

The Acton Free Press

Founded in 1876
Don McDonald, Publisher

Published every Wednesday by Inland Publishing Co. Limited at 69 Willow Street, Acton, Ontario. Telephone 853-2010. Subscriptions: Single copies 20¢ each, \$10.00 per year in Canada, \$30.00 in all countries other than Canada.

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Member of The Audit Bureau of Circulation, The Canadian Community Newspaper Association, and The Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association.

Second class mail Registration Number 0515.

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Need council support for old town hall

Councillor Ed Wood made a suggestion at last week's meeting of Halton Hills council that could very well spur citizens of Acton to save their old town hall. He suggested the cost of tearing down the building be applied to its restoration instead and then ask the restoration committee and the Chamber of Commerce executive to attend a meeting with council to discuss the future of the historic building.

Councillor Wood evidently felt that given some impetus the people of Acton would respond generously opening purse strings for the preservation of the building, the only one of its kind left in Halton Hills. He realizes the drive to save the town hall has been stalled for some time because people sympathetic to the restoration want some assurance the building will be saved before they commit themselves to pledging money.

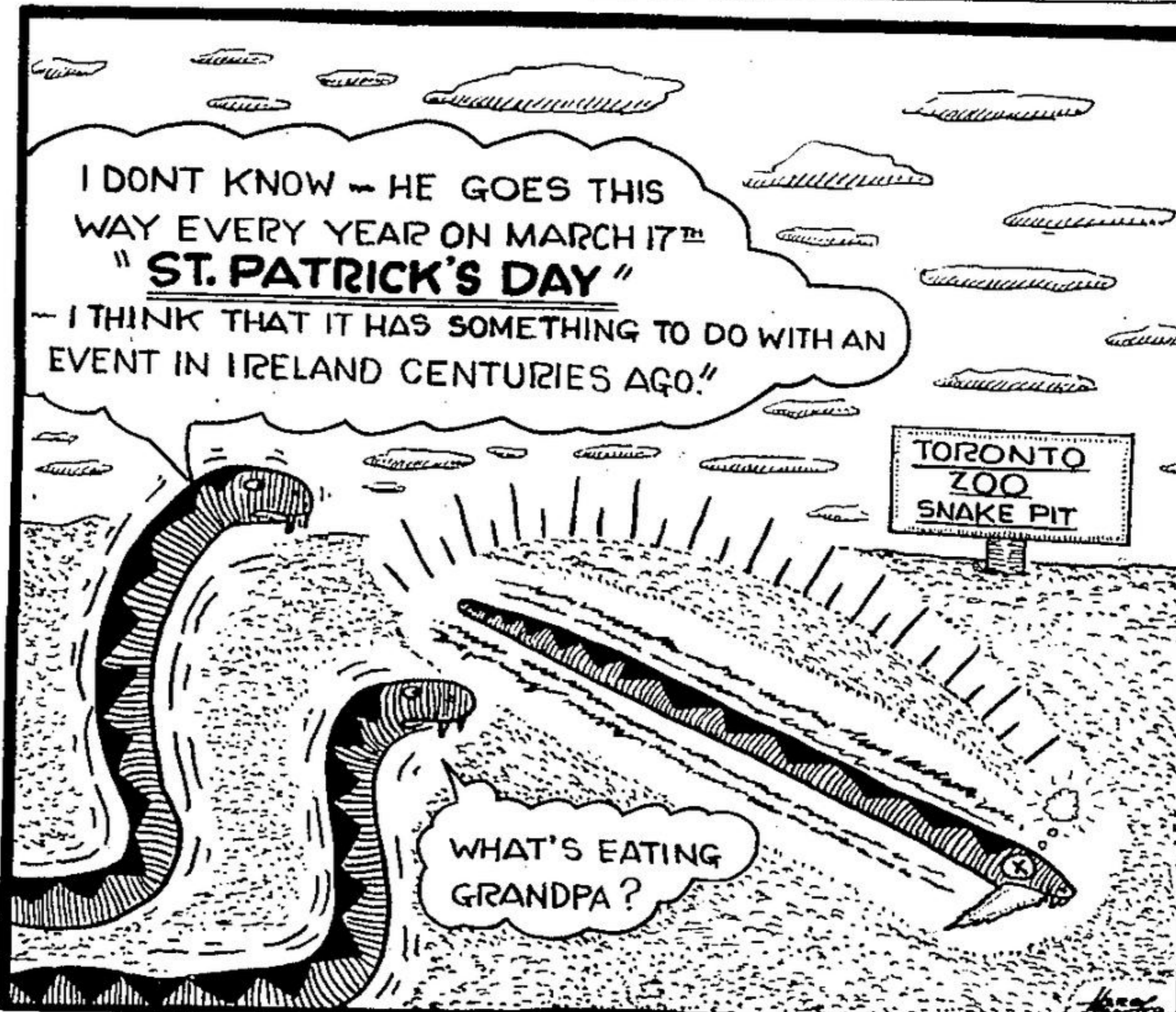
There is some truth in Councillor Wood's suggestion but there may also be a reluctance on the part of many people to donate funds to restoring the building until they are sure what use will be made of it. If it is simply to stand there in pristine purity as an example of municipal architecture of the 19th century, don't expect the purse strings to

loosen. There have been many suggested uses for the building but would-be donors want some concrete evidence the old town hall would be put to good use before they pledge money.

The first thing the restoration committee needs is an indication from council that they back the project. So far support for the restoration has been faint-hearted. Some councillors obviously feel there is no value in the historic building, although it is one of the last architectural links we have with Acton's past. The rest have gone under the wrecker's hammer, to our shame.

Many would like to see funds raised in Acton much as they were for the old Georgetown arena's restoration, through public subscription and Wintario grants as Councillor George Maltby has indicated. We recall there was strong support from councillors for that project. We suggest that should be the first step to invigorate the town hall project.

We can't let the matter sit while iconoclasts relish thoughts of tearing the building down and establishing a parking lot where it once sat. It is time for council to spearhead a positive drive to save the building or tell people they aren't interested.



Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the Issue of The Acton Free Press of Thursday, March 19, 1969
Largest show of hands in a co-ordinated service club effort in Acton was for a youth assistance project at a well attended joint dinner meeting sponsored by Acton Y's Men. Other projects, in order of priority, to be considered at a follow-up meeting: beautification of the town; extension of park facilities; a downtown comfort station; a swimming pool; tennis courts and bowling greens. Johnny Goy referred the discussion as chairman. Mayor Dudy made a plea for beautification and told the group some of the things they might want to do could be affected by regional government. Jim Ledger, returned from Erin, the hub of the Empire, made a plea for housing for senior citizens. Paul Nielsen resurrected the idea of a green belt along the banks of the town creek. Bruce Andrews pointed out the community centre was taxed to capacity.

All the pupils in the Eden Mills school took part in the operetta Eskimo Land. Vernon Osborne took one of the lead parts of The Mighty Angakok and his three wives were played by Vicki Crane, Heather and Sharon Dankert.

Mrs. E. J. Maxwell, Acton, was elected president of the Halton Egg Producers, with Mrs. K. Ella returned as secretary. Acton Clergy Association has again organized three Lenten services.

20 years ago

Taken from the Issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday, March 12, 1959.
Council approved the construction of the new 12-room \$150,000 addition to the Robert Little school. Chairman E.W. Bradley, trustees J.W. Wolfe and Tom Watson presented the resolution to council. The old section of the school has been condemned since it was partially destroyed by fire in 1956.

60 years of married life were observed by Mr. and Mrs. Alex McGregor.

A more spacious, strikingly different interior greets shoppers in Symon's Hardware this week. The store has just had an extensive facelift. Customers are attended to by Mac Symon, Mrs. Marguerite Taylor and Harold Elliott.

Attending the hairdressers' convention in Toronto were Mrs. Edith McEachern, Mrs. S. Russell, Mrs. Ken Hardman and Mrs. Andrew Cislak.

Miss Isobel Anderson, thinking she was invited out for tea, arrived at the home of Mrs. A. Gamble to discover the teachers had planned a party for her. Miss Anderson, who is retiring in June, has taught in Acton for nearly 40 years.

50 years ago

Taken from the Issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday, March 14, 1929.
The township of Esquesing has a nice surplus of \$12,868 this year as shown by the Auditor's Report.

A very happy and appreciative gathering of St. Alban's Young People witnessed the result of their efforts to purchase a new piano for the hall. \$102 was handed over as a substantial payment on the very desirable purchase. Mr. and Mrs. F.J. Sault kindly played the opening number, a duet. Other much appreciated numbers on the program were rendered by Miss Doris Holloway, Miss Renatta Waller, Miss Esther Taylor, Misses Violet and Ella Woods, Miss Leona Waller, Rev. P. Sawyer, Mr. J. Whitham and Mr. J.M. Savage.

An almost capacity house greeted the presentation by the Ballinacraig players of the Path Across the Hill in the town hall last evening. The play shows that the attractions of the city are little but glitter. In the cast were Eddie Oldham, Earl McKay, Fred Shortill, Henry Hills, John Cole, Jessie McKay, Mrs. Vanatter, Myrtle Allen, Pearl McEnery, Mrs. Robert McEnery.

Highway 7 is now clear of ice between Toronto and Guelph. Numbers of farmers who did not drive their motor cars in the winter months, are getting them into service again.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Acton Free Press of Thursday, March 20, 1879
Acton School Board is adding a large number of books to the already large library in connection with the school. Anyone may get books free of charge, by giving their names to the librarian, Mr. Thos. Moore. The library is open Monday evenings.

This morning about 7 o'clock as we were busily engaged in preparing our pages for press, Mr. H.P. Moore suddenly discovered that the joist and ceiling where the stove pipe entered the ceiling were in flames. The cry of fire was sounded and the citizens responded nobly and the fire ultimately extinguished. Had five minutes more elapsed the building would have been destroyed. When Mr. T.A. Moore arrived in the building at 5 a.m. there wasn't the least vestige of fire.

The building is the property of Mrs. R. Fisher and there is no insurance on it, but the stock and material are insured.

43, not 450 senior citizen applicants

The attached letter was delivered to Councillor Miller in response to a news item based on statements made by Councillor Wood.

February 8, 1979.

Dear Russ:

The news item in the Free Press, dated Feb. 7 re senior housing is so inaccurate, I would like you to correct it for council's sake as well as for the sake of the seniors of Acton and area.

The building on Elizabeth Drive, Acton will contain 54 units—53 for seniors and one for the superintendent. Our policy is to offer accommodation to residents of Halton Hills on a "need"

basis, and if a unit is available in Georgetown, we do offer it to the applicant. However, there is no pressure employed to have a senior move out of one community, and if he/she states that only a unit in Acton will be acceptable, then only Acton will be offered.

We have an active waiting list of 43 applicants, not 450 as stated by Mr. Wood. All applicants do receive a letter from Halton Housing in response to their applications.

In the letter sent, it is requested that if circumstances change, the office be

notified. Also, if there are questions, they should contact the office of Halton Housing Authority direct.

Halton Housing is responsible for the renting of all public housing in Halton and may be contacted at: 139 Thomas Street, Oakville, Ontario, L6J 3A9, or by phone at: Zenith 7-9910. This is a toll free number.

Thank you for your assistance in clarifying and correcting this unfortunate item.

Sincerely
D. Moulden
Tenant Placement Chm.

Free Press Letters

Ont. Govt. ad disturbing

Mar. 9/79.

Editor,

I see you have fewer local ads and are taking on bigger ones (i.e. Eaton's. Last week the Ontario government had a most disturbing ad that is supposed to prevent Mental Retardation. This ad has no place on T.V., and daily papers let alone our local paper.

Follows is a letter which is being sent to the Minister of Community and Social Services:

To Whom It May Concern:

I know you have been ignoring complaints from the Association for the Mentally Retarded but one more letter can't hurt. I have three normal, healthy children. Thank God! This ad is sickening and every time I see it I get angry. Who ever is responsible for it should think twice if he (probably a man since no woman or mother who has feeling could agree to such

an ad), is married and planning a family. The pain this ad must be causing parents of retarded children must be unbearable. The guilt and doubt it has unnecessarily put in their minds will probably send some to mental health clinics so you won't save money on treatment if that is the idea. The ad doesn't even mention quantities of drugs or cigarettes. I just wonder what statistics you have to back and justify it.

The government always says it needs money. Ha! They are wasting the taxpayers money on such garbage.

After mentioning this ad to many people, I have yet to find one who thinks well of it and is willing to have their money spent on it.

A lot of votes have been lost over this you can bet on it Mr. Norton and Mr. Davis!
Rosemarie Pratt

Inflation-wise!

We've got a brand new hydro bill, It's based on this inflation, We have to pay for everything, That's plaguing every nation.

Now, Cousin Bill's gone visiting, In far off distant lands, He's still annoyed about unemployed,

While basking in the sands.

The boss-man has gone ski-ing, And his secretary, too, They must relax, and save the tax, It's their privilege to do.

But, our Johnny's working overtime, To keep the products flowing, Tho' it's safe to bet the super-debt, Will keep his taxes growing.

So, Grandpa's gone out ski-ing, With the kids across the street, All wrapped in rags, and sugar bags, With barn-boards on his feet.

The sun still shines upon us, In this land of "milk and honey" Will we get wise to inflation rise, Before we all run out of money?

Victor Smith
R.R. 2, Rockwood.

Briefly

Think about it... There's nothing so annoying as arguing with a person who knows what he's talking about.

Every survival kit should include a sense of humour...

A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something.

Keep going up

Halton Board of Education last week disclosed a proposed 8.16 per cent increase in this year's expenses, which represents a tax boost of about \$35 for homes assessed at \$7,000. The average Acton home owner would be tagged with about a \$25 tax boost since the average assessment here runs just under \$5,000.

The bad news is that unless the board finds more revenue these figures mean Halton Hills council is already hamstrung before the total tax rate is set.

It has long been a bone of contention between councillors and trustees that boards of education could set their levy without interference from councils. The board sets its budget ahead of the municipality. This leaves councillors with few alternatives when the board budget went up without a corresponding increase in revenue.

As a result councils often postpone or cancel plans for improvements in the municipality because the school budget increased. Councillors feared the backlash if they raised their levy at the same percentage. Taxpayers often do not recognize that education and regional levies are set and council must pick up the pieces.

With declining enrolment and less pressure on trustees to build new facilities some thought the board would achieve a budget at least comparable to last year's but finance chairman Garry Morton said inflation, rising cost of services and a decrease in anticipated provincial grants fueled the \$7 million increase in spending.

Instruction (teachers) and plant operator eat up more than 83 per cent of the proposed expenses while debt charges of \$6 million and transportation costs of over \$2 million sent bills soaring.

There's not much trustees can do about it except by lowering expectations. If revenue does not increase at the same rate as expenses they are going to have to find other means of cutting costs.

Trustees are hampered in efforts to save money by demands from the public for new courses and improvement of existing ones. Teachers, alarmed at the enrolment figures, are doing their best to secure job security, another pressure which keeps costs climbing.

Trustees are going to have to be tougher both with public and teachers, until the economic picture looks brighter or taxpayers can expect to see education taxes keep climbing.

Fourth Estate

ICG protest is thoughtful and considerate

by Eric Elstone
"Protest in itself is not unhealthy, but it should be thoughtful, carefully considered and unemotional..."

Premier William Davis, Toronto, 12 May, 1971.

Recent protests in Ontario have mainly been as the premier hoped.

When premier Davis described that almost idealistic view of protest, he had behind him the Spadina Expressway drama and was facing opposition to proposals for a new Toronto airport, first in Amaranth Township and later in Pickering.

The same healthy thoughtful, considerate and mainly unemotional character can be seen in the activities of the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG).

The premier's words go somewhat in describing efforts by the ICG and its pre-

decessor the Interested Citizens of North Halton and Wellington to argue and present reports to government and commissions.

The ICG, composed of businessmen and farmers, has also exhibited an uncanny ability to keep alive its issue. Five years ago this month citizens first questioned the sense of Ontario Hydro plans to run a power corridor through the area. And five ministers of energy they are still at it. Citizens' groups normally do not last after their issue has been dealt with by government or after it has worn thin. The liveliness of the ICG in argument and raising money demonstrates the legitimacy, in the ICG's minds and others, of the issue.

The particular issue of the ICG is equality. Members think they should be treated as well as other people in Ontario. Other

people have managed to get a non-Ontario Hydro study of proposed corridor routes and the ICG would like the same.

Although the ICG has, from time to time, been aggressive, it has never been violent like protest groups elsewhere. Japanese farmers and students warred with police concerning the new international airport at Narita near Tokyo. The ICG and other Ontario groups have been especially peaceful.

Success, in terms of earning the much sought after independent study, has so far eluded the ICG. Government has so far accommodated the citizens with half-measures.

Success in a broader sense has been also marginal. Through persistence in the courts the ICG changes a bit of law with respect to expropriations. The ICG, and no doubt other citizens' groups, rattled