

Citizens win in government's Cantrakon switch

Ontario's Minister of Housing, Claude Bennett has been forced to eat his words and we're glad.

In August of this year Mr. Bennett arbitrarily stepped over the heads of numerous levels of government and decided to permit the construction of the Cantrakon convention centre on the face of Niagara Escarpment in Caledon. Last month in the Legislature, despite growing protests against his decision, Mr. Bennett told the House his decision was "neither appealable or reversible."

Last Friday he was forced to eat crow and back down. Mr. Bennett is now in the process of organizing a meeting between Cantrakon, himself and the opponents of the proposed complex including members of the Caledon Ratepayers Association.

Mr. Bennett should have proposed the meeting at the beginning instead of playing dictator and acting in a manner that is not in the public good. The Ontario government is allegedly pledged to trying to preserve the Niagara Escarpment. It is a good policy and one worth pursuing. Yet if that is the case why did Mr. Bennett not even intend to consider alternatives to the escarpment site for Cantrakon before imposing his okay?

Had Mr. Bennett taken the time to ask he would have learned that Cantrakon Ltd., the developers of the project, are willing to consider alternate sites. They have recently stated this publicly.

With Mr. Bennett's hamfisted handling of the affair, it is little wonder that many members of the public have trouble accepting the authority and taking seriously the 'lower levels' of the provincial government. One would have thought that the recommendation of the highly touted Niagara Escarpment Commission, along with a report from the Town of Caledon planner, would have been enough to convince the

minister to at least act cautiously before ruling on the matter.

It did not.

However, there is an encouraging lesson that emerges from the Cantrakon affair. There is power in protest. Had the Caledon ratepayers and the majority of Ontario's conservation groups sat idly by while Mr. Bennett attempted to hand over the escarpment to developers, the project would have gone ahead. They didn't. Instead the various groups mounted an impressive campaign that included press conferences and news releases designed to let the public know of the minister's stupidity. And it worked.

The Cantrakon issue became such a hot potatoe that both opposition parties made a grand show of their opposition to the minister's action. At one point it looked like there might even be a vote of non-confidence in the government over the issue.

Why, the same Liberal Party of Ontario whose own member moved a motion last year that effectively would have dissolved the Niagara Escarpment Commission, found it politically expedient to portray themselves as champions of the escarpment and opponents of Cantrakon. It's amazing what a little well applied pressure can do.

The success of the Caledon Ratepayers Association et al should serve as an inspiration for Halton Hills organizations like the Interested Citizens Group and other grass roots organizations opposing the government foul-ups. Government's still have to be elected and, with self-preservation as their motivating force, they remain susceptible to public pressure. We hope other concerned citizens groups will be buoyed by the Cantrakon reversal and continue in their attempts to make the government hear what the people really want, no matter how much it hurts.

Five shopping days left before the municipal election

Only five more shopping days until the municipal election.

Shopping days? Sure, what else do you call the process of sizing up and evaluating the collection of candidates vying for Halton Hills municipal seats if it's not shopping?

It's a bit of a tradition for the local newspaper to make an appeal to local voters before the election to make sure they vote. Consider this that appeal.

It is an appeal that makes sense.

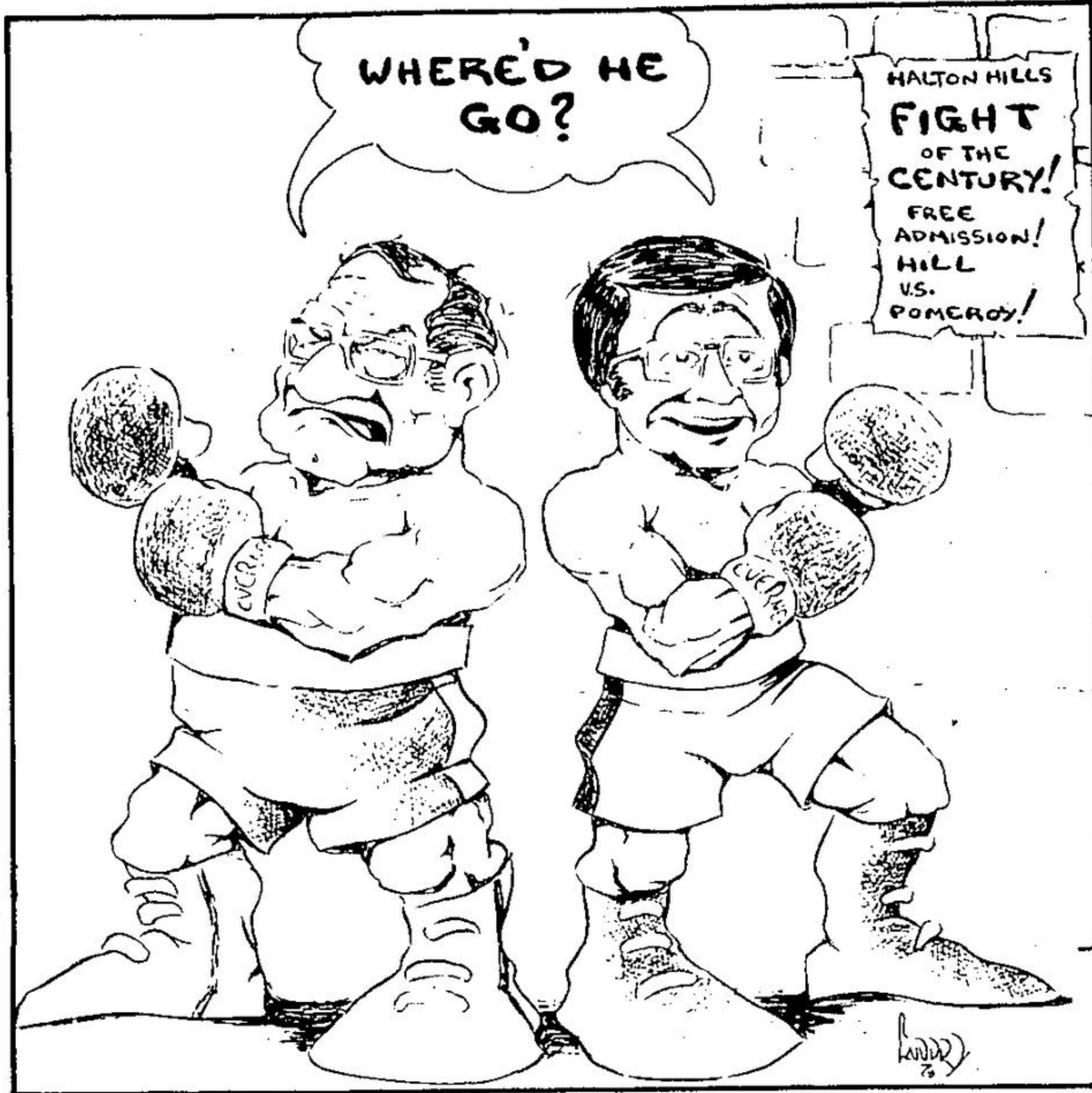
The dozens of people seeking municipal office in Halton Hills may not be household names to you yet but they should be. Collectively, on school board, town council and regional council these people will have a direct say in spending literally millions of dollars—your tax dollars. You should have a say in how this money is spent and who is making the decisions. The only way you can have that say is to vote on Monday.

It was encouraging to see a large turnout at last week's advance poll. We hope this bodes well for the election day turnout and means there will be a high vote.

Certainly, the way the weather has been lately the provincial legislators who moved municipal election day from December to its second Monday in November spot look like geniuses. It looks like no one will be able to say they were unable to make it to the polls because of bad weather—we hope. Let's hope the good weather keeps up.

Voters who do anticipate having trouble making it to the polls on Monday should call their favorite candidate. We're sure the candidates will be able to find a way to get you to the polls if they think they will be losing a vote.

We at The Herald will do our part to see you get the best possible election results coverage in next week's paper. Now let's hope the voters do their part by voting—and giving us an election.



Trudeau must release documents or else lose substantial credibility



Ottawa Bureau Of The Herald

Prime Minister Trudeau makes a good point when he says the wheels of justice—in this case the McDonald Royal Commission into the RCMP—should be allowed to turn a full cycle before anyone jumps to conclusions, but in the meantime his government should start greasing that wheel.

Rightly or wrongly, many have the impression that the government prefers glue to grease. And if this impression is going to be changed before all ministerial credibility is destroyed, the prime minister has little time to lose in unsticking controversial documents.

It's fine for him to declare, as he has, that "the McDonald commission was given everything it asked for," but the fact remains that government lawyers have objected to certain documents being released at the hearings. And these documents, it seems, will reveal just how much certain ministers knew about illegal RCMP activities.

According to former RCMP commissioner William Higgett, the ministers knew more than they indicated. A serious contradiction exists.

Higgett startled the commission with his testimony that he recalled telling former solicitors-general George McNeil and Jean-Pierre Goyer that the Mounties were opening mail illegally. The ministers had earlier denied such knowledge. And "in all conscience," the ex-commissioner believes he gave former minister Warren Allmand the same information.

Allmand says he didn't. Among other things, Higgett says it is "absolutely inconceivable" that he did not

tell Goyer about the RCMP break-in at the Agence de Press Libre in 1972. Goyer had said he didn't know about this.

All in all, it was fairly damning testimony from the 36-year veteran of the RCMP.

And when a storm erupted in the Commons, the prime minister appealed for patience. "Let us at least have the elementary fairness not to condemn one side until we have heard the other side." But then, just two days later, lawyers for the RCMP stumped the commission by asking permission to table documents which, they said, supported Higgett's allegations of ministerial knowledge.

Lawyers for the government were indignant. They even said the RCMP, which is the government's own police force, was improperly in possession of the cabinet documents in question. And after an all-day legal fight, 13 documents were entered as exhibits for identification purposes—they weren't made public—and another four documents were held back for the time being, at least.

QUESTIONS ASKED

When government lawyers devote an entire day arguing against the publication of documents which relate to ministerial knowledge, or lack of it, about illegal activities, it's little wonder that the public begins to ask questions. Perhaps, as the government's lawyers maintain, it is simply a case of preventing publication until cabinet, which had been taken by surprise, had time to see the documents involved.

"The documents were sprung on the commission," Trudeau said, "obviously there couldn't be instructions from the government" to conceal them.

That makes sense, but given the sensitivity of the subject matter, and given the controversy that has swirled around solicitors-general for the last two years about illegal RCMP activities and ministerial responsibility, you can scarcely blame anyone for wondering just what's going on. And we can regret that earlier government ill-handled declaration that it, and not the

McDonald commission, would decide what should be made public.

At the very least, it seems fair to say the government has never appeared particularly enthusiastic about proceedings at the commission hearing, but with Higgett's sensational sentences, this impression must be changed. With ministerial integrity now the central issue, neither the opposition nor the public are likely to wait patiently for the commission's findings.

Letter to the editor Develop escarpment

To the editor of The Herald: One would think that God created the Escarpment only for naturalists, hikers and nature lovers well paid city journalists like Hugh Windsor of the Globe, city elitists, left wing academics and followers.

As usual these vocal and abusive groups seldom consider the ordinary citizens—the unskilled workers the manual workers, the truck drivers, the skilled carpenters and stone masons and the multitude of small family businesses. These are the people who would benefit by convention centres, hotels and etc. in the Escarpment. They would benefit greatly to local communities and their citizens. Architecturally they could be designed to blend into the scene and actually improve it.

A great cross section of Canadians and foreign visitors could enjoy the Escarpment as opposed to the few self centred groups that can use it now. The worthy cause of the environment and its protection has been misused by pressure groups throughout Canada, U.S., etc. for selfish and ulterior motives. One result is the accelerating rate of inflation and high unemployment—a real contributing factor.

C. C. Hillmer
Oakville
Ont.

Constitutional story like a ship, becalmed and barnacled for years



Queen's Park Bureau Of The Herald

OTTAWA — Constitutional history in this country is a little like an old-time sailing ship. For years it has been becalmed, accumulating barnacles, drifting with the currents of change (caused by war and expansion of social programs) towards a federal shore.

Now, at last, the protesting crew of provincial premiers have convinced the captain to raise the sails and risk tacking into the wind.

So slowly, creaking a little with age, the good ship Canada is changing direction towards provincial land on the horizon. It's all very fragile and tentative, and one

major storm could probably sink the whole process. But a start has been made.

Some long-time observers of federal-provincial conferences seem impressed with this mini-victory at the meeting just concluded here. Others remain doubtful.

LOGLAM BROKEN

The optimists really see it as psychological triumph, in that for the first time in years there is an impression of movement, that the constitutional logjam has been broken, that the federal government has finally become flexible.

Pessimists like Alberta's Premier Peter Lougheed remain convinced the federal shift is more form than substance, and that Ottawa has riddled everything it agreed on with qualifications and conditions.

Basically Ontario is attempting to define a proper balance of powers, trying to transfer enough authority to the provinces to satisfy their aspirations without at the same time emasculating Ottawa's ability to direct the country.

Whether everybody else is working on the same premise is questionable, and in Quebec's case there's not even any doubt.

But at least there are individual items to be resolved in the months before the first ministers meet again in February. And that's a change from the past.

FEDERAL LIMITS

Few of them are of the kind that will excite the man on the street and send him to the barricades, although some Westerners might disagree on the matter of resource development and control, and Easterners on fisheries.

Halton's History

From the Herald's files

Newman resigns

THIRTY YEARS AGO — Hal Newman, Recreational Director for the town of Georgetown since April 15, 1946, resigned his position at a meeting of the Recreational Council last Thursday. Mr. Newman said in his resignation he would remain in his position until December 31 in order that the GRC hockey schedule might be organized and that the Recreational Council would have ample time in which to fill the position. He is resigning, he said, because it has been impossible to carry out a complete recreational program with so many facilities lacking and he feels the position of recreational director is not justified unless more than sports can be undertaken.

With appropriate ceremonies the new Esqueping Township Community Hall and township building was opened at Stewarttown last Wednesday evening, with J.A. Carroll of the Department of Agriculture among the chief speakers. Reeve George Cleave was chairman and called on several prominent citizens to say a few words.

Cleave's purchase

TWENTY YEARS AGO — A large tract of land in the park district, purchased from Harold Cleave, will be the site of the new Georgetown District Hospital. The hospital board has recently completed negotiations with Mr. Cleave for part of his farm at the end of Princess Ann Drive, a new street created by erection of the Park Public School. The land is in Esqueping Township, bordering town limits.

Approval of a \$100,000 boost in cost of high school extensions in the three North Halton towns was given Monday by Georgetown council. Local board member Fred Masterman explained that costs had risen since the original estimates were made for building additions at Georgetown, Acton and Milton schools, and the amount which will be debentured by the county now must be \$1,145,000.

Poorly disguised as the traditional practical joke, vandalism crept into the Halloween celebrations locally and caused wilful damage which when tabulated will approach the \$1,000 mark.

Most of the thirty-one calls which flooded the police office Halloween night were concerned with the anticipated minor prank. However in at least six instances, the annual antics crossed the "fun" line. In the park district, the new Scotch lite street signs disappeared from many of the corners, while the most serious damage was perpetrated at the Hunter Real Estate office where a \$500 window was smashed with an ink bottle.

Over \$500 has been collected to date by Fred Hue, who established a Georgetown branch of the Springhill disaster fund soon after the tragic news of the mine disaster became known.

Three dollars in change, collected towards the purchase of school crests, was all that was taken in break-ins at both Wigglesworth and Harrison Public Schools over the weekend.

Booby-traps

TEN YEARS AGO — At least four booby-trapped apples turned up in the collection bags of Georgetown trick-or-treaters last week. Georgetown police said one contained a razor blade, another had been loaded with needles, and another two had concealed straight pins. "Anyone who would do such a thing has to be mentally unbalanced," Chief Harley Lowe commented. "Fortunately none of the youngsters who received the apples were seriously cut."

For many people in Acton one night last week, UFO's suddenly became very real. One was sighted high in the sky flashing red light and blue lights. Several people observed the object through binoculars and phoned others to take a look.

The first planning board in the history of Esqueping was appointed at Monday's council meeting. Having been informed by the Department of Municipal Affairs that Esqueping was designated a planning area back in 1957, council was then free to appoint the board.

With Reeve Hunter intimating that he thinks a consultant's recommendations for residential building land release to Brumac do not give Georgetown enough, and Mayor Gibbons with ruffled feelings after an exchange of words with a consultant at a meeting two weeks ago, it seems doubtful if any immediate decision is in the offing on the question. Following a request from the Brumac firm this spring to allow large-scale building on land originally owned by Delrex Developments, council engaged Municipal Planning Consultants to recommend what the town should receive.

An accident which resulted in \$800 property damage and a minor injury to a car passenger was caused by an egg October 31. Police said a Halloween grenade hit the windshield of a car driven by John H. Graff near the corner of Guelph and Queen Streets, causing the driver to be distracted long enough for the collision to occur.

Official plan

ONE YEAR AGO — A historic milestone in the brief history of Halton region was passed last Tuesday with the release of volume one of a draft of the region's first official plan. Three years in the making, the 100-page document contains 252 policies to guide development of the region to the year 2001. Volume two of the draft will be released this week. It will contain information on how the plan is to be implemented and definitions.

The banning from schools in Halton of a federal government pamphlet on birth control and abortion is not a "cause celebre" nor a means of having a debate on the pros and cons of abortion, says Milton Separate School trustee John Bradley. The board withdrew the pamphlet after trustee Bradley pointed out that it incorrectly referred to the Criminal Code's relationship to abortion — none, he said, — and the use of outdated statistics.

Two Acton boys failed in a valiant attempt to make their claim to fame in the Guinness Book of World Records last Saturday. Mike Ashley and Glen Van Rijk tried to crawl their way from Acton to Georgetown and on into the Guinness Book of World Records for crawling over 10 miles. But serious knee blisters after seven miles of the crawl-a-thon, had been completed led the boys to call off the attempt.

the HERALD
A DIVISION OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS COMPANY LTD.
103 MAIN ST. SOUTH, GEORGETOWN, L7G 3E5
WILLIAM EVDOKIMOFF
Publisher & General Manager
MICHAEL HOLLETT
Managing Editor
ED PEARCE
Advertising Sales Manager
Phone 877-2201
Second Class Mail Registered No. 923

AN AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Advertising is accepted on the condition that the advertiser agrees that the publisher shall not be liable for damages arising out of errors in advertisements beyond the amount paid for the space actually occupied by that portion of the advertisement in which the error occurred, whether such error is due to the negligence of the publisher or otherwise. There shall be no liability for non-acceptance of any advertisement beyond the amount paid for such advertisement.

National Advertising Office
100 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ont.
140 CANACON ST., MONTREAL, P. Q.