

Why even discuss closing hospital?

It was quite a shock for a lot of local Toronto Star readers when they spotted the recent Peel-Halton page headline indicating that Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital might have to close due to a lack of funds.

As it turned out, of course, The Star had been polling area hospitals with regard to new health ministry cutbacks and found a spokesman at the Georgetown facility ready to say that closure was a distinct possibility. That possibility was overstressed, though: closing the still-young hospital was only one of a number of rather vague and far-fetched options the hospital board had considered in light of renewed fiscal restraint.

So Halton Hills citizens who have come to appreciate the Georgetown hospital for its service and close proximity can breathe a sigh of relief. Or can they?

It alarms us that the local hospital board should even have to consider the option of closure - however remote it may be - in its struggle to cope with rising administration and operating costs and declining government funds.

The provincial government has been consistently criticized in recent years for failing to adequately meet the needs of Ontario's health and social service agencies. The provision of funds to such agencies through municipal channels continues to be a problem that plagues Halton Regional Council, a body which must itself constantly refer to the provincial budget, shrug its shoulders over declining Queen's Park grants and, ironically, bear much of the public criticism at election time.

When a funding cause so integral to the health and welfare of the province is neglected in favor of other spending priorities, there must be something seriously wrong with the government which allocates that funding. Without benefit of a detailed account of government

spending priorities, we cannot launch any specific attack, but instinct alone tells us that the ministry of health holds a distant position far behind other Queen's Park departments.

A number of ministries - consumer and commercial affairs, industry and tourism, culture and recreation, environment, education and, most notably, energy - absorb large chunks of the Ontario's annual budget, in many cases somewhat smaller than the health ministry's budget but invariably less justified in terms of public interest.

Each time you hear a politician or public servant complain about dwindling provincial funds for a new daycare program, a new hospital expansion or a new seniors' care facility, think about the hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent through Queen's Park on, say, Ontario Hydro's self-serving television advertising, or perhaps extensive promotional campaigns for culture and recreation, or even the latest innovations in education.

Failure to meet the most basic needs of a society already beleaguered by skyrocketing inflation can only compound existing problems. A cutback in welfare services here might turn this young man to crime; a reduction in daycare services there might lead that mother of three to leave the job that's giving her family a second income.

Certainly, compared to other ministries, the health domain seems invulnerable to any charges of service duplication and irresponsible allocation of funds: what is there necessary; the point is that more is needed as well.

Let's shuffle the province's funding priorities to ensure that services most in need are well-maintained and properly administered. The health of Ontario appears to be at stake.

CLOSE DOWN GEORGETOWN HOSPITAL?
NEVER, WE WERE
THINKIN' ABOUT
EXPANDING
THEIR FACILITIES



Trudeau's single-mindedness doesn't help BNA meetings



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

OTTAWA Bureau

OF THE HERALD

Manitoba Premier Sterling Lyons is not far off the mark this time: Prime Minister Trudeau, he thinks, is so mesmerized with constitutional reform that he can think of little else.

"He is totally and completely preoccupied with the time frame," says the host of this week's premier's conference. "I would say... that other problems which other people in Canada feel are of equal importance don't seem to register with him or his government."

On further thought, that might be putting it just a bit strongly, but it's not entirely wrong. It's been a long time since the prime minister has shown a tendency to sink his teeth into any other issue. Ever since the May 20 Quebec referendum, when Trudeau promised a renewed federalism, Ottawa seems to have been totally immersed in constitutional reform.

It wasn't too many months ago that, under a Conservative government, we seemed similarly preoccupied with our economic woes. And while there has been very little change in this area - all the same problems remain - we seldom hear a word about the economy. About the only time Finance Minister Allan Rock has been seen

in the news over the last few months was when he donned his kilt to open the Highland Games.

I bet former Tory finance minister John Crosbie wishes he had similar distractions. He couldn't even put on a pair of mukluks without being doused in damnations.

ELUSIVE DEADLINE

But we weren't preoccupied with the constitution in those days. That was before Prime Minister Trudeau re-entered the scene declaring a September deadline for substantial agreement on constitutional reform - a deadline that has become more elusive with each passing week.

There seems to be near-unanimous agreement that our federation should be revised without undue delay, and that some progress would be desirable prior to the next Quebec election when the issue of renewed federalism will again be in the forefront. And there is no doubt about Trudeau's determination to bring about a new made-in-Canada constitution before he steps down from office. This has always been his steely-eyed objective.

With virtually all premiers having entered the referendum campaign to assure Quebecers that a No vote would be interpreted as a desire for constitutional reform, Trudeau was probably prudent to move quickly following the vote. But in light of subsequent events, it would appear that his timetable is simply too tight, his approach too rigid, when you consider that constitutional reform and energy pricing have been melted into the same morass.

NOT HELPFUL

And the prime minister hasn't really helped the difficult negotiations with his veiled threats of unilateral action, perhaps involving a national referendum. It has placed enormous pressure on the provincial premiers

whose demands, in some cases, may appear unreasonable but who nonetheless mean that they, like the prime minister, have also become preoccupied with the issue.

Apart from the travelling attorneys-general, who have been debating constitutional reform in a summer travelogue, there have been countless meetings of officials, untold speeches by the prime minister and the premiers, and a growing feeling that nothing else matters much in this summer of constitutional discontent.

Even Ottawa's National Press Club, which normally has trouble dredging up interesting luncheon speakers, has been fending off requests from politicians who want to talk about the constitution. When cabinet committee meets, that's all they talk about.

When the New Democrats and Tories get together these days, it's all about developing constitutional positions. When the provincial premiers sit down in Winnipeg, with countless other difficulties facing them, they will be almost entirely preoccupied with the constitution. Deep down they are all angry with Trudeau's threat of unilateral action and the current federal advertising blitz that could be setting the stage for a national referendum.

As a result of various pressures, some rather strident statements are being made - statements that do nothing for the success of the current negotiations. This is not to suggest that the prime minister's rigidity is the sole cause of the warming war between the federal and provincial governments, but the cause of peace and progress could doubtless be enhanced with a little more apparent conciliation at the top. I doubt whether even the most impatient Quebecers expected miracles to happen just four months after the referendum.

Shortage of election issues prompts riding strategies



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau

OF THE HERALD

Elections come at two levels: one being the speeches, the hoopla, the issues, and the politician appealing for votes, the other the nitty-gritty back-room work of choosing the seats that lead to victory.

Let's make the doubtful assumption that Premier Bill Davis decides to seek a new mandate at the polls this fall. How does his party go about it? And how does the opposition react?

Politicians sometimes joke about sweeping every seat or that their party is in a battle to win all 125 seats at stake.

But they are not serious. Political professionals concentrate their resources on where they think they can win.

This is even more important when one considers the likelihood that the next election will probably lack the kind of emotional issues (anti-Davis in 1975 separate schools in 1971) that cause heavy voter swings.

The name of the game is forming

the government.

If one is a Conservative the goal is recapturing the majority government lost in the near-rout of 1975, and which remained elusive during the 1977 re-run.

OTHERS, TOO

That means the Tories are shooting for a minimum of 63 seats, a gain of six over their current 57.

One additional seat was Conservative, but the incumbent retired this spring. Should any others do so before the next election, and rumors indicate a couple will, then the Tory count will drop further.

This is because of a common political assumption that incumbents are (usually) harder to beat than newcomers, so when a member retires the riding shifts from being a seat the party hopes to "keep" to one the party must "take."

Meanwhile the opposition Liberals, who hold 34 seats and the New Democrats with 33, have a somewhat different perspective. Neither can realistically expect to form a majority government.

But both can aim for a minority situation where their party would squeak through with a plurality of seats and thereby form the next government.

TOUGH JOB

The minimum either must win to form a minority government is 43 seats, and that assumes all three parties run nearly equal, so a more reasonable target for victory is about

48 seats.

In historical terms that is chancy but not an impossible task.

The Conservatives have not topped (in round numbers) 50 per cent of the vote since 1929, but conversely they have dropped below 40 per cent but twice (1943, 1975).

The Liberals have beaten the 40 per cent mark but twice (1934, 1937) in that time, while protest parties (UFO, CCF, NDP) have only managed to squeak over the 30 per cent barrier but once (1933).

And that explains the secret of Tory longevity in Ontario, for although more than half the electorate rejects the Conservatives every election, neither opposition party can draw the dissatisfied to them alone.

NEW APPROACH

So the emphasis the opposition parties must take is to hold their own seats while nibbling away at Tory seats where each can convince the electorate that they are the "real" opposition alternative.

Coincidentally most ridings in the province where there is any chance of gains or losses (maybe 50 in total) are two-way fights between the Tories and one or other opposition party, with the third party playing the role of spoiler.

For the Conservatives the road to a majority is holding their own and sneaking a seat here and there across the province where an opposition incumbent settles or looks vulnerable.

For now, lacking major issues, it doesn't look easy for any party.

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO - Fire of unknown origin destroyed a six-room frame dwelling on the farm of K.C. Lindsay, on the outskirts of town early Tuesday afternoon. The fire was first discovered by Mrs. Lindsay about two o'clock and an alarm turned in. However, the fire had gained such headway by this time that the entire structure was razed.

Twelve-year-old Bert Benton of Limehouse has a potato crop he can be proud of. This spring, Bert, as a member of the Limehouse School Garden Brigade, planted four potatoes weighing four ounces each, and purchased from Webb's Seeds. From his seed, he has reaped a crop weighing 32 pounds, four ounces. This is probably a record yield and Bert hopes to win the prize offered by Webb's Seeds.

Georgetown Lorne Scots Band were in their usual good form last Thursday and once again brought honor to themselves and the town by placing first in the band contest at the Canadian National Exhibition. Only two bands were in the competition this year, a third band failing to put in an appearance at the test.

TWENTY YEARS AGO - Georgetown's first one-way street will be established when amendments to the traffic bylaw become law a few weeks from now. Creation of one-way traffic on Wesleyan Street and on the block of Market Street between Wesleyan and Young is one of several amendments okayed by council at Tuesday's meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. S.S. Rivet are justly proud of their Irish setter, Guard, who made an outstanding win in the dog show at the Canadian National Exhibition, already a prize winner in other shows, was chosen best Canadian bred sporting dog, while also winning best of opposite sex. He scored three firsts and two reserve wins in the show.

Do you picture the helmeted racing car driver as a brash Mickey Rooney - type extrovert? If so, you're wrong, at least in the case of Grant Clark, of Stevens Crescent, a soft-spoken, unassuming racing car driver whose daily job is being an auditor in Toronto. Mr. Clark drives a "souped-up" production Austin-Healy. Only the insides of a car can be changed. Structurally, the car has to be left the same as it came from the factory.

Evidence of Georgetown's Bantam hockey strength was prematurely revealed in a surprising incident at the Weston Arena last week. Making their debut at the summer hockey school, the twenty-plus Georgetown Bantams at the end of their first practice were invited to take on the cream of the school's hockey crop who have been brushing up on their game - all summer. The Georgetown youngsters whipped them 4-1.

This is one of the worst areas for hay fever and other allergies and we shouldn't be apathetic about weed control," said Coun. Ian Cass during a discussion on the subject at the council meeting on September 6. The discussion followed reading of a letter from county weed inspector V. McArthur, following an inspection he had made a few weeks ago in town. Mr. McArthur pointed to the unusually high incidence of weeds in two areas near Ann Street and on vacant Delors properties.

Five town-owned lots in Sunbeam Heights will be offered for sale according to a decision made by council Tuesday. The five, believed by council to be too small for a recreation area, were part of the subdivisions' requirements when the land was built on a few years ago.

Stepped-up police enforcement of the Highway Traffic Act within town limits and an increasingly traffic safety-conscious population has worked wonders with the local accident rate, which to date stands at 67 for the year. At this time last year, the number of reportable accidents stood at 107. The steep decline has dropped the accident toll to its lowest point in memory. It is the first time in four years that the figure has dropped below one hundred.

TEN YEARS AGO - Rumors have been circulating that Mayor Wheldon Emmerson will not seek re-election in December, and on Monday he made it official. At the end of the council meeting, the mayor told colleagues he has decided to retire at the end of his two-year term.

Georgetown will hold a plebiscite vote on licensing lounges and dining lounges to sell liquor at the December 7 municipal elections. At least one motel is being planned on Highway 7 and the promoters have indicated that a liquor licence is an integral part of the plan.

Halton farmers will start withholding taxes January 1, 1971. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture began the tax withholding action to pressure the provincial government into removing the cost of education from real property. Halton is the only county in which municipalities must pay their school board levy bylaw. In other counties, the requirement for funds was not received from the school board by the legal deadline and municipal councils could withhold education funds until December 31, 1971.

With all 24 apartments occupied in Kincourt, Georgetown's new apartment house on Hyde Park Drive which is reserved for senior citizens, council has initiated action to have further units made available. A council motion asks Ontario Housing Corporation to enlarge the present building or build an additional one.

After an absence of three years, Georgetown Citizens' Band, reorganized just six weeks ago, entered the Canadian National Exhibition bands competition Sunday - and took first place. In winning, the band brought home the Whaley-Royce Trophy and \$400.

A Sarah Street resident, an elderly widow, has some nice things to say about a group of youngsters in the neighborhood. One day last week soon after a friend had called at her home with a birthday gift, a young neighbor had knocked at the door and asked, "Is this your birthday?" Answered in the affirmative, he wished her many happy returns of the day. And to her surprise, a few hours later, six little boys called with a beautiful plant as a gift.

ONE YEAR AGO - Real Estate is booming in the area served by the Brampton Real Estate Board, which included Georgetown, according to the board's president, Tom Cooper. Mr. Cooper reports 42 per cent of the properties listed with board members in the first six months of 1970 have been sold.

A relatively small turn-out at last week's public meeting on the new Glen Williams Secondary Plan led planning board chairman Mike Armstrong to assume the plan had generally satisfied Glen residents, but two lengthy submissions followed which could bring about extensive changes. A petition bearing 138 signatures, representing all the residents its authors had time to canvass, criticized the town for incorporating less than a quarter of the resident's suggestions into the revised plan while making new changes which benefit Chateau Belair Developments.

A proposal to develop a 28-lot industrial subdivision near Hornby met with positive reaction from some members of the town planning board when it was presented last Tuesday. If eventually approved, the subdivision would represent a fruitful end to a six-year-old dispute over control of the property, located between Highway 401 and Steeles Avenue just west of Hornby.



Letter from the Editor

Paul Dorsey

Sorry, Cathy

Although weekly news quotas are only beginning to rise again after the usual summer doldrums, the past couple of weeks have been a bit more difficult for me because, as well as being (managing) editor, I've also been acting sports editor and, ostensibly, acting editorial cartoonist.

Both Halton sports editor Mark Clairmont and cartoonist Greg Landry opted for late summer holidays, leaving me with my fingers on two typewriter keyboards and an independently-minded foot sketching ideas for new cartoons.

The latter task turned out just fine: our editorial page carried a reminder of The Herald's impending Open House two weeks ago, complete with a drawing of the new building rendered by Donna Talton of our advertising staff, and then one week later featured a cartoon submitted by the Canada Safety Council concerning school bus safety week.

Although I've drawn editorial cartoons for The Herald in the past, not having to come up with scintillatingly topical caricatures and punchlines eased the situation somewhat. Putting out two Sports Weeks, however, was a different matter.

Quite frankly, I'm no jock. I participate in tennis and watch hockey, but I'm no baseball-football-soccer fan, and those sports, of course, are the big news in Halton Hills these days. Adding to my confusion as I tried to assemble each week's sports section was the great proliferation of various

teams and leagues in each sport, every one of which quite rightfully expects to see its weekly results in the paper.

Herein lies Sports Week's biggest problem and the source of Mark Clairmont's biggest headache. The poor fellow has been chided many times by readers and co-workers alike for failing to get specific results in his section, sometimes for several weeks at a time. How Mark usually prioritizes such contributed copy I do not know, but I am sure he does not deliberately assign low priority to any one sport or league, even though it must seem so to some readers.

But several factors conspire to keep some copy out of the paper week after week. Without getting too technical, suffice it to explain that advertising requirements and press restrictions have limited Sports Week's size within Section A of The Herald to a maximum of three pages. As has happened on at least two previous occasions, sports news also finds its way into fourth, fifth and even sixth pages inside Sections B and C, but no one particularly likes splitting up the sports section like that.

The alternative now being considered is to turn Section B in its entirety into one big Sports Week, complete with its own front page. The chief restriction here is that Section B as a rule must be run off on our press before Section A and early enough so that it doesn't hold up production, but sports copy coming through the mails is invariably too late to allow much leeway.

Anyway, leave it to Mark and I; we'll find a solution and probably surprise everyone in the process.

As Mark was packing his bags for a trip home to Gravenhurst at the outset of his vacation, a job application came in the mail from a young lady seeking journalism work in Ontario. I surveyed Cathy Clark's experience credentials from the east coast and let out a weary sigh at the prospect of hiring her as Sports Editor. You see, as Mark would well appreciate, Cathy made the brilliant strategic move of enclosing a photo of herself, reproduced here. Male readers will perhaps appreciate the dilemma I faced.

But the two weeks went just fine and now Mark is back in the fold, all a-fluster that production didn't come to a halt in his absence and determined to get every score and game credit inside his columns.

It's a new season for Sports Week, and one to look forward to, I'm sure.

As for you, Cathy, keep those cards and letters coming. We'll find you a reporting job when The Herald goes daily.



Would-be reporter