

the HERALD

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OMB hearing critical for town's future

November, 1977, might prove to be the most significant moment in history for Halton Hills.

It will be during this month that the Ontario Municipal Board will hear evidence on a proposal which might become the final stage of development and growth for the Georgetown urban community.

It will be a time for those with a concern about the quality of life here, its values, its characters and its level of services, to speak out and air their thoughts.

It will be a time for involvement. For without that involvement by the individual or the community volunteer organization the outcome of the hearings may not be to the satisfaction, or benefit, of all.

The proposal for Focal Properties for development of 1,840 residential units south of Silver Creek will force us to take an introspective look at ourselves. The community must be prepared to speak objectively or the opportunity might pass as a fleeting moment in history.

BLOCK PARENTS

Children will suffer

"The block parent program in Georgetown is in trouble."

Those words from the start of a report on page one which has an ominous ring. We hope the concerns raised by Bob and Linda Anderson will never reach fruition.

The block parent program is a worthwhile exercise in providing a sense of security, not only for children, but for all persons who live in the community. The program should continue.

We do not know why the enthusiasm or involvement has dwindled, but we hope it is not as the chairman notes, based on a false sense of security by the community at large.

Georgetown has been a community where social conscience has proved in part to be capable of controlling those elements in society which may commit a crime. But times are changing; social order is under an extreme test, and the community must redirect its concerns and seek ways to improve its lifestyle. This includes ensuring that programs such as block parents continue to flourish.

Maybe what's needed is a more vocal, more active program of participation where tangible results become evident. But that should not be the answer to the problem. It should possibly form the basis for finding a solution.

What welfare?

Canada used to be a welfare state. It isn't anymore.

That may surprise those who think that today's poor have a pipeline to society's wealth, a pipeline that gushes with welfare cheques, food vouchers, rent supplements, unemployment insurance, and family allowances.

If that's "welfare" then certainly this is the first welfare state. Only in this century, since the arrival of income taxes, have governments gathered money from the community to redistribute to the poor.

But is that really welfare? Prior to the industrial age, before the time when people flocked to the cities, governments didn't have to hand out money. Even without handouts, no one had to starve or freeze if they were able-bodied. The land, and its resources, was available to a greater or lesser extent to anyone.

In its forests, the community had a surplus of firewood; in its streams, water; on its grasslands, grazing; and enough space that everyone could have some kind of a home and garden. Barring laziness or physical handicap, most people could survive without dependence on charity.

Governments didn't have to tax a community's collective wealth, because people could help themselves.

That world of the past could legitimately be called a welfare state — a state of communal well-being. But that's no longer true in Canada.

The wealth of our total community still depends on the land. Its forests, streams, minerals, and fields provide food for its people, raw materials for industries, and energy. But the urban poor have been cut off, from that communal wealth.

They get filed vertically, in high-rise low-income housing, or cramped into rented rooms in old houses. They can't live on the crumbs from the tables of the rich — even our

throwaways are now sanitarily crushed, compressed, packaged, shredded, or buried. They own no land, and have no free access to the products of the land. If there is open land near them, it is zealously protected by local governments for recreation of the total populace (and possible for future development); the poor may gather neither food nor fuel from it.

Similarly, the wider natural resources of the country are no longer there for the taking. The riches of Crown (or communally-owned) land are available only by negotiated agreement with the government, on behalf of the citizens.

This is not a plea to roll back the clock, nor is it advocating unrestricted plunder of our natural wealth by opportunists, be they poor or rich, individuals or corporations. It merely points out a state of affairs in which the urban poor have only two alternatives open to them.

They can steal — a method of helping themselves that society considers criminal and punishes.

Or they can beg — asking governments, the custodians of our communal wealth, for handouts. It's difficult to describe that sort of state as welfare. But there is another option, if we have the will to implement it: they can be genuinely aided by creative involvement in the political and economic processes of the nation — and the fruit that would accrue in a "just society".

United Church of Canada.

And now it's personal

Unemployment — the issue we have always associated with the Prairies or the Maritimes — is becoming a reality in affluent southern Ontario.

The prediction is that Peel's rate of unemployment will hit 11.5 per cent in February, well into the double-digit bracket we once reserved in the back of our minds for so-called "underdeveloped" areas.

Oh, we've talked about unemployment and we've listened to union leaders and political people mouth the usual stuff on the subject.

But until now, no-one's really taken it seriously. Even a little while back when an unemployment demonstration took place here, there were probably peepsaying to themselves: Why here?

Why, indeed? Canada's most intensive concentration of industry, manufacturing plants, transportation facilities, office space and head offices is centred in the Toronto area, spilling over abundantly into Peel. People are attracted to this area from across the country because of employment potential.

Most people who want to work have been able to find work.

Now, we are told, that simply won't be the case. The implications of such a turn of events are probably as political as they are anything else.



We're fat, lazy and overpaid

By GERRY LANDSBOROUGH

Disaster - catastrophe - where do you stand when a national emergency natural or man-made befalls us? If a national emergency struck in the dead of winter how many of us would survive? How independent of hydro and water and the local market are we?

Question... How many of us are so totally dependent on so many different services that in the face of a national emergency we would quickly face starvation, exposure, or emergency medical crisis?

Recently a spokesman for the Japanese business association "Kaidramen" called Canadian workers "fat, lazy, indolent, and overpaid." Not only is the above statement fairly accurate but we have also become a nation of totally dependent whiners. We are dependent on almost everything - we tend to live solely for today - tomorrow is something we seldom consider.

The sad plight of our unemployed is a poignant example. Many unemployed according to a recent story in the Sunday Sun have committed suicide as a result of being jobless. Statistics show as - 31 people in Metro took their own lives in August and 41 in September as compared with 34 in September 1976. The article implies that the plight of jobless individuals - loss of self respect, financial worries, the inability to cope, resulted in an increasing rise in the number of suicides.

Well, if the above holds true what has become of our own individual independence?

How many of our people are unemployed solely because there is no work? Personally we are familiar with the local dairy industry and we know from past experience that many local farmers have to import help from Britain or Australia or elsewhere because Canadians do not only, not want to dirty their hands, but they also want to be paid wages beyond their worth. A local nursery imports help from the Caribbean islands, again because the work is hard and the wages comparably low - but the question here is comparable to what?

Our young people leave school, are not only without an education but are also without sufficient backbone and ambition to work - WORK - work.

They demand high paying jobs with a minimum of labour. How many young Canadian boys do you know that would stand and wash dishes for 9 or 10 hours a day for

\$85. or 90 a week as opposed to sitting on their duff and collecting unemployment.

The Japanese see us as "over-paid." I agree fully. The wage scale in Canada is completely out of wack. One man can work at a trade for 20 years and make \$6 or \$7 dollars an hour while a young lad fresh out of school can start at a steel mill beginning at the same rate it took another 20 years to make. Fairplay?

The Japanese found us "fat." You heard it, that remarkably ugly word that applies to so many of us - your humble writer included.

Fat means over weight. It appears to be a true moral crime that while two-thirds of the world goes to bed hungry we here in North America are completely hung up on diets. One reason is the "abundance" of food that is at our fingertips. How many of us eat to live as opposed to live to eat?

The Japanese found us "lazy." Lazy by what standards? Well - don't we all want a 40 hour work week or less, and who really wants to put in over-time unless we get time and a half for "OUR" trouble. How many Canadians work with the good of the community - province, or nation as a true factor in their daily lives?

Our own Prime Minister tells us "we're soft." Of course the Trudeau knockers will just laugh it off, but the PM recently pointed

out "that when the dollar falls 10 per cent in a year it's because the world is telling us we're living beyond our means."

Prosperity becomes something we Canadians believe "we are entitled to." Not something everyone tightens their belt buckles and works towards. Buy now - pay later. But unfortunately in a country whose people seldom think seriously of tomorrow, later always comes unexpected and much sooner than imagined.

If a disaster were to befall us, we are totally and completely unprepared. Even those with full freezers are helpless against a blackout.

We all need to be dependent on something and insomeways on our fellow countrymen - but totally dependent is wrong for all of us. It goes beyond being soft. If we are to hold our place in the world as a nation we have to start thinking and acting like one. We have to consider what the Japanese think of us, and what the rest of the nations of the world think of us. We cannot behave as a spoilt child and demand respect at the same time.

So come on Canada, let's get together. Let's work at it - first on a personal level (remember fat, lazy and overpaid) and second on a national level to think in terms of unity. To think in terms of "what happens tomorrow."

Queens Park information empire unlikely to change

By DON O'HEARN
Queen's Park Bureau
Of The Herald

The government has had a study done on its communications, and particularly its information apparatus.

A young graduate of a community college public relations course was hired to look at all the information branches in the various ministries and the information machinery generally and to recommend how it could be improved.

His main recommendation was that there should be much more centralization.

In this he should have lots of agreement. For it is plainly obvious that with it there could be both a better quality of work and a lot of money saved.

Other people have pointed this out over the years.

But we won't see it.

There is some extraordinary duplication in the government information service now.

Some ministries even have their own television studios (despite the fact there is a good studio in the main parliament buildings).

Many ministries have specialists such as artists and photographers on staff. People who are much under-used.

If these specialist services were centralized, combined into the one general unit for which all ministries would draw obviously so many bodies wouldn't be needed and probably a higher calibre of person could be hired.

And the same principle follows through most of the information structure.

ALL EMPIRES

Blocking it will probably be the biggest obstacle to the efficient government.

This is that, unlike the private sector, in government its components, which are the ministries, are all empires unto their own.

Each, even though, it draws its funds from a central pot, is very much akin to a private corporation acting on its own.

When one ministry has something all the others must have it. And this rock-bound

principle. The bureaucracy is dug in and it is almost unmovable.

As just one example of the growth, and waste this can mean, we have the Ministry of Environment.

A few years ago it had an information branch with a few people in it. Today it has 16 names of personnel listed in the government phone book, and this would be exclusive of secretaries and other support people.

It is an empire within an empire. And all the reports in the world won't disturb it.

Anything can happen at PC policy convention

By STEWART MacLEOD
Ottawa Bureau
Of The Herald

The timing was rather funny. There we were in a Parliament Hill cafeteria talking about the Conservative's national policy convention in Quebec City next month, and we were trying to get this Tory MP to tell us why we should bother attending.

"Come on," said a colleague. "Just give us one good reason why we should be there. It would be suicidal for you people to fight over the party leadership and the policy papers certainly don't offer much in the way of controversy."

He was referring particularly to one resolution which asks whether the delegates wish to find "an equitable means of ensuring the continued existence of a united country in which persons who speak either official language can live full and satisfying lives..."

The answer to that, I suggest, is decidedly predictable.

Anyway, this MP thought for a few moments, before suggesting there was every reason in the world for the press to be in attendance. "With Tories," he said, "you just never know what's going to happen. We'll find something to fight about, and you can't take a chance on not being there."

But at the moment, he agreed, things looked rather tame.

And here is where the timing took that funny turn.

An hour after that coffee klatch, the loudspeakers in the press gallery announced that a statement had been received from Gordon Churchill, the 78-year-old former Conservative cabinet minister who had been at John Diefenbaker's right hand during 16 years in parliament.

And just one month before the Tory convention was due to begin here was Churchill, a politician to the end, sprinkling a little sand in the convention grease. He was issuing a veiled warning that attempts may be made at the convention — if not in the Tory caucus itself — to drum his hero, Diefenbaker out of the party.

What set him off was that earlier statement by former leader Robert Stanfield criticizing Diefenbaker for what he considered to be indirect criticism of party leader Joe Clark. Stanfield said his predecessor should stop sticking the knife into his leader.

After thinking about this for a couple of weeks — when everyone else in the party seemed to have forgotten about it — Churchill let fly with this statement in which he said the " feud" between the two former leaders could lead to the formation of a new party. And he accused Stanfield of trying to muzzle Diefenbaker.

No one knows better than Churchill just how absurd such an objective would be.

I suspect Churchill, who held three cabinet posts during his years in the Diefenbaker government, was chortling to himself just a bit as he came up with an equally absurd suggestion that Stanfield might try to drum the Prince Albert MP out of the party.

Talk about suicidal missions! But Churchill went on to talk about the consequences. "... if that happened, the way would be open for the formation of a new party competent to deal with the present crisis of Confederation under the able and experienced sponsorship of John Diefenbaker and John Turner, former Liberal Finance Minister. Jim Richardson, former Liberal Defence Minister, will be watching and thousands of people would be attracted to the prospect."

The inference here, of course, is that the present party is not competent to deal with the present crisis of Confederation. And, just by coincidence, a prime objective of the forthcoming convention is to come up with policies that will convince Canadians the Tories are indeed competent to save the nation.

Furthermore, Churchill seems a bit intrigued by the idea of a brand new political party — an idea he might like to toss around in the backrooms of the convention.

Just what the party needs as it sets out to display a new enthusiastic unity! And that MP at the coffee table was absolutely right. When a Conservative convention looms on the horizon, you just never know what will happen.

Looking through our files

Highway 7 was released this week by W.J. White of the LePage firm.

Georgetown firefighters joined others from Erin, Guelph, and Orangeville early Friday evening in battling a blaze which threatened to engulf many buildings on the main street of Hillsburgh.

TEN YEARS AGO
Halton East was one of the exciting ridings Monday evening. As election returns came in a see-saw contest was indicated. And the evening ended with the Progressive Conservatives retaining their seat at Queen's Park by a scant 102 votes.

Downtown Georgetown was a soundstage for 12 hours Friday as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation borrowed our small town flavour for their successful drama series Quentin Durgens MP.

"We expect the new Mountainview bridge to be taking traffic by mid-December and possibly earlier," road chairman Wm. R. Smith told council Monday. Mr. Smith said the project had been three weeks behind schedule, but the contractor is catching up and barring hold-ups in delivery of materials, will have the bridge open before Christmas.

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