

# The Acton Free Press

Published every Wednesday by Inland Publishing Co. Limited at 59 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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Founded in 1875  
Don McDonald, Publisher

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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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## Large tax increase

Few taxpayers will be ecstatic over the large increase in taxes Acton residents will be asked for this year by the town, region and board of education.

An average home in Acton, assessed at \$4,498, will be billed an extra \$74 in 1979, bringing the total bill to \$657 from \$582 paid last year to all jurisdictions at the municipal level.

Biggest chunk of those dollars goes to the board of education which receives \$321 out of that \$657, while the region will be prying \$127 from our pockets, up 40 per cent from last year. Big culprit in the region increase is the sewer budget which increased 91 per cent, forcing the level from \$30 last year to \$58 for 1979.

Halton Hills council, meanwhile, is asking for a modest six per cent increase which represents another \$13.36, a figure most home owners can live with. The increase then comes from the region at a whopping 40 per cent, or \$38 for an average home assessed at \$4,498.

Halton Treasurer Don Farmer told the Free Press, Acton is

getting by far the biggest tax increase in the region, where the average increase is six per cent.

Taxpayers naturally then are entitled to ask where the much touted benefits of regional government are hidden. Town councils prior to the introduction of regional government would have been horrified if residents had been saddled with the kind of tax increase they are asked for now.

We hear much about equalizing costs over the region which handles sewers and water but all it seems to do is keep taxes mounting. They are becoming a heavy burden for those on fixed incomes.

At the same time we must recognize that many of the services Acton receives now might not have been possible under the old system where the cloth was cut to fit incomes. But surely we are all entitled to ask if taxes would not have been more reasonable as well. It's a question which no one can answer as they watch taxes keep going up under the new system with little control at the local level.

## Hydro decision predictable

There should hardly have been any surprise at the decision by the Ontario Cabinet to uphold the recent decision by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) which permits Ontario Hydro to continue to construct a 500 kV hydro corridor through Halton Hills. After all the cabinet has been turning down requests by the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG) since 1973 and there is no reason to suppose they would alter their policy now no matter how reasoned the evidence or how impassioned the plea.

The Cabinet could have saved face by ordering an independent study of the need for a hydro corridor through Halton Hills in view of evidence to the contrary which has been accumulating over the years. The ICG has been asking for an independent study such as was given the east-west corridor under the Solandt commission for five years. It has been consistently refused.

Since only a short (12 mile)

section of the 168 mile corridor remains to be finished it could be argued that it would be costly to discontinue the line now and dismantle those parts not needed. However, evidence has been steadily mounting that Ontario Hydro has vastly over-forecast electrical consumption in Ontario and the ICG believes there is plenty of time for the independent study energy ministers and the cabinet have refused on the grounds completion was urgent. That exercise has been going on for five years, testimony to the inadequacy of any study.

There is no doubt both the Government and Ontario Hydro would be considerably embarrassed if citizens fighting for an independent study were actually given one. How else to explain the reluctance to have an independent study to determine whether the corridor is feasible or just a millions of dollar waste which disrupts hundreds of lives and may never really be needed?

## Right on McGee

Jacques Cartier who first introduced the name Canada to the world, must have been doing cart wheels in his grave if he listened in on the Fathers of Confederation. Some of these fruck coated elders wanted to abolish the beautiful word Canada for atrocious alternatives. We owe a debt to the brilliant Irish orator D'Arcy McGee for using satire to preserve the name of Canada.

Some of the names proposed to replace Canada were: Albert Land, Albionora, Borealia. Britannia is not surprising in view of the pro British sentiments of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

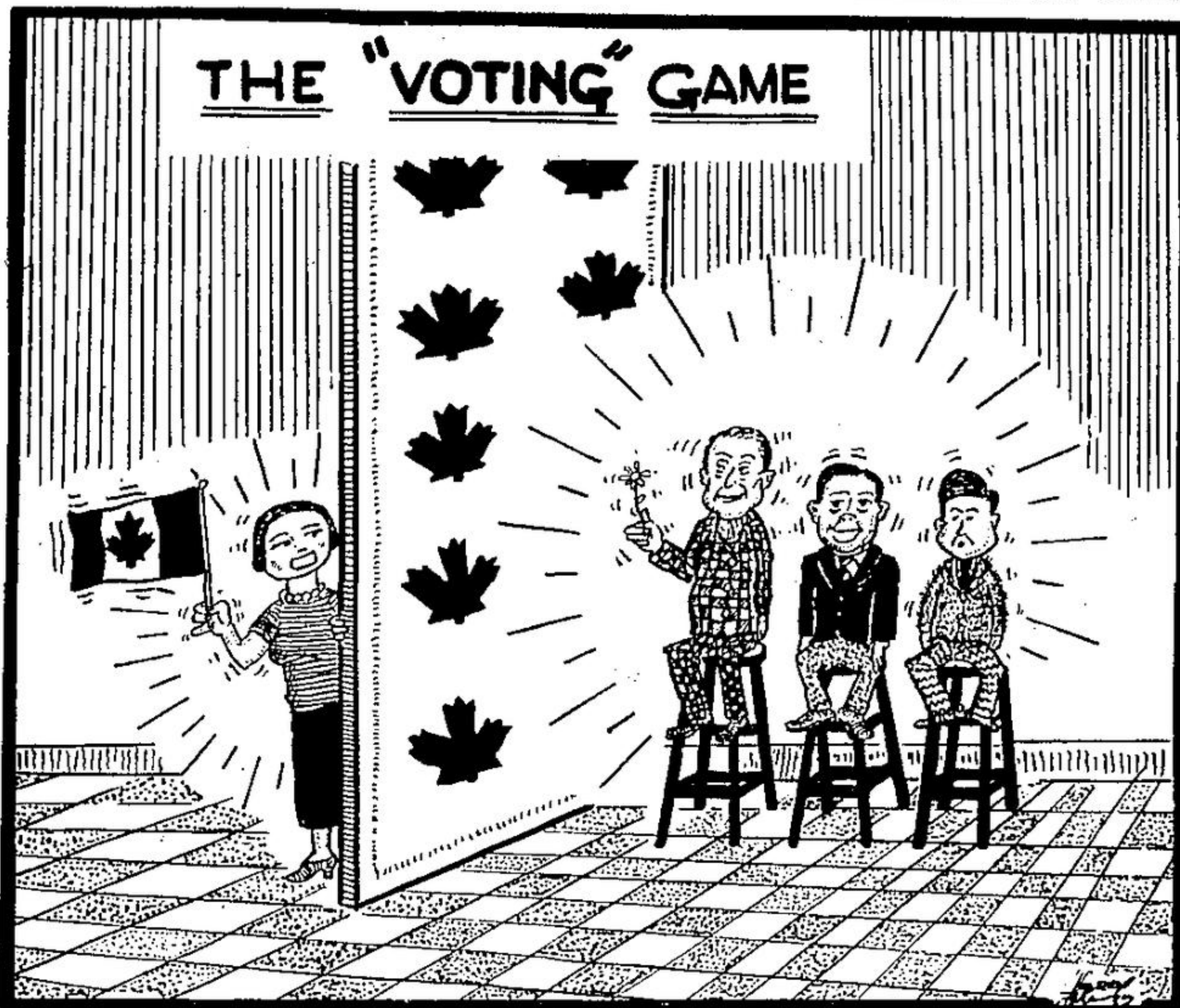
But how about this tongue teaser—Eifsga? It stood for the first letters of

France, England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany. Other suggestions at the time of Confederation debates were the old name for Montreal-Hochelaga.

Others were Norland, Superior, Transatlantic, Tuponia and Victorioland.

McGee used devastating Irish wit to bring the Fathers to their senses. McGee said in the United Canada Legislature February 9, 1865 "Now I ask any honourable member of this house how he would feel if woke up some fine morning and found himself instead of a Canadian, a Tuponian or a Hochelagander."

John Fisher, Executive Vice President of the Council for Canadian Unity was Canada's Centennial Commissioner.



## Regional budget stabs Halton Hills deepest

by Rod Lamb  
Halton Hills is the hardest hit of the four municipalities by the region's 1979 budget.

Halton treasurer Don Farmer said the town is the worst affected.

Acton feels the pinch the most he said.

Completion of sewage treatment facilities last year and lack of taxation assessment to soak up the increase mean existing taxpayers will pick up the tab.

For an owner of an average residential property of \$4,498, this means an increase of \$74 to \$657 from \$582. All figures are rounded.

The figure includes Halton Hills' levy and that of the Halton Board of Education. The latter still takes the most significant chunk, accounting for \$321 of the total.

Mr. Farmer said the sewers budget in Acton is 91 per cent over last year.

Georgetown homeowners can expect to pay \$50.31 more this year. Based on average assessment of \$5,638, the amount is composed of increases tallying \$20 from the region, \$23 from the Board of Education

and \$13.31 from the town.

Mr. Farmer said the high increase in Georgetown is similar to that in Acton where new sewage facilities and lack of increased assessment within the last year, means the existing taxpayers will have to dig deeper into their pockets.

Regional chairman Jack Rafalis said if Halton had accepted a sewer surcharge this year or equalized assessment with each municipality paying a proportionate share of the taxes, the increases in Halton wouldn't have been as high.

The region's levy on Milton will be no more than a few cents to homeowners.

Because the region had overlevied the town last year, there was a \$67,000 surplus to absorb the pro-



jected seven per cent increase.

The average Milton assessment is \$5,900.

Urban Burlington taxpayers will pay less towards the region this year than they did last year.

Mr. Farmer said the reason is due to the fact that increased assessment more than absorbed the regional levy.

However, for Burlingtonians, this year is a reprieve.

Mr. Farmer said the cost of debt charges on sewer works will make themselves felt and the regional levy will be up in 1980.

Rural homeowners in Burlington will pay \$10 more this year on account of the region.

Mr. Farmer said Oakville is in a similar position to Burlington. While Oakville residents will

pay \$20 more towards the region, they will pay more in 1980 because of debt charges on sewer facilities.

Halton's budget was approved at a special meeting Wednesday.

The \$36.7 million figure, eight per cent higher than 1978, demands \$17,533,360 come from the municipalities.

Halton Hills' contribution is \$1,911,657; Milton pays \$1,508,548; Burlington \$7,719,218 and Oakville \$6,163,937.

The balance will be covered by other regional revenues and provincial grants.

Attempts to cut the budget failed, as did an attempt to add \$9,000 to the Children's Aid Society for a child abuse team.

Salary increases to staff members are limited to six per cent plus increments, although negotiations with some members could change the picture Mr. Farmer said.

The biggest budget increase is in the public works department. A 33.5 per cent increase in road construction contributed to the department cost rising 15 per cent.

The cost of the planning department is up due to the expansion of the business development office.

Welfare costs went up 10.8 per cent and day care 19.4.

Where plants and bees, budding trees, Respond to Nature's call.

Where blackflies, leave their winter home, For a most unwilling host, While Mosquitos roam away from home To the ones they love the most.

We forget the old snow shovel, And grab a fishing pole, Worms in a can, with our little man, We find a waterhole.

It was there we met our neighbor, With his modern fishing tricks, Then right away we spoil the day, Discussing POLITICS.

We have to change the Government, That's what the "boss-men" say, To improve our lot, more than we got, We must raise the Workers' PAY.

Although we're making Progress, Within our human shell, The head of state, cannot create, A tiny living cell.

We are power hungry creatures, Who gobble up and glutton, Will we Change our spring and destroy the thing, With the pressing of the button?

Victor Smith  
R.R. 2, Rockwood.

## Back issues

10 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, April 23, 1969

Graduation night for the 21 dancers who took the Pairs and Squares course was a gala occasion Saturday, Marg Dedman cut the graduation cake.

After four days of intermittent digging and blasting, police have given up hope of finding the body of Marianne Schuett in a crevice beside the Bruce Trail in Esqueping.

An applicant before planning board, who has purchased the Seynuck and Vyse properties, has plans for houses that he concluded Acton people can't possibly afford. However, he hopes to begin work on five model homes on Wallace Ave. soon. The subdivision will eventually go from Wallace all the way over to Churchill. "I like Acton," applicant Reisman said, "and once I get here you'll be happy to have me."

For the first time, Brookville played host to the North Halton Music Festival.

Council agreed to pay 50 per cent of the renovation at the Y.

Acton hikers netted \$1,651 for the Cancer Society in their walkathon, which topped last year's. A tired Bob Andrews was the first one to sign in after walking 60 miles from Markham.

Over 170 took part. Others with good records were Gary Dobbie, Lloyd Smallwood, David Braida, Andy Miller, Gary Turkosz, Joe Tarr and George McPhail.

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, April 18, 1959

Special honor was paid to the Citizen of the Year, Amos Mason and young skating star Elizabeth Force when the Chamber of Commerce held its annual community dinner in St. Alban's hall Wednesday. For 40 years Mr. Mason has been a civic and community leader. He opened Mason Knitting Company in 1920. He led the band, was on school board and council, the Y board, led the United church choir, was president of the Board of Trade and chairman of the Swimming Pool committee, headed the War Service League, was chairman of the Red Cross, charter president of the Rotary club, was reeve, warden of the county and Acton's first mayor.

Elizabeth Force and her sister Mary Jane have both inspired others to skate. Elizabeth is the first member of the Guelph Figure Skating Club to complete her first senior test and silver dances.

Walter Woodburn of the Rotary club reports \$730 in Easter Seal receipts.

Acton council has an all-time high budget of \$480,092. Much to the dismay of council they learned that two councillors intended to resign, Joe Hurst and F. Watts.

Acton will lose an active businessman when Mike Cox and his family move to California.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, April 18, 1929

The employees of the Public Utilities Committee have had a busy time draining the large reservoir for fire purposes at the pump house on Main St. and giving it a thorough cleaning. The reservoir is now being filled again and is expected to be full at the end of the week.

Hurrah! The Girl Guides are well on their way to success. On Wednesday 41 Guides met in their splendid new room. Miss Mason had charge of the meeting with Miss Tyler in command also. The patrol leaders were chosen by ballot, namely, Grace Skilling, Lorna MacComb, Phyllis Tyler and Margaret MacDonald.

The treasurer is Dorothy McPherson and the secretary Mildred Hollinger.

The chain hardware makes its advent in Acton. Mr. W. D. Talbot has entered the Alliance Chain of hardware stores.

A calthumpin' parade is being planned for the big celebration here on July 1.

The Women's Institute at Bannockburn has provided hot lunches for the two schools during the year, quilted four quilts, and sent a bale to the sufferers in the north.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday April 24, 1879

Mr. Thos. Davidson, another old settler has departed this life. He lived on his farm above Acton since 1843, and before that for six years in Nassagaweya.

On Wednesday of last week a new city, named Guelph, was born. On that day 52 years ago the first tree was cut down. It is thus seen what rapid strides have taken place. The day was celebrated in a loyal as well as royal manner with 15,000 visitors in attendance. There was a grand procession, games, baby show, band competition, the inauguration ceremonies and a torchlight parade, closing with a grand bonfire.

A committee consisting of the reeve, E. Nicklin and C. S. Smith was appointed to ascertain where a suitable plot of ground to be used as a cemetery may be obtained. Every year the present graveyard presents a less healthy and more disgraceful appearance.

## British heritage should also be appreciated

Canadians are the inheritors of at least two great traditions, the French and the British, which are constantly being enriched by the contributions of the native peoples and of the newer immigrants.

What exactly is the British share in the Canadian identity?

Senator Eugene Forsey suggests it has five main features.

First, the constitutional law and practice, both of the dominion and of all 10 provinces, is basically British. It has been adapted, modified, added to, subtracted from, to suit our distinctive needs, but still basically British.

By deliberate choice of the fathers of Confederation, we have a British-type constitutional monarchy. The fathers did not choose it because they were too stupid, too ignorant, too "colonial-minded", or too timid, to do anything else. They did it with their eyes wide open, and unadvisedly.

Second main feature of the British share in the Canadian identity is our criminal law. This also, of course, we have adapted, modified, added to, subtracted from, to meet our own distinctive needs. But this

also is still basically British, notably in its fundamental assumption that an accused is presumed innocent until he is proved guilty.

The third main feature of the British share in the Canadian identity is the civil law of all the provinces except Quebec. That is based solidly on the English Common Law, which, Dorothy Sayers has written is "all case law, an intricate cat's cradle of precedents. It appears to know nothing of right and wrong, but only of rights and wrongs established by long custom, and to base its authority on a general principle, but only upon an endless series of improvisations—such-and-such a decision, made by a particular judge in a particular year between two particular men about a particular goose, insult or party wall."

She goes on: "Codify the result... and we should find that we could no longer lay hand on those things that we call our liberties. For the easier you make the law, the more readily can you drive a coach and horses through it."

British Common Law is part of the Can-

adian identity in the nine provinces (and, in its constitutional aspect, even in Quebec). But is it "foreign"?

It is as Canadian as the Quebec Civil Code.

And are these heritages of British constitutional law and practice, of British criminal and civil law, only for those of British blood, valuable only for those of British blood? No. They are every bit as much the heritage of the rest, and the fact that they did not spring straight from the Canadian Shield, or the aurora borealis, or the waters of the Saguenay, the St. Lawrence, the Saskatchewan or the Mackenzie, does not make them foreign or un-Canadian.

The fourth main feature of the British share in the Canadian identity is pragmatism.

This is well illustrated by our characteristic attitude towards public and private ownership. True, both the Liberal and Conservative parties now have a growing tendency to whomp it up, American style, about "free enterprise," and the New Democratic party talks of "democratic socialism." But in fact, all three approach