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WILLIAM EVDOKIMOFF, Publisher

BOB RUTTER, Editor

PHONE... 877-2201

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37% functionally illiterate: Study

Those who think that illiteracy belongs only to the Third World had better think again. According to a recently published article by Professor J.C. Cairns, Director of the Centre for International Programs, University of Guelph, over 37 per cent of the out-of-school adult Canadian population fall within generally accepted standards of functional illiteracy. His article is partly based on a 1976 research study by Audrey Thomas, for World Literacy of Canada, of which Prof. Cairns is a director.

As defined by the Canadian Association for Adult Education, functional illiteracy is applied to those with less than nine years of basic education considered necessary to meet the demands of Canada's industrialized society. Similar criteria are used by those working on this problem in most western countries.

"Education requirements are related to the development level of society," says Prof. Cairns. "The minimum education level required in a largely rural African or Asian country is quite different from that necessary in present day Canada. Although the definition is somewhat arbitrary, and certainly does not apply to many individuals who rise above their educational backgrounds, it is

clear that we have a surprisingly large number of poorly educated adults in this country."

How many of the five million Canadian adults with primary level education or less are recent immigrants who received their schooling in another country and a language other than English or French? Not many, says Prof. Cairns. The 1971 Canadian census reported that over 76 per cent were born in this country. Also, surprisingly enough, 32 million live in urban centres, and 74 per cent of the total group fall within the 20 to 64 age range, the period in which education is most needed for participation in employment and in society. Although the percentage of poorly educated adults is highest in the older age groups, available data, plus the experience of other industrialized countries, indicate that functional illiteracy, however defined, will be with us for a long time.

There are economic, social and personal reasons why young people drop out of school, says Prof. Cairns. He feels the problem cannot be solved by raising the compulsory school age or by trying to make school more meaningful. "I don't think it's productive or feasible to keep young people in school longer than they really want to be or longer than

they feel they are benefiting from it." Instead, he feels the emphasis should be on the education of adults throughout life, through the concept of lifelong learning. "We need far more flexible opportunities for people who have dropped out of school to come back, with educational networks more open to the returning of adults at all ages," he says.

"Generally speaking there's a lot of adult education in Canada, but not much of it is tackling this type of problem." The federal Department of Manpower operates the two major programs in this area. Other government institutions, school boards, colleges, universities and private associations are also active in adult basic education says Prof. Cairns but most are just touching the fringe of the problem.

Any solution to the issue must involve "widespread effort to make the adults concerned more aware of what they can do individually in helping to improve their own lives. It's not just a question of what society provides, but also a problem as to what extent poorly educated adults themselves see their need and the potential for changing their conditions, and to what extent they are motivated to do something about it."

Educational inadequacies are closely related to, and reflect, regional disparities in Canadian life, says Prof. Cairns. "Increased educational levels will not in themselves, however, eliminate problems of unemployment or low productivity, because education is only one component which interacts with others in socio-economic development. Education is necessary, but insufficient in itself."

In his six years experience with UNESCO Prof. Cairns found that most industrial societies face situations somewhat similar to that in Canada. "Depending on whether school attainment levels are used as the sole criterion, or whether they are qualified in some way, one finds in most Western countries a hard core of 15 to 25 per cent of poorly educated or functionally illiterate adults. The problem is ambiguous, complex, and difficult to resolve by traditional means. In Canada, where there is, to date, little awareness of the issue at public or governmental levels, much more information, study and research are needed," he explains.

Nearly five million adults with primary school education or less over 37,000 of them below the grade five level, present a fact that is difficult to ignore.

Legislation pollution

Harold K. Embree, president of the Hamilton Automobile Club calls the proliferation of laws "legislation pollution" and urges that action be taken on instituting a sunset law in Canada and in Ontario.

"We do recognize there is much valuable legislation being processed, but along with it unfortunately is a plethora of legislation that simply represents a continuing erosion of personal rights and freedoms and adds to the costs of daily activities of people," he says.

Canadians complain they are over-governed. And so they should. Ontario in its last consolidation had over 300 acts of the legislature under which regulations have been passed. These regulations are passed by cabinet without scrutiny by the legislature. Last year more than 1,000 regulatory amendments were passed.

That's unfair to the public. Not only does it provide an erosion of individual rights, but

the public does not have an opportunity to practise participatory democracy.

Sunset laws by their accepted definition call for an expiry date of all legislation governing programs and fiscal policy. It's a good concept since some programs become outdated; others are only designed as a temporary measure (such as income tax) and still others can be found like the land speculation tax not to be the proper direction to fulfill the ideals set by government.

Everett Biggs, a former deputy-minister for Ontario, described last week to Progressive Conservative supporters in the federal Brampton-Georgetown riding that he's familiar with the ever growing bureaucracy of government and supports the call for a sunset law.

In addition to the clearing away of many redundant and superficial laws that tend to hamper daily life in this country, the enactment of a sunset law might also signal a concerted effort on the part of government to do something about restraint. For too long the taxpayer has been asked to restrain himself while government costs have increased faster than the private sector and now more than 40 per cent of the gross national product is generated by government.

A sunset law may also provide governments with the impetus to begin a system of zero-based budgeting, that is, where each funded program must convince a public accounts committee of government of the value of continued financing.

It might prove to reduce substantially the spiralling cost of government and help put Canada back in competition on a world economy. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain through the introduction of a sunset law.

FUNNYSIDE



Unfortunate situation

Don Long, a man with immense abilities has resigned from the Halton board of education because of business pressures.

It is unfortunate for Halton Hills because Mr. Long has worked diligently and with dedication for this community during his term on the board.

But more unfortunate is that he found himself in the position of resigning because an anachronistic clause remains within the Education Act which penalizes board members unless they attend meetings regularly. Dedicated people who find themselves serving the community do not need that kind of pressure to ensure their dedication.

The clause we are told dates back to the days when boards of education met once a month to shape the operation of small and medium-sized school systems. Those days have gone. The administration of boards such

as that in Halton now takes considerably much more work than anyone 20 years ago would have believed.

Three meetings and you are out. That is one month's work in Halton. It is unfortunate that society would make such a demand when the economy is uncertain and when personal and business conflicts arise. It is time for a change. Members of the legislature should be considering the plight of Don Long. They should be considering that no man should be placed in a "temporary" position of resignation because business pressures might take two months to resolve and his attendance at meetings might not be consecutive.

Surely with a cabinet minister living in Halton Hills, we can expect to see action designed to prevent this unfortunate action from manifesting itself in future elsewhere.

Looking through our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO

"Dolly," *Bestman's* one of the champions of last year's Intermetals. A finalist is back in a *Georgetown* uniform and made his first appearance this season on local ice in an exhibition game with *Brantford* Seniors Saturday. It was a *Georgetown* that Dolly played his *senior* game against the team which defeated *Georgetown* for the Intermetals "A" championship last year.

A stroke which she suffered ten days before was fatal for Mrs. Thomas S. Hill, who died at her home on King Street on Sunday, Feb. 15. Formerly Catherine Burwell, she was born in England 81 years ago and came to Canada with her parents when she was an infant, settling with them in Hamilton. Following her marriage she lived in Weston and Granton and for the past eighteen years in Georgetown where Mr. Hill was C.N.R. station agent until his retirement ten years ago.

Norman B. Hill has been elected by acclamation to fill the council vacancy created in Ward 2 by the resignation of Harry Hale. Mr. Hill was one of the two nominees for the position and was elected when the other nominee, ex-councillor Thomas L. Lyons did not qualify. Mr. Hill is well-known in the ward, where he operates a grocery store at the corner of King and Queen.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Delrex Developments, in a letter read at Monday's council meeting has asked for a decision on release of extra land for building houses in their subdivision at the earliest possible date.

A quote of \$2,500 has been set for Georgetown by the Ontario Division of the Canadian Red Cross Society. This figure is slightly in excess of last year's quota, but last year *Georgetown* exceeded its quota by more than six per cent.

Although *Georgetown* has no one on the town relief rolls, it is possible that some unemployed workers might qualify for a provincial-sponsored public works program. The town is eligible for a 70 per cent government grant on approved works projects using men who are unemployed and not entitled to receive unemployment insurance.

TEN YEARS AGO

Georgetown council has requested a \$5,000 annual grant from Esquimaux Township towards upkeep of the *Georgetown* public library. The request was forwarded to the township following a decision at Monday's council meeting, after the 1968 library budget request was reviewed.

Motorists who have been parking in downtown meter spaces Mondays, and Thursday evenings at no expense can expect to start feeding the meters from now on or invite a \$1 parking violation tag. A new bylaw amending the previous parking meter bylaw now makes it illegal to use the parking spaces Mondays and Thursday evenings without using the meters.

Main Street North, east side has undergone a startling transformation this past year.

Demolition of the old Christian Reformed Church and the Corduroy building and construction of the two impressive new business blocks has made an attractive addition to the downtown business scene.



French delicate, important to Ontario, Canada's future

By DON O'HEARN

The question of the status and use of French in Ontario is a most delicate matter that will concern the current session.

Delicate, and potentially perhaps very important in the future of Canada as a nation, the situation, of course, is that French now has quite substantial status in the province. There is considerable French schooling in the Ontario education system. And it is available to some extent in the courts of the province.

But it is not an "official" language. And the opposition parties, as well as some section of the public, say it should be.

The Ontario government says no; that the approach should be to continue to expand the usage on the present informal basis. Critics of the government say that its position is based on political fear.

That Premier William Davis believes that there would be big political resentment from those in the province who are against bilingualism.

Frankly, I believe this is selling the premier short. There probably is some "fear" involved. But most likely it is fear of reaction in Quebec and of the consequences here in

Ontario.

The big argument of those pressing for official status is that this would be a gesture towards the people of Quebec which would show them that Ontario was sympathetic.

But others with a more detached and knowledgeable view of Quebec today can see quite a different result.

They can see it regarded, and looked down on, as a strategy or trick by Ontario, particularly after it was handled by the Quebec press, to try and win French-Canadian favor and keep Quebec in confederation.

This, of course, could absolutely defeat the good intent — just make the situation worse.

Then there is the question of just what "official" status would mean. Nobody seems to have really gone into this, and particularly made any study of the practical consequences.

Would it, for example, mean that all Hansards and other official documents of the legislature have to be published in French as well as English? This would be a huge job.

And what else might have to be handled in French?

Nobody knows, and it seems likely nobody ever would know, the one certain thing would seem to be that there never could

be enough to satisfy francophones and that formal official status probably would open up a continuing mare's nest that could never be contained.

A world of apes

By GERRY LANDENBOROUGH

The world is running amuck folks. As a testimony to this we bring you potpourri, a tongue-in-cheek look at the antics of our fellow inmates on this wonderful wacky world we live upon.

Here's a little ditty from London, Ontario where these sweet little Brownies have gone wild. It seems the little darlings were at a pantomime theatre when the manager John Coe had to take over the ice cream and soft drink counter because his usherette was afraid of "the little horrors."

The problem occurred during intermission when they ran out of ice cream. "They went completely mad," Mr. Coe said. "Two little Brownies no more than nine years of age put the knee in and kicked me. They were backed up by a horde of hysterical children and I fell to the ground wrenching my back..."

Now, now, and, ask, ask, I always thought the motto was "lend a helping hand" not "put the boots to him."

Margaret Evans usherette said "These little horrors are quite unbelievable." Mob rule by little Brownies strikes London.

Elizabeth, New Jersey, is where John Ronzo had definite second thoughts about his up and coming wedding. He was dining with his betrothed and her parents in their home when he got up from the table went upstairs and set fire to his future brides wedding dress.

Unfortunately the fire spread causing \$23,000 in damage. Mr. Ronzo pleaded guilty to charges of arson. Needless to say the wedding has been cancelled. No doubt the bride's parents evidently found Mr. Ronzo just a little too hot to handle.

Here's a pip from San Francisco. Jayson Wechter had a rather unusual ambition in life.

"I always wanted to be able to tell my grandchildren that I hit a Watergate conspirator with a pie." And that's just what he did. As Charles Colson, a former Nixon White House aide, was entering the elevator in the fashionable Fairmont Hotel he was struck in the face with a chocolate cream pie thrown by Mr. Wechter. Colson and hotel officials declined to press charges. Wechter admitted he made up the story that he originally told officials "Jesus" came to me in a dream and told me I should smite him with a pie. Shades of Watergate, now what a real good story.

Montreal is our next stop where we sympathize with Montreal architect Norman Spatz. It seems that he was in the bank when hidden cameras photographed him during an armed robbery. The robber had stuck a gun in Mr. Spatz's back. Somehow the photograph sent to several Montreal newspapers showed only Spatz at the counter with his hands up and it didn't show the robber or the gun. Under the picture was the following: "A \$500 reward is offered to information leading to the capture of suspected bandits."

The entire mistake came to a head when a neighbor tried to arrest him for the \$500 reward. Picture the scene. "I know we've been friends for a long time Norman, but I never did like the way you barbequed steak so good neighbour you are under arrest. It's not the money, it's my duty but the \$500 will certainly come in handy."

Which just goes to show you to make sure the steaks are always right — because neighbours just aren't what they used to be." Away to San Diego now where we are about to look in on the bizarrest happening in a long time. Carol Louise Hargis was trying to kill her husband and eventually succeeded. Her methods, however, seemed rather unusual to say the least.

Some of her plots revealed during her trial for murder were: She and a girlfriend, Natha Depe, put LSD in his french toast; they served him blackberry pie containing venom from a tarantula; they placed several 38 calibre bullets in the carburetor of his truck; they tossed a live electrical cord into his shower; she and her friend injected air into his veins hoping to induce a heart attack.

The women finally killed Marine Sgt. David Hargis by dropping tranquilizers in his beer and beating him with a heavy weight while he slept. All for his \$10,000 insurance policy.

Can you believe it?

To Los Angeles now, where two children digging in a backyard came across what they believed to be the roof of a car just below the surface of the soil. Sgts. Joe Sabas and Lenny Carroll with a skip loader and some helpers with shovels uncovered a green 1974 Ferrari worth at least \$18,000. Just how the Ferrari came to be buried in the backyard is yet a mystery. The car was stolen from a man named Rosendo Cruz and the insurance company had reimbursed him. The car is reported to be in excellent condition but everyone is baffled by how it could be buried without attracting any attention. "It's not like planting cabbages," quipped Sgt. Sabas.

Well dear readers I must leave you now I have some work to do in the yard, of course with my luck I'll probably find just grass and weeds but I'll have everything ready for the cabbages then anyway.

Till next week — keep on smiling or digging as the case may be.

Federal-provincial conference leaves me confused

By STEWART MacLEOD
Ottawa Bureau
Of The Herald

By way of explanation, it wasn't that I was deathly ill or anything like that; it was just that the doctors decided that I had to remain in hospital during that period which happened to coincide with the great Canadian theatre production known as the federal-provincial economic summit conference.

And that was my undoing. It's had enough when you have to attend one of those federal-provincial picnics, but at least you are in a position to ask questions when you are overcome by confusion. But it's another matter when you are lying on your back in hospital, feeling some mysterious obligation to keep in touch with proceedings via that funny little television set that dangles over the bed.

To be honest, I probably would not have watched the conference except that the

alternatives were not particularly appealing. I had already seen that particular episode of Gilligan's Island. I've never developed a fascination for The Edge of Night, and the reception was lousy on the channel showing Polka Dot Door. Besides, when I caught glimpse of Energy Minister Alastair Gillespie standing before a huge blackboard wielding a pointer I thought the federal-provincial conference might offer some light comedy to soothe the bedsores.

WIIONG EFFECT

Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way. Far from being soothed, I found myself being feverish with confusion and frustration. By the time the conference ended I was unable to sleep, and three days after this the other patients began complaining about my babbling.

It wasn't the premature departure of Quebec Premier Rene Levesque that upset me. Various Quebec premiers have been

catching early flights from federal-provincial conferences since former premier Jean Lesage made a rather undignified departure from a Charlottetown meeting back in 1964.

However, I would like to know exactly how Levesque took his leave. Various commentators informed me that he "walked" out, that he "ran" out, that he "stomped" out and that he "stalked" out.

Bit of a gymnast perhaps. No, what bothered me a good deal more was Levesque's charge that the conference was "nothing but a pre-election manoeuvre... a pre-election extravaganza" sponsored by the federal Liberals.

It's not that I believe the federal Liberals are above such a ploy — Heaven knows I don't believe that — but I'll be darned if I can figure out how such a meeting could be considered an electoral coup. Would you, for instance, switch your vote just because Prime Minister Trudeau emerged from the

conference to say that "we have decided to do our best to help the economy recover?" Or would you move to the Tory camp because Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed announced that "we're all interested in the country and a continuation of it?"

And it was scarcely a turning point in history when Ontario Premier William Davis said that "I am not happy... but I think the conference accomplished a great deal."

Perhaps so, but in my weakened condition I was unable to put my finger on any of these great accomplishments. Even when I waded through all that rhetoric in the final communique I remained in a state of confusion over what had been achieved.

Surely it could not be that agreement that government spending should lag behind economic growth in the next few years. There hadn't been any apparent disagreement on that for years.

And I can't whip up much enthusiasm

over that general agreement by the provinces to support a federal objective of a 3.5 per cent inflation rate by 1981. Since no one said how this was to be achieved anyway why not subscribe to an objective of zero inflation?

Could it be that agreement to hold down the growth of the bureaucracy? Hardly, since there has been unanimous agreement on that since Lord Strathcona had to fill out five forms to get that last spike for the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. And I am certainly not going to get carried away by that agreement to wage a co-operative war on the spruce budworm.

But perhaps I shouldn't have looked for specific achievements since Trudeau said the main purpose of the gathering was to "create confidence from which jobs will flow." I don't know how it struck those Canadians who happened to be in an upright position, but for those of us on our backs there was certainly no inclination to take up our beds and walk.