Luck.

A note with a subscription renewal from Sudbury comments: "Enjoy getting the paper though the people I once knew are thinning out. Enjoy George's articles on the town hall. Keep it Acton! I'm proud of my home town."

The years marks the 60th anniversary of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Today, the CNIB provides services for more

than 30,000 blind Canadians of all ages and in all walks of life. Support the CNIB campaign for funds now under way in Acton and district.

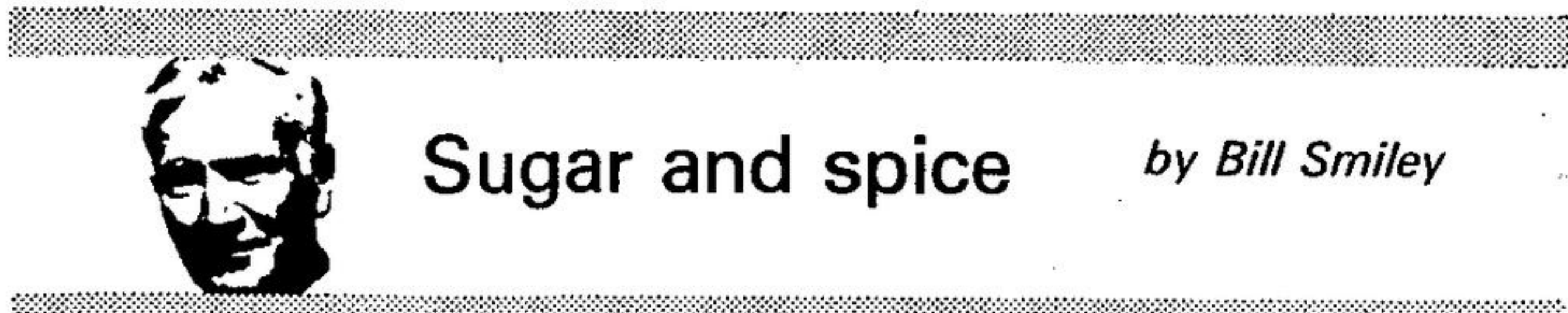
Does anyone have any old pictures of events which took place in the town hall? There weren't many flash pictures taken in the days of concerts there, and we have very few on file. Pictures loaned to the Free Press are rephotographed and returned. We would like to have more pictures to go with the new series of Town Hall Tales.

A sign outside a little town reads "Please drive carefully, Our children might be disobeying us."

Senior Citizens week begins June 18.



LEGION AND IODE MEMBERS took part in Decoration Day at Fairview Cemetery Sunday. Legion members came in full uniform. Both groups plant flowers at the gravesides of members who have died. Other private citizens also came and paid tribute to loved ones, trimming grass, planting flowers and laying wreaths.



Sugar and spice by Bill Smiley

Some of the most refreshing thoughts about education I've read in many a day are contained in a recent article in the Toronto Star by W. E. Franke, principal of a new private senior high school in Hogtown.

As he points out, our educational system today consists of people blaming other people for the slipping standards of education. The universities point the dirty finger at the high schools, the high schools at the elementary schools, the elementary schools at the parents. Only the poor bewildered parents don't have anyone to point at. All they know is that their educational tax bill goes up every year and their kids don't seem to be learnin' nuthin.

Mr. Franke would launch a holy war against the present sludgy system, "a war that must be fought for our intellectual, spiritual, and economic survival."

He would make French, English, and mathematics compulsory subjects. Grammar would be an integral part of any language course. The compulsory French would not be for the political reasons now attributed to its study but because we cannot be called "educated" without the knowledge of a foreign language.

How right he is. I can well remember the days when high schools offered Latin, French, German, Spanish. Today, Latin has almost disappeared, French and German are hanging on by their toenails, and it is a very rare school that offers Spanish.

And what does that say about our teachers? I'd be greatly surprised if more than 10 per cent of the teachers in Canada know more than one language.

The man wants a powerful stimulation in the arts from the federal government. He says: "the soul is undernourished in our schools, and the emotions are not addressed." He's not far off.

For too many years there has been the attitude that only a talented few have an ability for the arts. Any good teacher of drama, music, dance, and fine arts knows this is a lot of hogwash. There can be a spark of artistic fire in the most unlikely lump of a kid.

He'd push this further and have every province establish schools for the artistic elite, as they do now for slow learners. The system has swung to the extent that it is now the brightest and best who are neglected, who wither on the vine in frustration and boredom.

Mr. Franke would like to see a return from mediocrity, which is now the standard, back to the excellence which it once was.

But his article is not all just pie in the sky, an airy-fairy repetition of what most progressive educators have been saying. He has some practical suggestions.

One of them is to cut the provincial governing apparatus in half. As he points out, a move of the government, in Ontario at least, "merely shifted its top civil servants into the newly-created positions of directors and superintendents. Their enormous salaries now come out of the

pocket of the local home-owners." That argument has a hole in it, but he's on the right track.

He claims that "a 75 per cent reduction in administrative jobs would not make the slightest dent in the 'quality' of education." And he adds that the wall-to-wall, air-conditioned palaces of these administrators should be rented out to somebody who can afford them. Right on, Franke, baby.

He suggests that boards of education are little more than a nuisance, that they have grown into small empires, that "schools should be run by schools, not by a bombastic outside apparatus." I'll buy that. There's so much paperwork involved that teachers will often give up on a good and valid project rather than wade through it.

He thinks teachers and principals should be carefully examined before they are hired, and should be ruthlessly fired when they don't do an excellent job. Fair enough. Industry does it. Most teachers and principals give it their best shot, but they might give a little more if they were less secure.

Mr. Franke would eliminate faculties of education. He says the universities should be the judges of those who have mastered their subject. I don't agree there. Universities are far too impersonal to know a brilliant academic who would make a lousy teacher, from a less-brilliant type who would make a fine one.

But he has a good idea for training teachers. After doing away with teachers' colleges, he would select young teachers from among the best university graduates, put them in a school on nominal pay for a year, with half a teaching load. This would be an excellent training for the aspiring teachers, wouldn't cost a fortune, and would provide jobs.

He feels the same about training students for specific industrial jobs. He thinks industry should train its own people as they do in Europe. Again, I must agree. A first-rate apprenticeship system would give Canada the large pool of skilled workers we don't have now, one of the factors that keeps us in the role of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

He'd like to make it a privilege to go to school, not a duty. He doesn't say what he'd do with all the thousands who don't want to go.

The man isn't the only one crying in the wilderness for an improvement in our sludgy, apathetic, bureaucratic educational system. But he says it trenchantly, and I hope he goes on yelling.

Two boys were walking home from Sunday School after a lesson about Satan, and one said, "What do you think about all this devil stuff?" His friend said, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your dad!"

Our readers write

Writer is concerned

I am a long time resident and farmer of (Esqueving) Ward 2, Halton Hills and am very concerned and disturbed by the attitudes of some members of Halton Hills Council.

After reading the discussion of Council concerning roads (Ward 2), I heartily agree with the Mayor in his statement saying the roads are a disgrace and they most certainly have deteriorated in the past five years (reign of Regional Government).

One Councillor stated, "How could you remember the condition of the roads five years ago?" How could you forget! Anyone who has to travel the roads as we do instead of on paved or hard topped as the councilors and population do in Wards 1, 3, and 4, you couldn't forget. I personally toured the roads in Ward 2 Esqueving lately and their condition is terrible.

I also have a complaint concerning the efficiency of our men who work on roads. I saw four men, three trucks and a Hi-Lo working to lower a culvert in a road; if a manufacturer or a farmer operated in this manner they would be broke; I maintain if the money and labour were administered wisely Ward 2 could have hard topped roads. Surely we deserve the same quality of roads as the remainder of Halton Hills.

My second concern is the rise in municipal taxes since the formation of Regional Government. The taxes on a farm including house and barn, etc. have almost doubled, also the taxes on a house on a separated lot have increased by 100 per

cent in the last five years in Ward 2. I cannot speak for Wards 1, 3 or 4, but surely even with rising costs this increase must be due to poor management or by ideas whether practical or not. We certainly do not have any improvements in Ward 2 to cause the tax rise.

I disagree with percentage of our tax dollar set aside for recreation. I would also like to see a different type of financial statement issued, a more explicit and itemized account, to enable the average taxpayer to understand what his taxes were being used for. I also feel that it is too much to ask for 75 per cent of the taxes be paid in the first six months.

Garbage disposal is another concern of mine. I would like to suggest a thorough investigation into a large incinerator (furnace) such as is in operation in Port Colborne.

This, I feel, would eliminate pollution of creeks and dumping garbage on the roadside. People create garbage and we must be realistic and dispose of it the best practical way.

Regional government has not proven to be a successful or realistic venture as yet. It certainly is an excellent opportunity to build bureaucratic empires and spend money. Regional Government was tried in Halton and Wentworth Counties 177 years ago and proved unsuccessful.

Ralph Denny, R.R. 2 Acton

The Free Press Back Issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Wednesday, May 29, 1968

The Chamber of Commerce shot at commercial experiment, a mail proposal, fell to the ground with a gentle thud Thursday night at a special public meeting in the council chambers. But the council's second arrow in the bow, a recommendation to council for more off-street parking, hit the bull's eye and received the full support of all over 30 present.

Rev. Michael J. Bennett will be ordained into the priesthood at the Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, this Saturday morning, June 1.

Rates for township residents using water from the Acton system will be double the combined sewer and water rates paid by residents of town, council decided Tuesday night.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 12, 1958

Bruce Andrews, 16-year-old track and field star from Acton leaves Monday, June 16, for the British Empire Games in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where he will compete in the one mile event. Bruce, who started running in 1955 in Acton with the YMCA entered his first long race in 1956 when he ran in the three mile road race in Milton and placed 33rd out of approximately 47.

Acton Wolf Cubs made a determined bid to bring cubbing honors back to Acton again this year, but the best they could do was to finish fourth among the 14 district cub packs competing in the Third North Halton District Cubaree last Saturday afternoon in Georgetown park.

Ken Hulford, proprietor of the Acton Bowling Lanes, attended the annual convention of the Bowling Proprietors of Ontario held in Hamilton recently. During the three day business session the future growth and support of junior bowling in Ontario was discussed.

On Wednesday morning of this week, Corporal Ray Mason of the OPP detachment in Acton had a call from an alarmed citizen in the Lakeview subdivision who reported a large snapping turtle at her back door. Corporal Mason arrived at the scene and eventually captured a 30 pounder with his revolver and a shovel.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 7, 1928

Scout news: The boys are showing keen interest in the activities of the Troop and are attending in large numbers. Last night two brothers, James and Jack McGeachie, passed successfully the Tenderfoot tests.

Work has been commenced and the brick and material is now on the ground for a new addition of considerable size to the plant of Beardmore Co. in Acton. A new dry loft and storage room is being erected over the rolling room. With splendid periodic regularity the plants of Beardmore & Co. and the Acton Tanning Co. build additions and increase the output of their plants here to care for the ever increasing demands for their products.

Mrs. F. J. Salt and babe left on Thursday on a trip to her home in England. They sailed from Montreal on Friday morning on the "Lettitia" and will spend the summer in the former home and visiting friends in the Old Land.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday June 6, 1878

Acton has always had the reputation of being a quiet and peaceable Village, but it has occasionally been the scene of some sordid little game. The first robbery which has taken place here for some time past took place sometime during Monday night or Tuesday morning. It took place at Mr. Hurst's "Regent Hall" and we must say that it was a rather poor reception to give a new and enterprising businessman who has only been in our Village a little over a month.

The Halton checker players scooped the Guelph players in Georgetown on Tuesday evening. Only nine played on each side.

Mr. Adam Winlow, who went to Manitoba a few weeks ago with a party of young men, has returned to Acton. Not being able to procure any work there, he thought it would be best to return home. He says no one should go there with less than \$1,000. Some of the other men are expected home shortly. Monthly Fair today.

There is some talk of having our streets watered every day, to lay the dust.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS
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Business and Editorial Office

Founded in 1875 and published every Wednesday at 50 Water St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the Canadian Community Newspapers Association and the Ontario Weekly Newspapers Association. Advertising rates on request. Subscriptions payable in advance. \$7.50 in Canada, \$25.00 in all countries other than Canada, single copies 15 cents; carrier delivery in Acton 15 cents per week. Second class mail Registration Number 6518. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at a wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time. Dits Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd. David R. Dits, Publisher

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