

Province was short-sighted

While it's premature to breathe a collective sigh of relief at this point, we share the feelings of impending release which directors of the Halton Children's Aid Society must now be experiencing.

A ministry of health decision is expected shortly concerning a special committee's report, released last week, which concluded that the relatively large workload and the relatively low servicing costs associated with the Halton Society warrant special funding attention from the province.

The importance of the committee's findings cannot be underestimated: facing an enormous increase in its caseload and continuing cutbacks in programme funding because of Ontario's much-touted financial constraints the Halton CAS launched a courageous and righteous struggle for additional funds early last year.

During the course of 1979, the province's failure to meet the society's financial needs and its apparent lack of sympathy over the critical situation at hand could only be interpreted as a ministry failure to fully appreciate the work of such community services. Elsewhere, regional societies were encountering public criticism because of unfortunate problems which arose in specific cases; Halton's CAS got a kick in the butt in spite of its clean record and uninterrupted high standards of service.

The work of any Children's Aid Society in making sure our youngsters and teenagers are receiving the care and understanding which is rightfully theirs is yet another instance of

public service being provided to a community which rarely shows sufficient gratitude.

Financing problems are all too common during the current recession, particularly among community organizations and health services, and because economic hardship is something we're all confronting on a daily basis, these causes are frequently allotted a low priority when it comes to public assistance.

It's without a doubt one of the great tragedies of our times.

It's also one of the great ironies of our day when the local Children's Aid Society was forced to devote the bulk of its administrative efforts during the International Year of the Child to simply making ends meet. CAS directors had some fine schemes in mind late in 1978 for new, innovative programmes which held much promise for young people with special problems: for the most part, no doubt, those ideas are on a shelf in some storage closet.

So we join the Halton CAS in awaiting the all-important ministry decision on an investigative report which points to the third highest caseload and the lowest per capita cost in Ontario and concludes that the Halton CAS deserves better than most. We couldn't agree more.

If its recommendations are accepted at Queen's Park, the report could provide the society with roughly \$180,000 which it did not have before, reducing its final deficit to only \$20,000.

That should put smiles on some of the youthful faces left downcast during 1979.

MP's wage hike is election issue

Meanwhile, in the nation's capital, civil servants go about their jobs as if nothing were happening government-wise, tacking yet another seven per cent increase onto each and every MP's salary and thus propagating the sense of injustice shared by newspaper readers everywhere.

While it's not entirely fair to criticize the annual pay hike granted automatically to Ottawa politicians in light of financial hardships bestowed by the provincial government upon many, deserving recipients, Ottawa and Queen's Park are inextricably interwoven when it comes to furthering the conspiracy of the expanding paycheque.

Again this year, we are so incensed over the automatic salary increase for MP's that we suggest it should become a true election issue between now and February 18, rather than being cast aside by promise-ridden candidates as a non-issue beyond their personal control.

Certainly, energy and economics are far more pressing issues deserving of the politicians' and voters' attention, but "small" items like an annual seven per cent hike tied to an indexed pension play a devastatingly large role in the overall scheme of things.

Just ask John Crosbie, who added a whole new meaning and range to the Chretien Crunch, ostensibly in the interest of the Canadian economy, with dire warnings for consumers to tighten their belts even further or else load up the dory ready for when the whole ship goes down.

With a twinkle in his eye, the finance minister predicted disaster for all unless we batten down the hatches, but he knew even the Tory backbenchers would be comfortable with their \$44,000 plus per year and the skipper, Joe, could somehow make do with his \$84,500.

The indexed pension, of course, is the real stinger, defended by some as a fitting reward for those who have served their country's Parliament with honor and integrity (!), attacked by others as legalized theft. The situation faced by Donald McDonald, former Liberal finance chief, has been raised as one alarming example: retired from politics at 45, Big Mac stands to see his annual pension rise from \$13,000 annually to \$145,000 per year if he manages to reach 80.

Some future for the people in charge of a nation whose own future, economically and politically, is one big question mark.

Jitterbugs?

Our congratulations and best wishes to Jake's Disco and Dining Lounge for its commendable efforts thus far in organizing the charity dance-athon slated for this weekend.

Businessmen, professional people and service groups have banded together to support the massive, three-day fund-raising event which will see dozens of dancers donating their time, energy and shoe leather in the interest of providing Georgetown Memorial Hospital with a fetal heart monitor, a rather expensive piece of equipment of great assistance to physicians engaged

in pre-natal care.

A far cry from the crowded, commercial, "yowzah, yowzah" dance marathons of the Depression Era, Jake's dance-athon promises to bring together many community-minded and fun-loving swingers, toe-tappers, fox-trotters and maybe even the occasional devotee of the jitter-bug craze.

Should be quite a show, and one which some proud parents can one day recall for the benefit of their children, whose development during the all-important pre-natal stage perhaps derived enormous benefit from some kid who cut a rug for charity.



Trudeau's return to lead Grits was 'most difficult decision'



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau Of The Herald

I don't know how Pierre Elliot Trudeau really felt as he sat there, the glare of television lights streaming down on him, to tell a waiting nation that he had responded to the draft and would lead the Liberal party into the Feb. 18 general election.

But I believed him when he said he has just made "the single most difficult personal decision I have ever made."

He showed it. His carved face, with its pouches giving off shadows appeared weary. Occasionally his eyes would give off a burst of determination, but generally showed the effects of four days of agonized soul-searching. He would get his teeth for a few moments and announce that "I will serve with all my energy, with all my ability," and a few minutes later he would appear to be blaming his caucus for his present predicament.

"The caucus drafted me and they better deliver," was one comment, perhaps intended in semi-jest.

To me at least, his announcement came as a surprise. By the time his press

conference was announced Tuesday morning I was convinced that the former prime minister would resist the draft movement and stick by his decision to retire to Montreal with his three children.

MANY PROBLEMS

Sure his departure would have created some havoc, such as getting around some sticky constitutional problems to hold a leadership convention within a month. But these difficulties were not insurmountable—so long as it wasn't called a "leadership convention" it would be easy enough to hold a "meeting to select a new leader"—and I fully expected Mr. Trudeau to thank his supporters for their support and then carry on with his original plan.

It's not as though he faces a certain victory. The party is not in the best of shape, it was rejected by the people seven months ago, the leader's personal popularity is zilch in the West, the rebuilding process hasn't begun, the Liberals are low on innovative policies, the party's bank account is not exactly bulging, and top-flight candidates are not tripping over each other looking for nominations. Why you might ask, would Mr. Trudeau want to go through the horrors of a winter campaign with so many dubious factors facing him?

The draft movement could not have been that irresistible. It took caucus all day to decide it unanimously supported its leader. And as for the party's national council, it had little choice but to concur, the alternative being a serious rift. Anyway, draft movements can be interpreted as standing ovations, given as going-away presents.

The federal caucus contains, for lack of a better expression, a generous assort-

ment of draft dodgers.

HEAVY ARGUMENTS

Mr. Trudeau would know this. He would know that the controversial torpedoing of the government last week had thrown the Liberals into an unmerciful tizzy and that the internal agony over leadership was still burning. And he must realize that cracks of disunity can appear at any moment.

The weight of argument brought to bear on him must have been immense. Perhaps he was being held responsible for the defeat of the government and was told to pay the full price. Perhaps he was genuinely moved by the argument that he owed this to his country. Perhaps he feels it's his patriotic duty to defeat a Tory government, which he says, "has been doing terrible things for Canada."

I don't know. But I did believe him when he said "my strongest dream was to leave politics and raise my family in Montreal."

At this surprising change-of-mind news conference, Mr. Trudeau tried to look bouncy and enthusiastic as he announced that "we will carry to every corner of Canada the message of Tory failure." He said he was looking forward to the battle.

But, somehow, I got the idea that if he faced last week's vote again, he might have done things differently. One clue to this was his comment that, "I didn't realize one of the answers to the disarray would be to draft me."

Without knowing his inner feelings or prejudging the coming campaign, I did experience a surge of sympathy for the man. What a difference from his pre-election news conference of 1968 when no one doubted his breezy nonchalance. "I am anxious to get into the campaign," he said then. "It should be fun."

Needless clashes in Legislature

may indicate spring election



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau Of The Herald

A political nose scenting the air around here might be forgiven for smelling a provincial election next spring.

Proof there isn't, mind you, and a lot of arguments against just such a course, but one has to wonder.

The House was testy this fall, with much needless disagreement and personality clashes. It is as though the place was wearing on the members.

In particular there was a shrill edge to some of Opposition Leader Stuart Smith's questions and reactions during the sitting. The frustration of not being able to seriously dent Premier William Davis' political armor for the past year appears to be telling on Smith.

On energy, which was the major policy question MPPs faced, Smith could not find a way to flank Davis so as to make the premier look bad on the topic.

NEITHER ONE

Davis coolly covered all the angles, not only arguing against price rises that hurt the Ontario economy but also demanding a revision by Ottawa and Alberta of existing oil revenue flows.

Neither Smith, nor NDP leader Michael Cassidy for that matter, was ever able to

carve out a distinct and separate position from the premier.

And Smith's attempts to do so appear to have provoked a Davis mean streak, as the man has often gone after Smith the person rather than his policies during question period.

Davis' annoyance with Smith can't help but contribute to the premier's latent desire to hold an election so he can reclaim the majority government denied him in 1975 and 1977.

MAKE ISSUE

He has promised no election until 1981, which would be the end of a "normal" four-year term. But no one believes he would hold back prior to then if he could just find an issue.

And there's the rub. Could he manufacture one this spring out of the sovereignty-association referendum in Quebec and the need for Ontario to speak with a strong voice?

Or is there some other issue he can manipulate so as the electorate faces a clear choice?

SMITH TON

Meanwhile one rumor about the Liberals says Smith was thinking of forcing a confrontation over environmental rights in the spring.

That, or similar approach such as opposing Darlington nuclear power station, would likely draw NDP support for dumping the government.

And NDP don't appear terribly worried. What they call the collapse of medicare because of budget restraint and doctors billing above OHIP rates is scoring them political points across the province, they believe.

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO—Mayor Harold Cleave, in his inaugural address to council, forecast a policy of strict economy in town affairs, and said that the half-million dollar budget put a debt of 35 per cent on the assessed value of property in town and that we "should pause in the orgy of expenditures that have recently been made and put our house in order."

Norman Brown, a former town councillor, is possessor of the first motor licence issued by the licence bureau which opened here the first of the year. Mr. Brown has licence 28651, first of the local allocation which runs up to 29999. Strictly speaking, this is not the first licence issued in Georgetown, for several years ago it was the custom for an office to be opened one day each year by the Ontario Motor League for the sale of licences.

Quite a sudden drop in the temperature we had on Saturday night. The thermometer reading of 16 below zero on Sunday morning showed the coldest for this winter, and was a drop of 52 degrees over the previous Sunday. The seven inches of snow we had looks more seasonal, but will it last?

TWENTY YEARS AGO—John Gunn, president of the board of directors of the Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital Association recently announced the launching of a fund to raise roughly \$1 million for a new hospital in Georgetown. In addition to grants anticipated from federal, provincial and county governments, which are expected to total \$310,000. The board hopes to raise \$250,000 from public sources.

A Glen Williams family is homeless as the result of a flash fire that completely gutted their two-room house near the outskirts of town Friday. Ousted by the blaze are Mr. and Mrs. Ern Thompson and their five children. The small oil space heater which was blamed for the blaze exploded Friday afternoon while Mrs. Thompson was at home with her two youngest children and her mother.

GOLF CLUB OPENS

The familiar satisfying "click" of rock colliding against rock, a sound long absent from the ears of local curlers, was revived here last weekend, when the new North Halton Golf and Curling Club opened to curlers.

The highest volume of Christmas cards ever to pass through the local post office, some 44,000, were handled during the recent mail rush by local staffers. Twenty-eight extra helpers were added to the regular staff of 17 to share the work.

From the Herald's classified columns: This five-room modern bungalow has a large kitchen with plenty of cupboard space. Living room, picture window, four-piece bath, three bedrooms, full basement, oil-heated. Aluminum storms and screens, close to factories. Now vacant. One easy mortgage on back balance. Full price, \$9,700.

TEN YEARS AGO—A Georgetown Transportation Company school bus was hit from behind by a fully-loaded 15-ton gravel truck Friday, causing an accident moment for 16 school children ranging in age from five to thirteen. The accident occurred as the Georgetown bus, which had just deposited six children on the west side of Highway 10 south of Caledon Sideroad 5, began moving slowly. It travelled about 30 feet, its lights still flashing when it was hit.

On a 13 to 1 vote, Reeve Alan Day of Oakville became the warden of Halton County Tuesday afternoon with Deputy-Reeve Ted Tyler of Acton receiving the solitary vote. Garfield Brown, clerk-administrator, acting as chairman of the election, reminded council that in any event, the coming of regional government would make this the last election for warden. The first warden was elected in 1853.

The stork bypassed Georgetown for the first five days of the New Year. It wasn't until 5:20 p.m., January 5, that he arrived, bringing a little daughter for Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Rodgers, 64 Main Street South.

GLEN WATER

The Ontario Water Resources Commission has announced that the contract has been awarded to G. Hart and Son of Fenelon Falls for test drilling for water system to serve the Glen Williams area. Design reports for a complete water supply and distribution system for the Glen as well as a sewage collection system were ordered by the OWRC last May.

Georgetown is a soundstage for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation again, but this time without the falshy pseudonym of Moose Falls. A CBC camera crew has been filming and several actors have been emoting through the town for the past week, and will continue until about Tuesday, when the film drama they're working on, entitled "Postcard", is in the can.

ONE YEAR AGO—The Ontario Municipal Board has heard more than 16 witnesses during seven days of testimony at the Gordon Alcott Arena in Georgetown into Ontario Hydro's proposed 500,000-volt hydro corridor through Halton Hills and all sides are expected to conclude their cases at today's session of the hearings.

Town council has abolished its recreation advisory committee after five years of operation that witnessed stormy confrontations between committee members and councillors. The decision was made during a closed-door session of council in which appointments were made to four other local boards and committees.

Dire warnings from staff members about the future of the Niagara Escarpment have prompted the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) to delay a decision on a proposal that would see the NEC's planning control area reduced by more than one-sixth of its present size.

Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett was elected chairman of the Halton Regional Police Commission Thursday. Mayor Barrett has been acting chairman since the termination of Burlington lawyer William Hourigan's appointment at the end of October. Glenn Magnuson, a provincial appointee from Georgetown, was appointed vice-chairman.

the HERALD
A DIVISION OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS COMPANY LIMITED
103 Main St. South, Georgetown, L7G-3E5
WILLIAM EVDOKIMOFF
Publisher & General Manager
PAUL DORSEY
Managing Editor
Phone 877-2201
Second Class Mail Registered No. 0943

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