

Unity issue won't be solved by rhetoric

A serious question of nationwide importance is being brought before the homeowners of Halton Hills this week through the town's hydroelectric commission, whose billing system has been temporarily tapped by the Ontario Federation for Canadian Unity to help distribute a "pro-unity" petition.

Commendable for their basic intention and acceptable enough for their content, the computer-size petition forms - a message "to the people of Quebec" - nevertheless fall short of carrying the true significance of national unity across to the many Quebecois planning to vote "yes" in their province's sovereignty-association referendum this spring.

The problem is in the petition author's choice of words: Instead of trying to persuade provincially-minded Quebecers that Confederation offers them the better social and economic options, the Ontario Federation resorts to emotional rhetoric worthy of the dullest and least sincere political speech-maker.

Like the populist propaganda of its federal counterpart, literature distributed by the Ontario Unity Federation appeals not to the average Quebecois, who in many cases has been educated about Confederation's flaws by years of treatment as a second-class citizen, but to the average Ontario, still basically unaware of Ottawa's well-documented shortcomings in the field of inter-government relations.

Thus, pro-unity lobbyists woo the rest of Canada's "votes" by offering, on the nation's behalf, to "reach across to Quebec members of our family and ask with full hearts and clear heads...to remain with us and continue to build together a more magnificent Canada".

Red Cross dedicated to our community

When the Red Cross calls itself a "friend for life", it's not just an empty slogan, but a reflection of the commitment the Red Cross has to this community.

We see that commitment to the relief of human suffering every day. Youngsters learn the basics of safety through Red Cross programs. Senior citizens regain their physical fitness and joy in living with the help of Red Cross instructors. Veterans learn arts and crafts and enjoy the company of Red Cross volunteers. Experienced Red Cross relief workers respond immediately in time of disaster. Blood, collected and processed by the Red Cross,

Elsewhere, the petition text evokes the Spirit of '67, notes that our politicians and media can't always be trusted to say what's right, acknowledges Canada's bi-cultural heritage and certain integral divisions between provinces and points out the importance of putting up a united front in the global theatre.

All of which is fine, patriotic stuff for classrooms and federalists, but none of which is significantly relevant to the Quebec population, particularly outside Montreal.

In similarly emotional language, a handful of Quebec residents explained some of confederation's economic and social problems in the past Saturday Star's Insight section. Interestingly, the North Shore spokesmen placed much optimism in Quebec's separate future because of the province's abundant natural resources.

And not coincidentally, the Unity petition mentions natural resources, too, but in the national sense. What our Quebec neighbors need to hear from the rest of Canada, in the interest of national unity, is exactly how we intend to amend our Constitution and change our attitudes to bring their lifestyles, incomes and expectations for the future into line with Canada's common average.

A New Deal must be forged of legislation, not simply words. While it probably doesn't worsen the situation, hollow rhetoric of the kind being proposed to us now cannot help Canadians decide what sacrifices must be made to keep the country united.

The real problems facing a majority of Quebecers deserve real answers, full of detailed proposals for lasting solutions as complex as this complicated situation warrants.

Snow is essential to the natural world

For most of Ontario, this has been a winter of little snow, to the chagrin of skiers. But for the natural world, the influence of snow cover is also very important.

One of the first serious looks at the ecological importance of snow came from a Russian scientist named Formozov in the 1940's. He grouped wildlife into three types - "chionophobes," who avoid snow by migrating southwards; "chionophores," such as moose, fox, and mice, who can tolerate snowy winters; and "chionophiles," or snow-lovers, such as the snowshoe hare and ptarmigan that actively adapt to a snowy environment. Perhaps Formozov was ahead of his time - his labels sound like something from pop psychology that you could apply to your neighbours.

A blanket of snow is aptly named. Its insulating value ensures that even when winter air temperatures fluctuate wildly, climate beneath the snow remains stable at just below freezing. In this sheltered world, the secret communities of woodland mice, voles and shrews tunnel their way from one grassy tussock to another, safe from both winter storms and searching owls.

Ironically, the importance of snow was realized partly through studies on the effects of snowmobiles. These machines compact the snow, often making it too dense for small mammals to tunnel through, and allowing cold temperatures to penetrate. In areas of heavy snowmobile usage, high mortality of both snow-loving animals and wintering plants can result.

In a mild and snowless winter such as this, that shelter is missing, and the continuous freeze-thaw cycle robs forage vegetation of its nutrition. If these conditions persist, the populations of these small mammals suffer. Some researchers have suggested that the regular population explosions and declines of mice and other small mammals are closely related to the previous year's snow conditions. Because these communities are at the base of the food chain, the populations of foxes, coyotes, hawks and owls also tend to fluctuate in step with their prey.

For deer and moose, little snow means an easy winter. But for those tiny unelated engineers of the forest floor, just the opposite is true. For them, "thinking snow" is a matter of survival.



Trudeau's cabinet-making has the reporters confused



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

I have no inside information on the matter, but I have this recurring vision of Prime Minister Trudeau, with his feet on his desk and a glorious grin on his face, rifling through newspapers to learn all about those Machiavellian motives that went into his cabinet-making.

I can almost hear the snorts of laughter.

Within hours of the swearing-in ceremonies, the born-again prime minister could read that he carefully selected a left-leaning cabinet, that he selected members to give Quebec extra clout, that his cabinet was designed to punish the West for voting Tory, that he left out certain veterans because of their ill-advice, that he displayed great imagination, that he favored the same old gang, that he struck a pretty good balance, and that he was preoccupied with economic nationalism.

He has been credited with "striking a good geographic balance," and he has been complimented for ignoring traditional geographic balances and

appointing ministers from three adjoining ridings in the Windsor area.

THREE CHOICES

If the prime minister reads on, he will learn through various editorial writers and columnists that the biggest surprise was the appointment of Mark MacGuigan as minister of external affairs. Or he will read that the appointment was an obvious reward for Mr. MacGuigan's years of valued service to constitutional reform. Or, as a third choice, he can read that the MacGuigan appointment means that "Trudeau intends to handle foreign affairs himself."

One Toronto newspaper will inform the prime minister that he bypassed former minister John Reid and Judd Buchanan for "privately counselling the party against Mr. Trudeau's staying on as leader at the time of the Conservative defeat."

And if he doesn't like this reasoning, the prime minister can be assured by a syndicated columnist that "out went John Reid for admitting that under the Liberals, gasoline might be as expensive as under the Tories."

While one newspaper credits Mr. Trudeau with "some first-rate new choices," another columnist has decided "it's the same old bunch." He will also see that he has done "a fair job" of matching names with portfolios, while another writer decides some of the appointments are "astounding."

New Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin, says one newspaper, "will not double the CNR track through the

Rockies" because of his tough-mindedness. But another editorial says Mr. Pepin was selected because he is gifted with an understanding of western alienation.

MANY VERSIONS

There are several opposing interpretations on the appointment of Gilles Lamontagne as defence minister. It was a "surprising promotion" said one commentator, while another said the prime minister was clearly downgrading the defence department.

Mr. Trudeau, if he keeps on reading, can learn that he selected Donald Johnston as the President of Treasury Board because "his professional experience on the private sector equips him with a strong sense of economic imperatives." Or, in another editorial, he can be warned - in reference to the Johnston appointment - that "it is a risky climate in which to be trying out new boys."

As for the appointment of Herb Gray as minister of industry, trade and commerce, the prime minister would read that his decision was variously influenced by Mr. Gray's hard work, economic nationalism, perseverance and religion.

Naturally, I would like to have some exclusive inside information on some of the more unexpected appointments, but I don't. Why Judy Erola should become minister of mines, for instance, or why John Munro now is in charge of Indian affairs, is a total mystery to me.

But I can't help thinking about the prime minister sitting there reading about all the Jesuit logic that went into his appointments while happily reminding himself that a good many of his selections were made just for the hell of it.

Provincial election is unlikely in spite of push by Liberals



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

Trust this corner. There will not be a provincial election in 1980. The target date remains 1981.

That's a political prediction, which means it is as safe as being a Christian playing in a pit full of Roman lions.

But barring some unforeseen circumstances popping up in the next eight months, one can't help but reach that conclusion.

While something can always happen to change the equations, anyone trying to mix an election formula right now can't help but find that it doesn't quite gel.

The key factor is Premier William Davis, who has said time and again that his minority Conservative government will serve out a full four-year term before seeking a new mandate.

The last election was June 1977, which brings us to late spring or early fall of 1981 for the next provincial vote count.

Being the government, the Conservatives have the advantage of being able to dissolve the legislature when they want, of picking the time and issues (if any) with which to start the campaign.

monumental (and some might add unnecessarily shrill) proportions.

It is given that the Liberals believe Tory rule is so bad the government deserves to be overthrown. The question is when, and that is a matter of tactics.

Mouse-trapping the NDP into supporting a motion opposing the government (by framing it in terms of NDP policy), may not prove as easy as the Liberals think.

In any case the New Democrats, who aren't keen on holding an election anyway, see no reason why they should act as a Liberal left hook in knocking out the government.

WHY NOW?

But even if the Liberals surmount that obstacle, one wonders why some of them (others aren't) are so insistent their chances are better this year than next.

One explanation is that Davis is unpopular now because he endorsed Joe Clark's federal Conservatives, and that voters want to punish him for it.

The back-up to this belief, what you might call the federal theory of provincial politics, is that Pierre Trudeau will be unpopular again next year and Smith's Liberals will then pay the price at the polls.

The second idea being mooted about is that somehow Davis gains in credibility by surviving four years - if he's so bad why didn't you bring him down? - and can ask for a majority.

MAYBE NOT

Neither argument carries a lot of weight with me.

The first contradicts the obvious, that people vote differently federally and provincially in this province, and also assumes that to punish one government they will throw out an entirely separate entity.

The second is more plausible, but common sense says the electorate might think the other way: We've had four years

of not unpopular minority government, let's keep it going.

In that case it is 1977 all over again, with incumbents (except where local issues are important) waltzing back to Queen's Park with ease.

Observers see no visible ground swell for the Liberals at this moment, and a year from now - a lifetime in politics - there just might be.

Trudging to the polls just isn't likely this spring.

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO-Many friends from Georgetown attended a piano recital last Friday in the Heliconian Hall, Toronto, by Margaret Bradley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William F. Bradley of town. It was the official debut as a concert pianist of this talented young lady who has been studying concert work for several years, latterly under the tuition of B. Hayunga Carmen.

With the Roxy Theatre packed to the doors by 8:15 Sunday evening, an estimated 200 people were turned away for the Lorne Scots monthly band concert. An added attraction was the appearance of Bruce Smith whose early morning radio program "Toast and Jamboree" is so popular.

Georgetown taxpayers will contribute \$104,527 to the town treasury in 1980. With a local assessment of \$1,537,510, the tax rate has been set at 68 mills this year. It is possibly the highest tax rate which Georgetown will ever have, for when the new assessing system comes into effect next year, the assessment will increase considerably and the mill rate will of course decrease.

TWENTY YEARS AGO-Future subdividers may have to foot one more bill, if action initiated at Monday's council meeting is followed through. Suggested by the road committee, a motion by Deputy Reeve Walter Gray proposed that council's town planning committee investigate the possibility of having subdividers provide paved roads and storm sewers, in addition to other requirements of the subdivision bylaw.

SINGULAR HONOR

A singular honor has been bestowed upon Credit Valley Bottling Works Mountainview Road as recently they were presented with a marble and gold plaque by the Charles E. Hires Co. for 12 months of consistent quality perfection. The presentation of the award is the first such made to a Canadian Hires bottler and a look through their quality reports seems to indicate that the plant is now well on its way to another "perfect score."

Georgetown's newest public school, George Kennedy, will be thrown open for public inspection shortly, it was announced when the public school board held their regular meeting at Harrison public school Tuesday night. Board member Roy Hansen and George Kennedy principal Hazen Allen were appointed to a committee to arrange the night which will combine the open house with the building's official opening.

Employees at Varian Associates have combined their gifts to the hospital building fund to make a total of \$5,000. This is exemplary leadership in the employee field. B.H. (Bill) Breckenridge, Varian executive, also announced a company gift of \$5,000, to make a total of \$10,000. Other firms whose employee gifts are generous and worthy of commendation are Meadowglen Growers, Delta Craft, J.B. Mackenzie and Son, Canadian Tire, Canadian Bank of Commerce and the Royal Bank of Canada.

TEN YEARS AGO-The planned Halton and Peel Regional government will not come into existence on January 1, 1971 as the Ontario government had hoped. Municipal Affairs Minister Darcy McKeough told a meeting of mayors and reeves from the two counties Monday afternoon that a number of unsolved problems will obviate the hoped-for January merger. Reporting to council Monday night, Mayor Wheldon Emmerson said McKeough did not enumerate the problems. Nor did he intimate when the merger might take place.

Jim Snow, MPP for Halton East, announced Monday that tenders will be called during the week of March 18 by the Ontario Department of Highways for Contract 70-16 for the reconstruction of Highway 7 between Georgetown and Acton.

MOTEL PROPOSED

A 22-unit motel and restaurant at the corner of Highway 7 and the 6th Line of Esquevas was proposed to Esquevas Council Monday night by B. Campbell, lawyer for and Anthony and William Kri, whose mother owns a 100-acre farm at that spot. The land was formerly owned by John Fox.

The Lorne Scots century-old pipe and drum band may soon play its swan song. Military officials said this week the 104-year-old band will be a victim of the recent Department of National Defence cutbacks unless public support can be found. The band is one of many across the country which the defence department is eliminating as part of an economy drive within the armed services.

ONE YEAR AGO-Town council has approved a 1979 operating budget in totalling \$5,525,003 that represent a 6.8 per cent increase over 1978 for lower purposes in Georgetown and Acton and a 9.9 per cent increase for Esquevas. Generally, taxpayers in the town's urban areas will pay approximately \$13 more in taxes to the town than in 1978, while those in the rural areas will pay \$16.51 more.

TOWN EXPANSION

More than \$2.5 million worth of improvements to Georgetown's sanitary sewage disposal facilities, which could ultimately enable the community to grow to 32,000, have been deemed practical in a consultant's report tabled last week. Halton region's public works committee last Wednesday recommended that the results of the report prepared by Proctor and Redfern Ltd. should be utilized by regional staff in the planning of Georgetown's future development.

The Halton Regional Police force is hoping to launch a project called Neighborhood Watch this summer in an effort to combat vandalism in Halton Hills and Milton. Neighborhood Watch would be a summer job program for students, whose wages would be paid by the Ministry of the Solicitor-General of Canada, along with a small amount of the program's operating costs. The force would be responsible for transportation costs, equipment, office space and equipment, and any other expenses associated with the project.

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