

The Acton Free Press

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Coroner's inquest place to settle questions

The place to settle all the questions surrounding the tragic drowning deaths of two seven-year-old Acton boys last week at Fairy Lake is at the coroner's inquest.

Everyone involved seems to have a slightly different, in some cases widely different version of the circumstances and reasons for this terrible accident. Rumors, too, are rife.

People within and outside the community are hungry for facts and explanations but the quicker accusations, publicity and talk about the incident die down now, the better.

The whole incident will be best viewed in a couple of months when emotions aren't running quite so high and the pain for those directly involved also has had time to heal, although the scars will be with us all for a long, long time.

Young lives have been snuffed out and nothing can bring them back, but a coroner's inquest and the recommendations from the jury can clear the fog away from the incident and maybe offer ideas to prevent such a tragedy from being repeated.—G.M.

Expect trustee restraint

Give some people an inch and they'll take a mile is an old adage which came true recently.

A couple of weeks ago school board trustees in two Metro Toronto boroughs gave themselves raises in excess of 90 and 120 per cent.

School board members were given a right their council colleagues have had for a long time—to set their own rate of pay. Previously trustees' pay was set by provincial legislation. There is one difference, though, trustees must establish their remuneration scale before a municipal election. Councilors don't.

We are confident that should Halton trustees decide they need a raise before we troupe to the polls in November that they will exercise common sense and restraint.

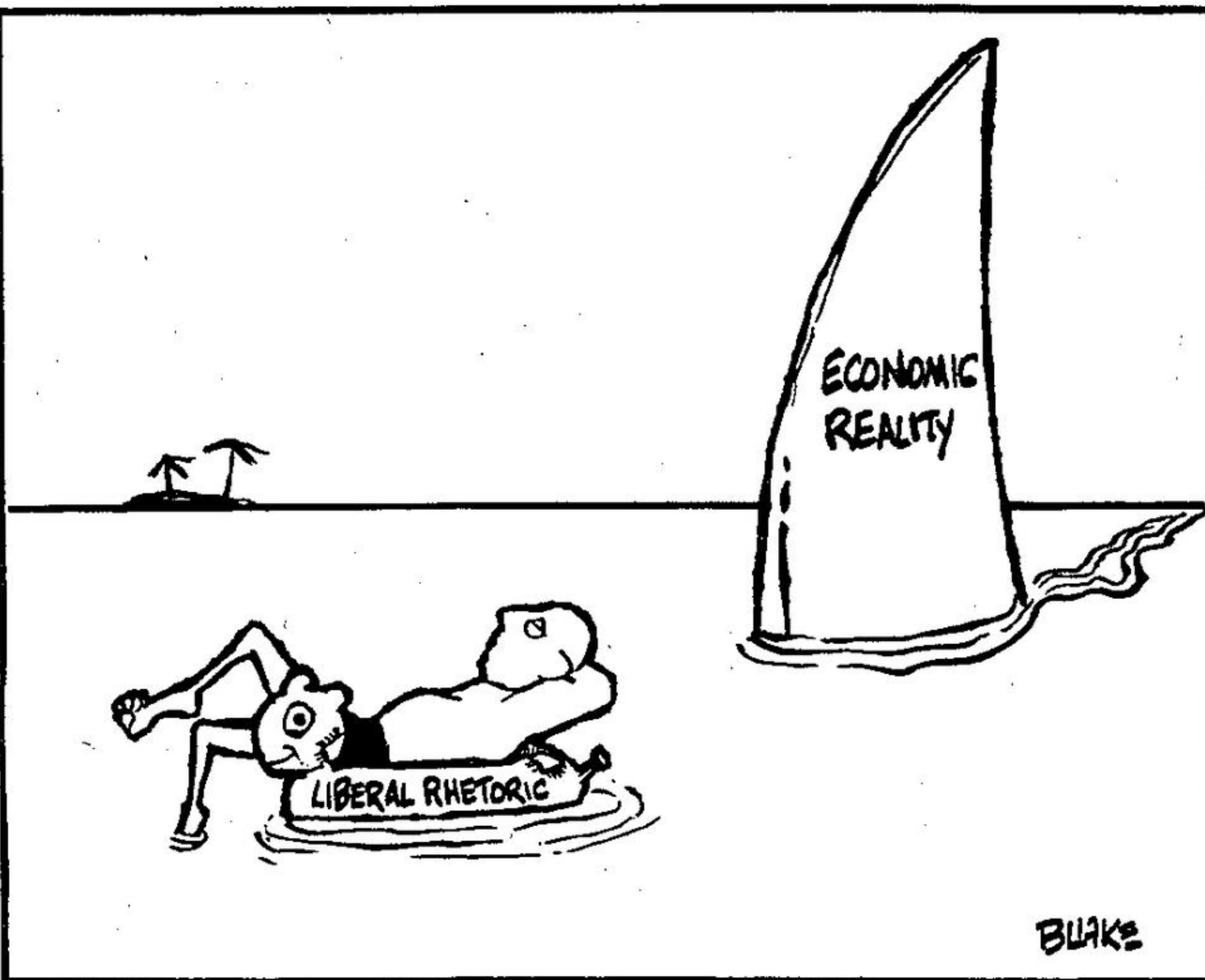
It has no doubt occurred to them already, but just in case it hasn't we'll suggest they all follow the federal guideline of six

per cent which Halton Hills councillors recently adopted, though under their own formula they were entitled to over 10 per cent.

In light of the fact local taxes soared this year, predominately because of a steep increase in the education levy (admittedly because of some circumstances beyond trustees' control like decreased provincial funding) a move to take no raise would be welcomed by taxpayers and not branded simply a grandstand or vote getting ploy.

The six per cent guideline is full of problems and already looks like it hasn't been applied fairly, but elected officials, if they hope to ever regain the respect and confidence of ratepayers, should embrace it.

As for those trustees in Metro, it can only be hoped voters there will have long enough memories to turf the scoundrels out in November.—G.M.



BLAKE

From the editor's desk

by Gord Murray

In this day and age of people turning off the boob tube it's a little embarrassing to admit that I still watch the box quite a bit.

Of course, with a reporter's schedule it means I have to make some adjustments. A few years back Helen and I purchased a video cassette recorder with a timer. While we were out covering council or taking a Brownie photo the machine hums away taping MASH or Lou Grant for viewing later, more often than not at the time when others are watching the late movie or very early in the morning.

There's been so many advancements in video machine technology our machine is almost obsolete. I'm not sure if those new taped movies which you can rent or buy will even fit our machine.

Anyway, having a passion for television, I've never been too fond of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

Programming on commercial TV isn't nearly as good now as it was, so I find I watch less. But the CRTC, an expensive government bureaucracy though is also to blame, I believe, for my waning interest in TV.

Let me explain some of their rulings which have annoyed me.

Our local cable company has tested bringing in stations from Erie, Pa., in the past. The reception was adequate. Yet they weren't allowed by the feds to add it to the converter channels.

Like many Actonians, Helen and I spent hours watching The Movie Channel Halton Cable was bringing in during the Christmas holidays. It was great, but disappeared quickly, too.

Cable is a private business required to offer community programs. If they had more services on converter to offer

I have no doubt there would be more subscribers and thus more funds to pump into local programming, not to mention more enjoyment for viewers.

I guess the biggest beef is Pay-TV. The technology has been there for years to bring Canadians Pay-TV. For years now Americans have enjoyed this cable service, but not in Canada where the CRTC has been dodging away trying to figure out how it can control our culture through TV. Of course the movies which Americans have been enjoying for several years now on TV are available in the theatres, here, so they haven't managed to keep U.S. cinema culture out of the country, just made it more expensive for us to enjoy Hollywood's products.

Now we are going to finally get Pay-TV, either later this year or early in '83. I realize the idea is to have the industry pump money into Canadian films, thereby improving the domestic industry and creating jobs for Canadians. What has always annoyed me is that they had to dither over it for so many years. If they'd got cracking on Pay-TV sooner, think how much money would have been made by now for Canadian content.

I have nothing against Canadian programming. I do watch Canadian shows, though not as often as American offerings. I'm not unique in that regard.

The highest rated programs on our costly national network, the CBC, are the American shows like MASH and Dallas.

Obviously Canadians want to watch American programs. Obviously it's desirable to produce our own shows, too.

I've never quite been able to accept spending money on staff and studios, etc. for the CRTC to regulate private commercial TV in this country so much and have them then playing by rules similar to the CBC.

To my way of thinking it would be more sensible for the government to keep its nose out of all broadcasting and spend all their funds now devoted to regulating the entire industry on just CBC television and radio. Make the CBC devoted totally to Canadian content, it will still create jobs and distribute Canadian culture. The choices for viewers then would be quite clear cut between Canadian and imported programming.

I suspect with more money and the need to create quality programs to draw viewers and thus revenue from commercials, the CBC would rise to the occasion. I don't think Canadian shows would completely disappear from other channels either, just the ones made to fill time.

My final complaint, for this week at least, about the feds in broadcasting are these satellite dishes. Why can't Canadians legally have these dishes?

Presumably it's to protect our television industry and cable. But at their hefty price tag, can you really see everyone running out and cancelling their cable or getting rid of their antenna, so they can receive HBO or the Movie Channel or the Atlanta Super Station? I doubt it very much.

By the way, just so my neighbors don't start a petition, even if dishes were legal, I won't be spending gobs of dough to buy one.

But I do think people who can afford one, especially businesses who use TV to draw customers should be allowed to have one.

Anyway that's my beef for now about the CRTC.

What brought this on? Why, rerun season of course. Commercial television is bad enough, but right now there really is nothing to watch.

Back issues

10 years ago

July 26, 1972

At least 11 families from Ospringe are affected by a hepatitis outbreak, and it is believed contaminated well water may have triggered the outbreak. The water will be checked out by the Wellington-Dufferin Health Unit.

Bob Stanfield, quiet-spoken leader of the federal Progressive Conservatives and a candidate for the Prime Minister's chair, will be in Acton for breakfast on Tuesday, August 1, to meet municipal officials, key Conservatives and local citizens.

The new constable with the Acton detachment of the OPP is Murray McCrea, a native of Paris, Ontario.

Specials this week at the IGA are, one case of Pepsi-Cola \$2.28, Rib Steaks \$1.15 a lb., IGA Margarine 5-1 lb. pkgs. \$1., Dole Bananas 10 cents a lb., and Prime Rib Roast 99 cents a lb.

20 years ago

July 26, 1962

Actonians holidaying up north who went to see the Huntsville tannery were surprised to find parts of it still smouldering from the fire there many weeks ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Anderson spent several days at Port Colborne the past week and returning by way of Port Dover visiting relatives there on Monday.

Acton police have nabbed nearly 30 speeders to date with the newly installed radar equipment.

Specials this week at the A-B Supermarket are, Chickens 37 cents a lb., legs and breasts 51 cents a lb., ready-cut Chicken parts in a Basket 39 cents a lb. and Red Hot Wieners 31 cents a lb.

Miss Ruth Spielvogel is visiting in North Bay with Mr. and Mrs. Jim Spielvogel and family.

50 years ago

July 21, 1912

Misses Margaret Buchanan, Jean Bennie, Jean Beattie, Edna Hinton, Marjorie Near and Margaret Elton, of Acton, are spending a week at the summer camp at Baden.

This week's specials at Patterson's Meat Shop are 3 tins of Clark's Pork and Beans for 23 cents, 2 Aymer Catsup 12 oz. bottles for 25 cents, fresh Ham 14 cents a lb., Sirlion Roast 18 cents to 20 cents a lb. and Stewing Beef 10 cents a lb.

Mr. Robert Holmes, of Winnipeg, Man., is visiting his mother and sister, Mrs. Robert Holmes, Sr. and Mrs. M.R. Moore.

Playing this week at the Gregory Theatre "It's Tough to be Famous" with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. "New Morals for Old" and "But the Flesh is Weak", starring Robert Montgomery, coming soon "Sunshine Susie."

Mr. W.M. Cooper, an officer of the Grand Lodge, attended the sessions of the Masonic order in Kingston this week.

75 years ago

July 25, 1907

Crewsons Corners is all a quiver of excitement over the possibility gold has been discovered, as well as oil, by Crewsons Corners Oil and Gas Company. The strata containing gold was found at a depth of 150 feet and if the vein is found to be a paying one, the eyes of the commercial world will be turned, not on the oil fields, but on the gold fields of Crewsons Corners.

Council granted Beardmore and Co. and the Acton Tanning Co. the use of water in what is known as Corporation or Henderson's Pond.

Council have done well to keep the rate at 20 mills after their reckless expenditures of last year. Estimates of expenditures are \$11,574.40. The Board of Education requires \$2,950 from municipal council this year. Teachers' salaries total \$3,200.

100 years ago

July 26, 1882

The little son of Mr. D. Mann and daughter of Mr. Wm. Masales uncovered the well in Mr. Mann's yard and both fell in together. Their cries were heard and a large number of neighbours were soon on the spot. Messrs. G.C. Clark, L. Matthews and Ed. Hemstreet descended the well and rescued the little ones. They were considerably frightened, as were their mothers.

W. Kelly, hairdresser, makes a specialty of ladies' hair switches and curls. Give him your combings.

A labourer near Hornby was tried for assault on his wife and found guilty, and fined \$4 and costs, amounting to \$7.85.

The ice cream social under the auspices of the Ladies Aid of the Methodist church at the residence of Mr. James Matthews was largely attended, and the band played.

Our readers write

Free Press story on air

Dear Sir:

Thought it might be of passing interest to you folks of The Free Press news room, other staffers, and possibly some of your readers, that your story of tragedy averted, and a happy ending, intensely interested me.

The one referred to dealt with three-month-old Andrew Cole, his five-year-old sister and others, and appeared on page one, your issue of April 14.

Should you be raising a quizzical eyebrow at my reaching into my "may-hold" file of stories, away back into

April, I must offer some explanation. To keep our little two minute feature on the small town press on the air all summer, we plan to tape five segments at one sitting. This will provide for continuous showing while I attend the Newspaper Convention in Saskatoon, and then continue on to holiday on the Pacific Coast with family members resident there.

Meanwhile, keep The Free Press coming. It is fascinatingly interesting.

Yours faithfully,
Arthur Carr, CKCO-TV's
"Country Editor"

Get behind Lorne Scots

Dear Sir:

It has recently been brought to our attention that the military band of the Lorne Scots Regiment has been denied a grant by our Regional Government for the year 1982.

Their request was very reasonable, only the sum of \$1,000 being involved. At the same time, the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra was given a sizeable grant by Halton Council, which seems very strange.

By whose authority do the council members give Halton taxpayers' money to a Hamilton organization, while denying it to one whose roots in Halton go back to Confederation, and whose musical services have been used by other Halton organizations through all the years since then?

The Lorne Scots Regimental Military Band is not supported financially by the Department of National Defence, and the way things are going, we may soon see no regimental bands receiving support from the Federal Government—certainly they have been reduced to the absolute minimum in recent years.

May we suggest that these disappearing bands are at least as much a part of our culture as are philharmonic orchestras, and while very little attention, respect or support is given to tradition by people in authority these days, we must voice our disapproval of their priorities.

Let's get behind the Lorne Scots, and demand that they be given a fair deal.

Yours truly,
Renee and Tom Watson

Writer defends lifeguards

To the people of Acton:

I am writing in response to the recent drowning deaths of the two Acton youths in Fairy Lake.

I personally know many of the lifeguards in the Acton area and those at the beach on July 19 '82. They have received an extremely large amount of negative feedback for their actions or lack of on that tragic day.

One television station reported the guards to have been "sunbathing and sleeping" whereas I know differently as I was at the beach approximately around 4:45 p.m.

These guards are provided to watch

the beach area and help those in trouble, not to work as babysitters for every one of the numerous children on the beach these hot summer days. If there are no visible signs of trouble, and the water being as cloudy and murky as it is, without the help of those at the beach and the swimmers, "buddy," it is unreasonable to point any fingers.

In my view, this type of tragedy will continue to take place if youths go to the lake unattended.

My deepest sympathy goes to the parents, family, and friends of the two boys and may others learn from this unfortunate accident.

Yours truly,
Rob Faber

Coles' slaw

More weeds and hooliganism

While I was frothing at the mouth last week about weeds in the school creek (or Henderson's Creek as it is officially known in memory of a pioneer Acton family) I should have mentioned the weeds growing along the CN property and the railway's right-of-way. The railway right of way looks like the weeds have taken over.

This has been a good year for bounty crops of weeds but there's no excuse for the railroad to leave them standing two or three feet high, ripening and spreading their seeds in people's yards and gardens.

The CN hasn't given a darn about appearances in Acton ever since they managed to close the station and rip it down and cut off passenger service. Now we have to put up with their weeds as well.

I'd like to get hold of Mr. Pepin some time and show him what his widely heralded cuts in passenger service have done to small towns like Acton. What was once a hive of activity has turned into the biggest weedpatch in the province, unless there's some other railway property around to beat it.

Downtown merchants, harassed by hoodlums who are breaking windows

with rocks and generally making a nuisance of themselves, are hopping mad over the damage done to their businesses over the last week. No one can blame them.

They've had enough of this kind of nonsense where a few youths take over the area and turn it into their own playground once everyone else is in bed.

Tempera are reaching the boiling point with some of the business people. If there isn't some kind of clean-up I'm afraid they may take things into their own hands and there'll be a few broken heads around instead of windows.

It isn't fair that these business people should be subjected to this type of harassment when they pay so much in business taxes and try to operate in attractive premises. There's certainly no motivation to renovate their premises when it means some kid hopped up on drugs or with a grudge against the owner leaves his calling card with a rock.

It's got to the point where some residents will not walk downtown after it is dark because they are afraid of the gangs of youths who loaf around the streets. As far as I know no one has ever been harassed by them or hurt in any way but their appearance is sometimes

frightening, especially for elderly people who aren't used to the coarse language some of them use.

It is not a new phenomenon by any means. When I was a youth in Acton we used to do the same thing. However, the only ones who threw rocks through windows or broke into businesses were burglars from out of town. They were dealt with harshly by the courts when they were caught. And the whole town watched to see that people's property was not damaged.

We used to have a few burly policemen around in those days and they didn't hesitate to step in when someone got out of hand. Usually the courts backed them up.

Police nowadays are faced with judges who deal lightly with offenders and they take advantage of the leniency to repeat the offences over and over again.

I don't know what the answer is to changing the lack of manners and harassment of business people. Maybe the judges should see the offenders who are caught are sentenced to attend church at least every Sunday for two or three years. It certainly wouldn't do them any harm, and it might do some good.

Hartley Coles