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Property owners fight back

It would appear that property owners are starting to fight back against the high cost of local government. Californians last week called on government to reduce its costs by more than 50 per cent.

And while admittedly there is a mechanism in California for such a move, the fact that the electorate spoke in such a demanding tone won't be overlooked by other jurisdictions. Already there's talk of other states and possibly even some areas in Canada following suit.

Reform of property taxation is clearly a major concern everywhere. And while local government costs have been increasing, it would be the school boards which would suffer the biggest burden under any substantial reduction in funding.

So the question is really: If the taxpayer is seeking a reduction in property taxation and he wants the same level of service where will the money come from?

California governor Edmund Brown says there will be no new taxes raised to cover the loss of more than \$7 billion in property taxes. But it's already being predicted that hundreds of thousands of people will be forced out of government jobs, income taxes for the average home owner will increase (because taxes are deductible) and increasing state taxes to provide for the unemployed.

Maybe there's a moral in this entire affair that politicians should recognize and that is that the average homeowner can't continue to afford the cost of local government. One alternative that has not gained in recent times is the concept of income taxation

for local government. It boils down to a question of intrusion of higher levels of government into local affairs and at the same time searing the hell out of some local politicians because they would feel dependent upon what the provinces would do out.

The property tax situation in Ontario is relatively good. Most local governments, including town and region or county for that matter have held the line on costs relatively speaking. The problem is in the field of education where rapidly developing areas such as Halton require funding for new student populations, or the incorporation of new advances in teaching technology.

My earlier statement about boards of education becoming the brunt of any reduction in property taxes is illustrated by the fact that generally speaking education accounts for roughly half the amount a ratepayer finds payable at the bottom of his tax notice.

Complicating the situation in Ontario is the failure of the government to implement tax reforms promised for some time, and the present confused state of assessment across the province. There are places where assessment has been revised to market value, other places where revision is pending, and still others where no change in assessment on some properties has taken place since long before 1969.

City hall can be fought and beaten, but it is at the expense of local autonomy through reduced local fundraising and possibly higher taxes at the federal and provincial level.

It remains a no-win affair.

Rainy day tidbits from House of Commons

By STEWART MacLEOD
Ottawa Bureau
Of The Herald

Just a few tid-bits you might miss if you didn't spend a rainy afternoon reading the official record of the House of Commons.

Between 1964 and 1973, a total of 49,402 public servants took second-language training at government expense. Of these, 8,064 were trained to speak English and 41,338 were trained to speak French.

The cost of drilling a 10,000-foot oil well in the Beaufort Sea varies from \$35 million to \$50 million. Drilling a similar well in Alberta costs between \$750,000 and \$1 million.

Last year, it cost the government \$781,392 to provide security personnel to check passengers and baggage at Canadian airports.

During 1977, the tax on exported oil added about \$1.3 million a day to the government's coffers.

As of last January, the average processing time for initial applications to the Canadian Pension Commission was 207 days.

Since the Foreign Investment Review Agency was established, it has heard 466 applications for new business and 358 of these were allowed.

Since April, 1976, the department of employment and immigration has spent \$319,110,000 on entertainment. The bulk of this, \$206,000,000, was spent by the foreign service.

The government plans to spend about \$13 million this year on naval research.

A total of \$12,883,561 was spent last year

relocating government employees. Of the 10,360 relocations, 4,830 were inter-provincial and 32 were international.

The department of supply and services, which obviously doesn't like bare walls, spent \$13,371,000 last year renting works of art.

The department of public works last year gave work to 820 outside consultants, most of them in the architectural and engineering fields.

As of last Oct. 31, old-age security cheques were being mailed to 2,056,127 Canadians each month.

There are 400 different varieties of natural cheeses in the world. Canada manufactures 66 of these varieties and imports another 200. Cheddar Cheese is the most popular variety consumed in Canada with sales totalling 176,600,000 pounds. Next is Mozzarella at 41,100,000 pounds.

In the first nine months of last year, 22,114 males and 4,800 females applied for employment in the Canadian Armed Forces. The forces accepted 8,265 males and 1,295 females.

Since 1968, a total of 27 ministers have resigned from various Trudeau cabinets.

The National Capital Commission, which oversees the development of the Ottawa-Hull region, publishes everything in two languages, including a guide to the birds inhabiting the region. The English version says the cry of the black-capped chickadee is "chicka-dee-dee-dee." The French version credits the birds with saying "qui es-tu-tu-tu."

And there are 1,400 full-time employees on Parliament Hill.

Davis' faux pas

By DEREK NELSON
Queen's Park Bureau
Of The Herald

TORONTO — No matter how he tries, Premier Bill Davis is not going to adequately explain his actions here at Queen's Park over Bill 89.

That is the legislation introduced by Ottawa East Liberal Albert Roy that would have legally guaranteed French-language services by government to the six per cent of the Ontario population who are Francophone in origin.

Examples would be a visit from a social worker, or school classes, or a jury trial, or a health inspection.

It would not have made Ontario officially bilingual.

The decision on whether an area warranted French, and when it should receive it, would have been up to a Language Services Board.

The bill received unanimous support in the legislature, including verbal support from two cabinet ministers, before Davis in effect killed it by refusing to proceed with it.

REASONS

Why he stopped the legislation immediately became a matter for debate. Unity groups protested, and one federal minister claimed he was appealing to the anti-French backlash.

Their problem, and Davis' is that his motivations are complex, involving not just his political principles but an understanding of our parliamentary system.

After all, Davis agreed with the bill in principle and even said "the measures included are, to a large extent, consistent with the approach this government has taken in regard to French language policy."

In fact, "I regard today's vote as an

endorsement of our position," the premier said.

RESERVATION

The one objection he did have, and that expressed mildly, was against ensuring all French rights in law rather than by custom. Education and judicial rights are already statutory in nature, but social, municipal and health are not.

Opposition members claim the statutory framework has symbolic value, especially to federalized unity groups in Quebec; but Davis said he preferred the current route since it works "without any significant divisiveness" amongst people in Ontario.

French Canadian rights should be balanced with the rights and to a "certain extent the acceptance" of the general public, he said.

Equally or more important was another reason Davis gave, and it relates to how parliament operates.

PRIVATE BILL

Roy's bill is a private member's bill, in effect an opposition bill, and in a manner of such importance Davis felt "obviously the right route to go would be by way of a government bill."

The premier also alluded to the financial implications of the bill, and the sometimes-forgotten rule that private members' bills should not involve expenditure of money.

Letting the debate proceed even though he intended to veto the results was not unusual or an insult to the legislature (as NDP leader Mike Cassidy suggested), Davis said, noting the same procedure was used on another Liberal private member's bill that would have raised the drinking age to 19.

All quite logical, but it's doubtful unity groups and Quebecers will follow the Davis reasoning. Rather they'll concentrate on the death of the bill.



A trip back in time to the tender age of 23

By GERRY LANDSBOROUGH

Values are hard to change. It has always been my personal belief that anything that interfered with brain cells was strictly taboo. Being a writer I've always felt I needed whatever the good Lord gave me in the first place, and I've never felt I've had anything extra to spare. Drugs were out. No grass, very little booze and no smokes. No matter where you are in life you will always find people who are lesser and greater than you.

I've tried to follow the lives of successful people to learn the secret of a rewarding and successful career. One thing that has always stood out - no smoking - no drinking and definitely no drugs. This whole preamble is a warm up on the merits of marijuana and the general lifestyle (or lack of it) of today. Even Billy Graham has asked for the removal of "grass" from the criminal code. So many today are claiming that "a little pot" never hurt anyone. I'm not so sure. Grass is not physically addicting but it is psychologically - and this may be far more serious than anyone can imagine. At any rate the following poem is the result of my reminiscing back when I was young with some thought as to how I'd feel at 23 today.

A World Between
by
G. Landsborough

When I was a kid everyone played in the vacant lot
Not a neatly manicured park with "please don't pick the marigolds", but a "lot".
A magnificent hunk of field with grass waist high, complete with frogs and snakes and rabbits and wonderful smells, what a place.
The old lot.
There was probably perverts back then - but pollution was not.
Now the kid of today can't go to the park
For the perverts abound in daylight or dark

And the grass and the trees and the flowers are getting rare.
There's no tearing around there
Like in the old lot.

When I was a kid "two bits" took you off to the show.
The good guys wore white and the bad guys wore black - you could always tell - you'd just look at their hats.
The kids all ate popcorn, and shouted their hero on the right track.
Two bits - and a kid always came smiling back.
For the kid of today five dollars might get you a show.
The good guys and bad guys have blended to gray, and you can sit and watch a victim being chain sawed away -
The show is no longer a "great place" for a kid just to back.
No good guys ride off, and no kids to come smiling back.
No smites coming back.

When I was a kid fathers worked, and mothers stayed home all day.
Mothers made meals that cooked almost all of the day
But the kids had so much energy bubbling for play
The kid of today has a body that's old at fifteen,
The "eat on the run" fills the hole, but nutrition not seen
For moms have to work just to keep burgers on the table.
And the fathers work too.
For between them it takes two to pay off life long debts if they're able.
No raisins or apple pie "made by Mom"
Just a thing on a bun that you eat on the run
No wonder the young have no spunk for a thing called "work".
Kids of today are victims -
Victims that hurt.

When I was a kid booze was something that most kids tried
Behind an old barn or a shed where the folks couldn't spy
But "drugs" were something used only by horrible "dope fiends".
Sickly and slimy and lower than snakes, these "dope fiends".

The kid of today tried his "pot" between closed doors away from parents that pry.
It fogs up his mind so that life just floats right on by.
He just gives up the fight - whether wrong - whether right
It all fades to a world built on soft floating dreams.
"Have a joint" and nothing matters - or so it seems.
The kid of today is a victim of the "bureaucratic machine."
"Let us legalize pot so they won't have to think, only dream"

No one has to make plans, no honor no scheme.
"Let us legalize pot" they won't hear the babies cry or the old folks scream
All a dream
All a dream.

When I was a kid is a place we can no longer be
And the world has changed much since I was but twenty-three.
Prices have risen to beyond what the people can pay,
And "peace of mind" has slipped further and further away.

And the young they just trip out on grass, our youth finds it better that way,
And for this so called "freedom of youth",
What a price they pay
What a price they pay.

Looking through our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO

Good work of neighbors who formed a bucket brigade saved a barn from burning down on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Alex M. Hume, RR5, Milton, last Thursday evening. A fire, started by some children in a strawstack only two feet from the barn while the Humes

were away from home, might have resulted in tragedy had it not been discovered early.

Announcement was made on Monday of the allocation of the twenty-two Wartime Houses in Housing Project 2 at the foot of George Street by M.F. Meyers, district administrator for Central Mortgage and Housing which controls the houses for the government.

The official count of the June 7 election, as released by W.G. McDowell, Chief Returning Officer, shows that Stanley Hall, Progressives (Socialist Party), had a slim majority of 113 over his Liberal rival to return to Parliament for his third term. In 1945, his majority was 1071.

When setting the 1947 budget, the municipal council budgeted the sum of \$2,000 to be spent on major repairs to the Old Town Hall. The main repair work of replacing the windows, caulking the brick work, re-roofing the tower room and installing space for dual toilets was given to J.B. Mackenzie and Son; and this work was started during the summer months. The Georgetown Recreation Council said in its annual report.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Problem of whether to increase Georgetown's police force to seven was discussed at Monday's council meeting, with the question handed back again to the police committee for further investigation. Police chairman John Elliott said present population warrants

another man, based on the per thousand ratio which is the criterion.

Earlier in the meeting, Bernard Cassell, Windsor Road, had complained of vandalism by juveniles in his district and Coun. Elliott said this is another reason why the town needs extra protection. Maintaining the population ratio is the ultimate, he said, but with two-way radio, he feels the town is served adequately.

Mayor Jack Armstrong received a citation on behalf of the citizens of Georgetown at a luncheon at the Royal York Hotel on Tuesday, June 17. The citation was presented by the Ontario Safety League, at their seventh annual public safety luncheon. The award reads in part: "for the distinction of having, by united community effort, completed the year 1957 without a fatal traffic accident."

Three dams will conserve the Credit Rivers' greatest contribution to the valley, A.M. Greenaway, chairman of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, told visiting newspaper, radio and television men on Friday prior to taking off on a tour of the area under this body's control. Sites of the proposed dams to be built within the foreseeable future, are northwest of Orangeville, where the Credit begins, at a point southeast of Georgetown which for years has been

known to local residents as Hungry Hollow; and between the terraced walls of the deep valley which shelters Silver Creek, five miles due north of Georgetown.

TEN YEARS AGO

Despite her encounter with an armed robber, Mrs. Robert Crawford says she doesn't believe in buying guns for self-defense. The Hornby woman said she'd rather not provoke a violent man. A gun-toting youth barged into her general store here late Wednesday, June 5, and walked off with \$190. Before he left, he slugged a customer and Mrs. Crawford with the barrel of his 12-gauge shotgun. An Islington youth has been charged with armed robbery.

The 95 degrees recorded here Sunday is an all-time high for June 9 but still a long way off Georgetown's hottest spell, according to local weather watcher Roger Smith. Georgetown weather records go back to 1914 and in the 54 years since that time the peak temperatures were hit in 1938 when local people sweated for three consecutive days of 102 degrees weather which concluded on July 13 when the thermometer reached 103.

Lt. Col. R.P. Bourne of Georgetown, a member of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery, was recently promoted from major and given a key appointment to the office of the Privy Council.

the HERALD
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