

The 'not-so-great debate' another exercise in futility

Last Wednesday's "Great Debate" on the future of regional government in Halton would only have been great, in fact, if the outcome had been the opposite.

This is not to say that we favor an end to the six-year old system of not-so-local government: regional council has proven its worth, particularly to those in Halton Hills, on several occasions when the region's opponents tend to forget or ignore.

Rather, we view the debate as a failed academic exercise which served only to reassure those members working for reform that they're on the right track; apart from this, the whole trade was just another example of how some council members enjoy letting off steam once in a while, regardless of their various arguments' strength and relevancy.

The final vote on the motion to dismantle regional government was 15-7, or roughly 2-1, indicating that those who arranged for the verbal battle somehow overestimated anti-region sentiments among their colleagues on council. At the outset, there seemed a very real possibility, judging from the determination with which Burlington Mayor Roly Bird introduced his "anti-region" motion, that Halton region could very well suffer irreparable damage during this sudden, calculated affront on the part of a handful who demanded that the matter be resolved quickly.

It took four hours last Wednesday afternoon and evening for council to finally determine that a majority favor reform of the system, and not its termination.

Those in the minority - Milton and Oakville councillors whose political posts are in jeopardy because regional taxes climbed so high this election year in their municipalities - rallied against the system, bringing to bear their mounting frustrations over a system of government that seems to create as many problems as it solves.

Steadfastly opposing these short-

sighted, politically and emotionally motivated attacks, councillors from Halton Hills and Burlington (which are coping with current tax bills fairly well, thank you) maintained strong support for a government that continues to prove its worth in their municipalities in basic but sometimes surprising ways.

Assessment figures have shown two opposing communities to be on the low end of the tax scale in Halton: Acton, of course, continues to benefit from the equalizing system of paying for sewer and water facility improvements - the region as a whole has helped both Acton and Georgetown enter the 1980s in good shape by upgrading these public works; but in predominantly rural Nassagaweya, where angry Miltonians have rallied 'round a homemade flag of protest, taxes are similarly low relative to those in other parts of Halton.

Aware of certain pockets of "hostility" against the status quo, regional council, through Mayor Bird, decided to put on the gloves and find out exactly where its members stand. Thus, the "great debate" was launched, much rhetoric was exchanged, threats were tossed about and the issues were finally nailed to the wall; but the region's many opponents, their presence hinted at by the covert inuendoes of several disgruntled members, failed to show in any strength.

In the final analysis, Halton region received a strong vote of confidence, those on a special committee preparing reform proposals headed back to their drawing boards and the regional clerk filed away his copy of the recorded poll which might have upended Halton, but in fact failed to prove anything.

Let's hope there really will be a "great debate" when the hard facts of regional government come in for some close scrutiny once council discusses proposed reforms; at that point, relevancy should return to regional headquarters.



MacGuigan embarrasses us by linking treaty to rescue



Ottawa Report
By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of the Herald

External Affairs Minister Mark MacGuigan has every reason to feel frustrated about the lack of American action on the Canada-U.S. fish treaty, but I wish he would stop referring to the Tehran embassy caper in the same breath.

It's embarrassing.

What Canada did in Tehran - or more specifically, what Ambassador Ken Taylor did - in sheltering the American diplomats and smuggling them out of the country was very laudable, and the outpouring of gratitude from the U.S. was not surprising. The Americans have had little else to cheer about in Iran.

But we should keep the affair in perspective, and without taking anything away from Ambassador Taylor and his staff, it would be unthinkable for them not to help the desperate Americans. Everyone was clearly delighted that the exciting

affair worked out the way it did. And I imagine most Canadians enjoyed the unusual gush of gratitude that flew north from our American neighbors.

OTHER LEVERS

So let's let the matter rest right there. If the Americans, for any reason, want to refer to the incident that's their business, but it's downright embarrassing when we keep raising the subject. And I bet many of us cringed when MacGuigan said that, following the Tehran escapade, "There was a feeling among many Canadians that the United States owed us one."

If you go down the list of Canada-U.S. irritants, you can find many areas in which the Americans might owe us one, or we might owe them one, but surely we don't have to trot out examples involving human decency. I know some people who were given free medical treatment in New York not long ago, and I would hate to think the Americans might raise that at the United Nations.

If the ratification of the fish treaty requires bargaining levels, there are many business-like issues that could be raised - the construction of pipelines, energy conservation, wheat embargoes, environmental programs, fresh water diversions and the like. But the treaty should be ratified without any such levers. It serves the best interests of both countries.

HARD BARGAINING

The treaty was initiated by both



Letter from the Editor

Paul Dorsey

Opportunists of war detected by novelist

So Argentina is arming itself for apparent nuclear war? The Star's Today magazine this weekend documented Canada's corporate and technological contributions toward the South American nation's success in this venture, and once again the spectre of world war rears its ugly head.

With so many parallels existing between the state of global politics today and those of the between-war years (1918-1939), some thoughts on the philosophy of war which came across last week took on an astonishing relevancy.

The following words come from one of Ernest Hemingway's dispatches to Esquire magazine. The date is September, 1935; the subject matter is predominantly gruesome:

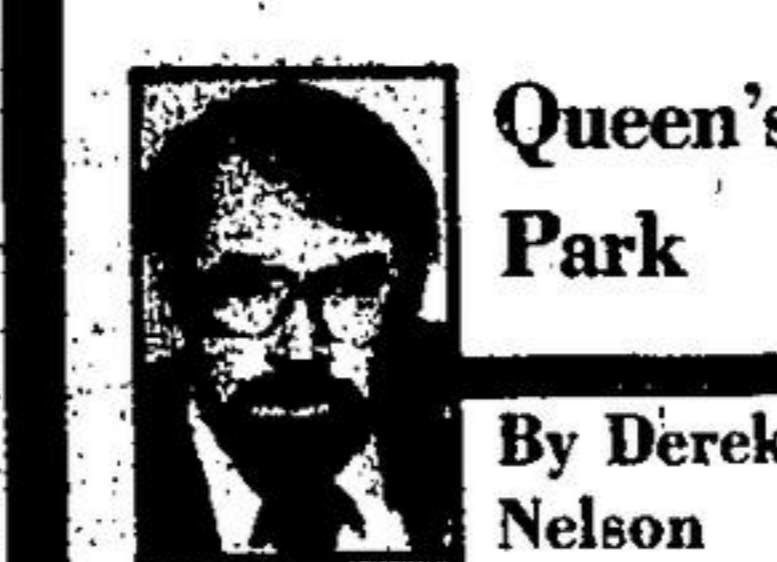
"The first panacea for a mismanaged nation is inflation of the currency; the second is war. Both bring a temporary prosperity; both bring a permanent ruin. But both are the refuge of political and economic opportunists....

"They wrote in the old days that it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country. But in modern war there is nothing sweet nor fitting in your dying. You will die like a dog for no good reason. Hit in the head you will die quickly and cleanly even sweetly and fittingly except for the white blinding flash that never stops, unless perhaps it is only the frontal lobe or your optic nerve that is smashed, or your jaw carried away, or your nose and cheek bones gone so you can still think but you have no face to talk with.

"But if you are not hit in the head you will be hit in the chest, and choke on it, or in the lower belly, and feel it all slip and slide loosely as you open, to spill out when you try to get up.

"It's not supposed to be so painful but they always scream with it. It's the idea I suppose, or have the flash, the slamming clang of high explosive

Elgie tempers union deal with dismissal of arbitration



Queen's Park
By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of the Herald

Two issues most irritate the trade union movement in Ontario.

Both deal with newly unionized plants or offices, and first negotiations between the fledgling union and a company.

One is the ability of the company to continue resisting a first contract with its newly unionized employees, by, for example, dragging out negotiations over months.

But even assuming serious first contract negotiations do go ahead, the second issue that arouses union leadership is company refusal to make union dues mandatory for all employees.

What unions want is "mandatory dues check-off," which really means you can't have a plant where half the employees pay union dues, and half don't, even though all receive the benefits of negotiations.

Labor minister Robert Elgie has now brought in a bill that gives unions 50 per cent of what they want, but which is linked with two other labor law changes they may not want.

DOESN'T WORK

Elgie still insists demands that there be compulsory arbitration of

outstanding issues when negotiations on a first contract break down.

He claims the record elsewhere, for example in British Columbia where such a law exists, show it just doesn't work and, if anything, exasperates problems.

But on "mandatory dues check-off" he has adopted the union position, saying it "goes to the very core of the acceptance of the trade union movement as a legitimate entity."

Yet at the same time he's letting companies put a final contract offer to employees by secret ballot vote whether union officials agree or not.

And since all employees are paying dues, Elgie's bill says all, even non-union members, will have a vote on strike or contract ratification.

BASIC ASSUMPTION

But the key amendment is "mandatory dues check-off", which has been the major sticking point in some of the most controversial and bitter strikes in recent Ontario history, such as Fleck Manufacturing and Blue Cross.

Without dues check-off, unions complain that new people being hired don't join the union and together with those who refused to join in the first place soon constitute a majority.

At that point the company seeks decertification of the union.

The subjective assumption behind union desire for "mandatory dues check-off" is that such "union-busting" won't work once all employees are paying dues - and regardless of whether or not they are union members.

(Paying dues and joining the union, which remains optional, are not the same thing. The only exception to dues-paying will be for religious reasons, and then an equivalent amount of money must go to charity.)

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO-J.H. Royston has sold his Dominion Hotel in Acton to two Toronto men, F.J. Dawson and Harold Dedels, who will take possession in the near future.

Now playing at the Romy theatre: "Francis", the funniest film surprise in five years. Starring Donald O'Connor, Zasu Pitts and Francis, the talking mule.

An estimated crowd of 2,000 attended the 3rd annual garden party last Thursday at the Hornby Ball Park. In addition to two ball games and a demonstration of model aircraft flying, there was a vaudeville show featuring some top flight talent. The show was headlined by two garden party favorites, Violet Murray and Tom Hamilton, and included two of the original "Dumbbells", Pat Refferty and Charlie Jeeves.

With practically no swimming facilities since the Glen and Norval dams were destroyed in the spring floods, the swimming classes which have been arranged by the Georgetown Recreation Commission at Norval YMCA pool are very popular this year.

TWENTY YEARS AGO-Calamity Junction unleashed its train-wrecking voodoo again last Wednesday when a head-on collision snaked diesels and cars along the jinxed section of the CNR main line just west of the station. Most seriously injured in the spectacular crash was a fireman, Leslie Eason of Stratford, who was trapped in the cab of a diesel engine when an empty coal gondola from the other train hurled four diesels, shearing the top off Eason's before tumbling down a steep embankment on the south side of the tracks. Damage in the crash was estimated at \$30,000.

Following the departure of Rev. Theo. Van Laer from Holy Cross Church, a Netherlands, Father Otger Devant, became the parish priest last week.

Meadowglan growers, a name well known in the community, will be known henceforth as Meadowglan Mushroom Growers Ltd. The business has been acquired by a four-man partnership consisting of Mac Skrow, his son, Ernie, his brother, Sam and his brother-in-law, Mac Cohen. They have been in the produce business for 40 years in Toronto.

From the Herald's classified columns: "House for rent in Sunbeam Heights, three-bedroom brick bungalow, \$65 monthly."

Wins by the pride of Conifer Kennels, R.R.2, Georgetown, Conifers Guards Siochana, at the Ontario County Kennels Club show at Oshawa Saturday have placed him within one point of the Canadian championship. Guard, as he is affectionately known by his owners, Sid and Bev Rivett, took Best of Winners, Best Canadian Bred and Best of Breed in sweeping every class.

A whopping \$1,253,125 was the value of building permits issued in June in Esqueping Township. However, included in that total is \$1,100,000 for the Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital. The remainder were residences.

Esqueping's share for 1980 of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, and the Sixteen Mile Creek Authority was authorized by the treasury department of the Credit Valley Council for the year is \$2,590, and for the Sixteen Mile Creek is \$1,040.

Passenger service on the old "Northern line" to Allandale came to a halt with the running of the last train through Georgetown Saturday at about 7:30 p.m. The service was inaugurated in 1971.

TEN YEARS AGO-Georgetown District High students set a new record this year. Fifteen in the graduating class received 80 per cent or over in their year and were awarded Ontario scholarships and a \$150 Ontario award.

Georgetown in general and Georgetown Little Theatre in particular can be proud of the success achieved by one of its residents in the theatrical world. Lynne Hyde started a new position in Ottawa weeks ago as technical director for the National Arts Centre. It's a long way from the days when this young man first showed his artistic genius designing sets for the town's theatrical group.

A halton school board trustee was critical last week of teacher contract settlements that pushed the board's budget up \$2 million for the 1970-71 school year. R.E. Godden made his criticism when the board was asked to approve the new contract for secondary school teachers in the county. He told the board, "Someone must say no" to inflated salary settlements.

Halton farmers holding land designated as "Parkway Belt" in the provincial government's Toronto-centred region plan are demanding to be reimbursed for the resulting drop in speculative prices for their farms. Gary Stann of the regional development branch of the treasury department said last week that government policy has not yet been determined on the issue, "and when it is, it will be strictly a political choice."

The 1974 International Plowing Match has been awarded to Halton County for the first time. A committee under the chairmanship of Ross Segarworth attended the annual meeting of the Ontario Plowmen's Association earlier this year and requested the match for 1974.

A possible zoning change from industrial to high density residential is in the formative stage for a six-acre property north of Guelph Street at the unopened 10th Line intersection. A developer has already announced that he will build a motel complex on the old Tracey farm, adjoining the highway. He proposes to build apartments on the other portion of the land if the necessary zoning change is approved.

ONE YEAR AGO-Orson Welles of Citizen Kane fame and Michael Murphy, who co-starred in Woody Allen's Manhattan, have been confirmed for roles in Never Trust an Honest Thief, the major American Canadian production film which will begin shooting in Georgetown August 13.

Halton's Intersected Citizens' Group (ICG) and Halton Hills council got their latest day in court Monday in their continuing battle over Ontario Hydro's proposed 500-kv power transmission corridor through the municipality, but they won't know the results of their efforts for some time. ICG spokesman John Minns said Surpene Court Justice J. Holland, Steele and Montgomery heard the case Monday but reserved their decision on both issues presented to them.

Halton regional council has agreed to lease the building which currently houses the Milton detachment of the regional police to the recently organized Halton's Women's Place beginning in October.

The recently-formed Georgetown Boat People Committee is holding a public meeting July 18 for people interested in sponsoring Vietnamese refugees or providing assistance to sponsors. The committee will become the local chapter of Operation Lifeline, an organization working on behalf of the boat people. Committee co-ordinator Don Long said the response from the community thus far has been very good.

For the second time in seven months, Mayor Pete Fomeny and other members of town council are pulling out the stops to get the McNally apartment project proposed for downtown Georgetown off the ground.

Dave Whiting of Acton, defeated in the 1977 municipal election, has become the first to declare his candidacy in a by-election which will see Ward voters return to the polls October 1 to choose a replacement for the late Les Duby.

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