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Two way street

Congratulations to those Acton youths who organized and held a meeting at the Acton library last week to discuss with police alleged harassment. The meeting was suggested by Toronto lawyer Al Bickerton to the disaffected youth as a means of resolving differences between a few young people and the police.

A meeting is the place these differences should be aired, not in street confrontations during late hours where the hackles of both the young people and police are raised.

However, it would be foolish for anyone to deny there has not been a lot of problems in downtown Acton. Loitering, vandalism, rotten language, kids high on drugs and drink has invited action from the police, spurred by complaints.

Have the police been too harsh with those who break the laws? It is a matter of opinion. Certainly when individual officers go beyond the call of duty to subdue unruly youth they should be called on the carpet. But let's not forget there is often provocation.

As was pointed out in the meeting last week those who feel they have been unfairly treated by officers have avenues open to them to complain. They can file a complaint to the police department immediately

after an incident and an investigation will be conducted.

In two recent instances we are familiar with this was done with thoroughness and objectivity. All the complainant needs is the time and date of the incident; the name of the officer involved can be traced by the police department.

If the outcome of the investigation does not satisfy the complainant they can go further to the Board of Police Commissioners. The accuser must not forget that if the officer is found to be innocent of the charges levelled against him mischief charges could be laid against the accuser. It's a two way street.

Police must enforce the laws. They do not make them. When laws are broken those who break them have only themselves to blame when they fall afoul of the law.

The officers of the police department must also follow the law. If they break them, too, must answer to their superiors and further if necessary.

Perhaps, as the lawyer who suggested the meeting maintains, that the Town's loitering bylaw is in conflict with the Criminal Code and is also unconstitutional. Until that's resolved the police must continue to enforce the present laws fairly and without discrimination.



State of the Union

Acton, U.S.A., tourist turn-off

By PAUL DORSEY
News Editor

Oh, Acton, you have no peers. I thought I might be stumbling onto this little burg's mirror image during my recent New England holiday when I spotted "Acton" on the map of Massachusetts. There it was, northwest of Boston and not far from Georgetown, Burlington and Bolton. (Town fathers are an unimaginative lot.)

As I drove north on the interstate, memories of Georgetown, P.E.I., which is apparently closed on Sundays, filled me with apprehension. The Maritime namesake of our Halton Hills neighbor was as empty and still as the piles of lobster traps stacked on the sun-drenched piers when I visited it two summers ago.

Surely Acton, Massachusetts, would do more to meet the standard set for such an eye-catching name by its Ontario counterpart, the Queen of Fairy Lake, the glittering earring dangling from Halton's lobe. First impressions were good impressions, and people in public relations tell us that's important. You roll into Acton on a slick, two-lane highway lined with forests until you see the welcoming sign that tells you Acton was founded in 1756.

Almost 230 years later, the town is quite attractive, green and lush, tidy and inviting. Its downtown view is dominated by an old colonial church whose services surely must be well-attended by the good people of rural Massachusetts.

Opposite the big, modern pharmacy and attractively landscaped bank was a deli whose facade would have better suited an English pub. Either way, it was lunchtime, and with a copy of the Beacon, serving Acton and area, I strolled inside.

A front page story in the Beacon cited the town's flurry of "Help



If you lived in Acton, Massachusetts, you'd be home by now. If you don't live in our community's American namesake, stay home: the quietly

unassuming people there don't expect much and don't get much and they'd rather not bother with tourists asking silly questions.

Wanted" signs as an indicator of local economic recovery. There was one such sign on the pharmacy door and another on the deli's, but it was readily apparent that if the restaurant intended to hire more people, it would have to expand.

Armed and ready for the lunch-time crowd were five different teenagers, with a sixth coming in and out carrying pizza delivery boxes. At the drop of a customer's order, the team swung into action, one at the hamburger grill, another at the submarine post, a third wiping the counter, a fourth at the ready with pizza trimmings and a fifth to scurry aside the others working hard, or hardly working, it was difficult to tell.

From a disheartening menu, this crack team of burger jocks produce

mediocre sandwiches and other inglorious entrees that make you wonder if they aren't in training for certain fast food franchises in the big cities. A Big Mac farm team, or a Wendy's little league.

With regrets (for having entered), I left Acton's not-really-a-delicatessen-but-who-can-afford-a-new-sign.

Across the street, the bank refused to cash a substantial number of traveller's cheques because of a technicality that had not in the least worried retailers anywhere else in the state.

Acton, Massachusetts, it would appear, doesn't cotton to strangers. Tourists can stay on the turnpike. I drove on into New Hampshire (in quest of ridiculously cheap alcohol, but that's another story) and headed home.

Back issues

10 years ago

September 4, 1974

Halton Hills taxes can be paid in the former Acton town office. Lorna Clark finds many people did not know that their bills may be paid and accepted here.

Rev. James Smye of St. Eugene's church, Hamilton, will become the parish priest of St. Joseph's Church, Acton.

Wayne Bowen and family from Nova Scotia were visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stan Bowen and others in the Acton area last week.

Tom and Rene Watson and son John have returned after spending the summer at their home in Liscomb, Nova Scotia.

20 years ago

September 3, 1964

Skating before a panel of five judges in the Guelph Curling Club arena on Saturday afternoon, 16-year-old Linda Braida was successful in passing the Canadian Gold Test in both figures and free skating.

More than 3500 youngsters go back to school in this district and 1430 in Acton alone this coming Tuesday.

Duane G. Hackenbrook, Cobblehill Rd., was hired this week as a linesman with Acton Hydro Department.

Acton High School top graduating student Joan Cook learned this week she has been awarded a Dominion-Provincial student aid bursary for \$500. She had already been awarded a York University admission scholarship of \$500.

50 years ago

August 30, 1934

Applications are now being received for the position of Customs Officer in Acton to succeed Mr. R.M. McDonald, who has been superannuated following his critical illness from which he has not yet recovered.

Mr. W. Eccleshall was an exhibitor at the C.N.E. this year and carried off second prize for green peppers grown in his garden on Main Street.

Mr. and Mrs. C. MacColl visited in Acton on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. W.D. MacArthur and Misses Lucy MacArthur and Mary Mills and James Mills visited in Hamilton on Sunday.

The tree trimming on the streets by the municipal officers has greatly improved the street lighting and cleared the lower branches that were bothersome often to pedestrians.

75 years ago

September 2, 1909

One who has been a familiar figure on Acton streets for over 60 years has gone to walk the streets of New Jerusalem. Thomas Perryman, the oldest resident of our town, passed peacefully away last Saturday morning after but a brief illness. He was born in Devonshire, England, on the 8th October, 1818.

Owing to necessary repairs to the stone work surrounding the boiler at the power house, there was no electric current on Monday night. A night without electric lights leads users to appreciate the convenience more fully.

Mr. A.T. Brown, Manager, Bell Telephone exchange here will have an entirely new telephone equipment installed when the improvements are completed in his office.

100 years ago

September 4, 1884

On Monday last Messrs Lawson and McArthur threshed for Mr. James Dobble, lot 21, con. 5, Esqueving with their steam thrasher, 815 bushels of wheat and 435 bushels of oats within ten hours. This was without a doubt a faithful day's work.

Mr. John Hamilton of the Wellington Marble Works, Guelph, has kindly donated to St. John's Church, Rockwood, a very handsome baptismal font.

Vote against the repeal of the Scott Act and ensure the safety of your home and family from whiskey ships.

Mr. J.E. McGarvin, municipal clerk, and family, have returned from their sojourn in Muskoka. They had a pleasant time.

James, son of Mr. C.S. Smith, has entered Upper Canada College, Toronto, for a course of study.

Letters are welcome

Clergy comment:

Know-it-alls fall flat on their faces

Have you ever thought you had all of your life figured out, that you knew exactly what you were going to do with your life and when you were going to do it? If you are at all typical, you have.

And what happened in the outcome? Well, again, if you are at all typical, you ended up falling flat on your face. All your fine plans and ideas fell apart.

Whenever we think we know everything, we eventually find out how little we know. Whenever we think we have everything, we find out how weak we really are.

In Isaiah, chapter 10, we hear of a great and powerful king who conquers many nations, but despite all of his power he will soon waste away to nothing. In Matthew's gospel, chapter 11, we hear that the clever may know many things, but they cannot grasp that which is simple and most important.

You and I must not make this same mistake in our lives again. We need to realize we cannot control everything, or understand everything, or own everything. If we begin to think that we can, we are doomed to failure.

All we can do is try our utmost to be the best person we can be each day of our lives—and that will be more than enough.

Fr. R. Diodati,
St. Joseph's.

Queen's Park report:

Hydro increase should not exceed 5%, Liberals claim

Premier William Davis has appointed Tom Campbell, Deputy Minister of Treasury and Economics, as Hydro Chairman. This important post has not been filled on a permanent basis for more than a year. Instead of recruiting a strong, independent chairman to review Hydro management, make essential changes and rectify past mistakes, the Premier is appointing a man whose department has supposedly been responsible for monitoring Hydro, its management and borrowing practices—a bureaucrat who will attempt to defend his own past borrowing approvals.

Elected representatives should have an opportunity to review his credentials for the job, to hear his position on:

(a) Hydro's proposed borrowings of \$60 billion over the next 20 years;

(b) the over-expansion of power plants which have cost the province billions of dollars to build;

(c) Hydro's growing dependence on a single source of energy—nuclear power, and the balance of power generation which be supports. Also, will he bring rate increases back into line with inflation?

Hydro's borrowing program is, of course, designed to support the Capital Expansion Program, both past and present. Its report, "Long-Range Financial Projection, 1983-2003", prepared in August 1983, reveals plans to borrow a gross amount of \$64 billion during the



by JULIAN REED
M.P.P. Halton-Burlington

twenty years to 2003, to be used for new capital expansion, and to roll-over old debt, as well as financing interest capitalized. Hydro has one of the largest debts in Canada—\$18.16 billion at the beginning of the year. Its borrowing requirements are too large to be met on the Canadian money market alone, and it borrows in Europe and the United States.

Last year, interest on the \$18.16 billion was over \$2 billion. Hydro borrowed to pay \$1.25 billion in interest, leaving \$780 million to be paid by Hydro customers out of revenue. Now, Hydro plans to borrow \$2.9 billion in 1985, up \$378 million from the \$2.5 billion it borrowed in 1983.

Hydro's foreign borrowing costs consumers dearly in foreign exchange losses—nearly \$400 million lost since 1978. These losses account for a substantial portion of rate increases, and the latest financial outlook indicates that foreign exchange loss will mean an extra cost

to the utility next year of \$61 million over original forecasts.

Hydro projected interest costs (including foreign exchange losses) to be covered by revenues in 1984 and 1985 at \$953 million and \$1,455 million respectively, resulting in the need for a 9.1 per cent rate increase. Now its "Updated Financial Outlook" projects additional interest costs of \$88 million resulting from the projected foreign exchange loss of \$61 million, and higher interest rates for borrowing, resulting in a projected loss of an additional \$27 million. These are among the primary factors leading Hydro to revise its requirements for a 1985 rate increase of 10.3 per cent.

Fluctuations in the Canadian/United States dollar rate may cause higher rate increases due to Hydro debt obligations.

Hydro has made a serious error in its decision to reduce purchases of the more expensive low-sulphur coal from Western Canada. The "Updated Financial Outlook" shows a saving of \$23 million in purchasing more U.S. high-sulphur coal. It may save \$22 million, but Ontario may suffer similar economic losses due to acid rain damages, and tourist industry reductions.

The Energy Board should prevail upon Hydro to reverse this decision, and recommend against the tripling of the "water rental" tax announced in the Provincial Budget—equivalent to a tax on electrical

consumers which will impact rates in 1985 by 1.6 per cent or an extra \$59 million. This tripling of tax will further discourage private entrepreneurs from developing hydraulic power potential, at least equal to that in place now.

Hydro has remained aloof from normal market forces, primarily as a result of the provincial government's guarantee on Hydro borrowings. Its ever increasing capital requirements indicate a serious problem for the Crown.

Corporation's financial soundness? Ignoring warnings, it has over-bought and over-spent. Its debt load will skyrocket to \$28.6 billion by 1987 if not brought under control. This alarming debt, guaranteed by the government, will within four years represent an average indebtedness of \$13,148 for every family of four in Ontario. Interest costs already amount to \$2.5 billion. The debt has serious repercussions on our whole economy. Vital needs in health care, education and housing are not being met because the province's financing capacity is being squeezed.

The Liberal Party has introduced legislation to make Hydro accountable to the Legislature and the people of Ontario. We have, as mentioned at the beginning of this report, recommended that the appointment of the Hydro Chairman should be approved by the Legislature, following committee

hearings. We recommend that legislation should require the approval of the Legislature for Hydro borrowing, or borrowing by the government on Hydro's behalf, or government guarantees on Hydro bonds.

Lack of such accountability procedures has, we believe, led to the present chaos.

Hydro's "Updated financial Outlook for 1985" indicates that the rate increase for the utility to maintain its normal targets for financial soundness should approach 10.6 per cent.

In other words, the situation is worse than originally thought. We believe that Energy Board hearings should be extended to review Hydro's latest projections and to cross-examine Hydro staff.

Hydro has stated that its corporate objective is to keep bulk power rates at the rate of inflation, yet its proposed 9.1 per cent increase is almost twice that objective. Ontarians already pay more for our electricity than the average Canadian. Rates have more than doubled in the last nine years.

We believe that Hydro must play a leadership role, and must not be allowed to insulate itself from the normal market forces. 1985 bulk power rates should be kept at the projected rate of inflation—five per cent. We would recommend adoption of "lifetime rates" to cushion the effects upon fixed incomes.