

Questions arise with onslaught of rising floodwaters

Like the first snowfall of the year, the first spring break-up perennially gets the phones a-ringing down at the public works department on Trafalgar Road. The number of ratepayer complaints seems to rise along with the floodwaters.

Spring is thus an annual test of municipal planning and forethought, not to mention its readiness and abilities. Storm sewers back up, thawing road surfaces break up and the river ice jams up, and the town must act, often in assistance to or in conjunction with conservation authorities and regional agencies, to stem the tide of spring thaw run-off and taxpayer alarm.

We estimate that nine times out of ten, these agencies - the town work crews in particular - do a great job quickly and effectively, then monitor the situation adequately later. At the newspaper, we've received a handful of calls from readers concerned about neighborhood problems this past month; usually, they've already been in touch with the right town department and are either expressing frustration at apparently getting nowhere there, or else are alerting the news media that problems exist and the town is supposed to be resolving them.

Given the fluctuating weather conditions, it's no surprise that a call about snow piled high along Guelph Street sidewalks - forcing pedestrians to use the highway lane - should be followed only two weeks later by another call noting how deep the Remembrance Park pond is getting with the run-off, thus offering a tempting hazard to local youngsters.

This week, Herald reporters watched town and Credit Valley Conservation Authority workers move quickly on two problems created by spring thawing, but then keep a cautious distance from a third.

A mini-mudslide on Georgetown's Dayfoot Drive warranted some rapid at-

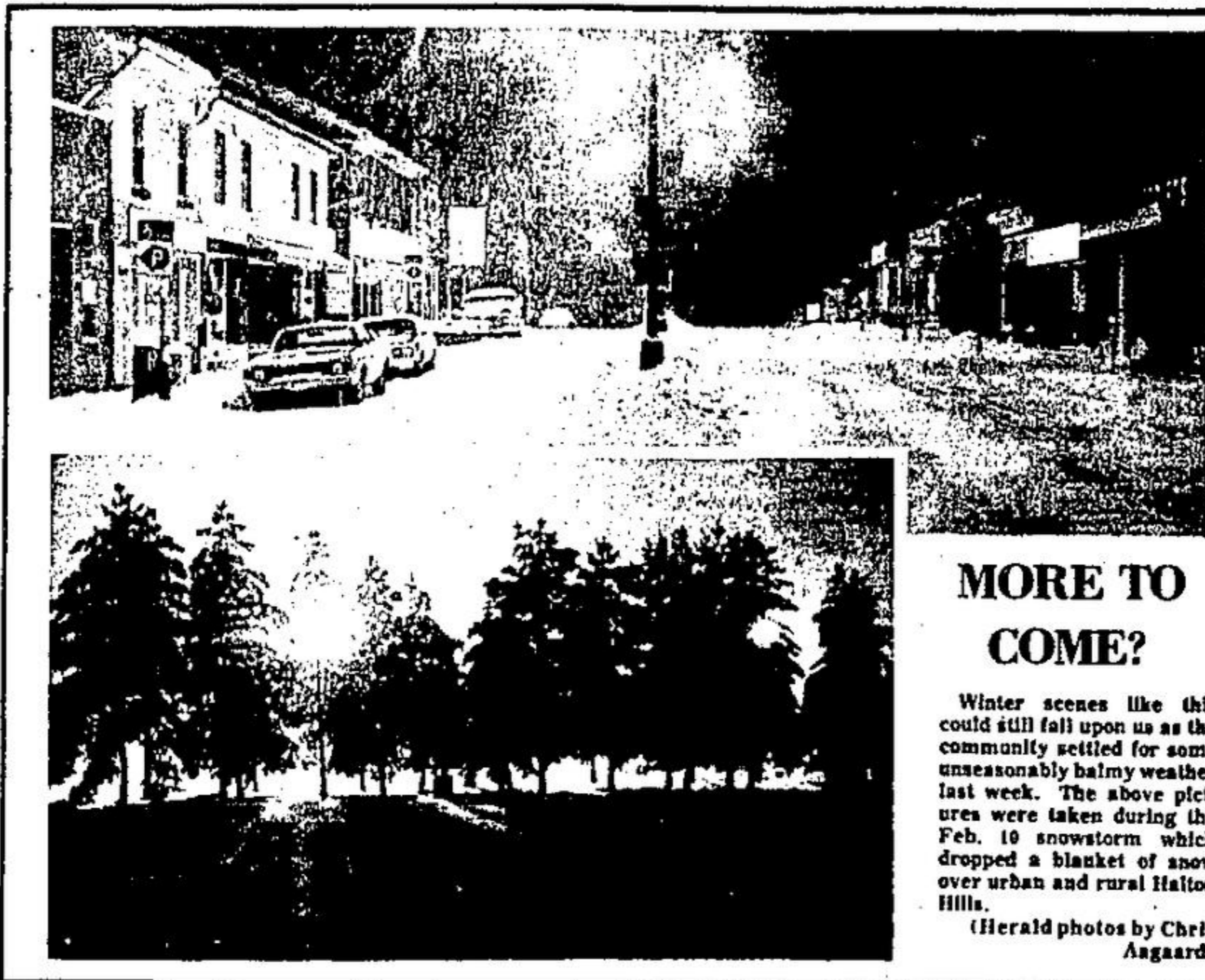
tention late last week, but even more serious was the rising Credit River in and around Glen Williams. As is well-documented elsewhere in this issue, flood control measures undertaken well before this season are having their desired effect and although some Glen residents perhaps thought those measures would eliminate the need for dynamiting (see a safety-concerned letter, opposite page) the overall evaluation is a positive one.

Back in Georgetown, meanwhile, a recurring problem at Remembrance Park on James Street awaits solution, and only the town budget knows for sure when that will come. Situations like this seem to indicate that when town engineer Bob Austin, works superintendent Frank Morette and their staff fail to respond as quickly to a call as residents would like, it's a matter of financing (if not priority), and that's just something they can't control.

We've criticized municipal budgets in the past for what we considered improper prioritizing of necessary projects. Including the re-grading of the Mountainview Road-River Drive intersection, and Remembrance Park may fall into the same category.

A water hazard in the spring and fall, a mosquito breeding ground in the summer, the Remembrance Park pond just can't justify its existence on periodically good looks alone. Residents have long asked the town to fill it in and be rid of it, but town officials lately have referred to some long-range plan that they hope will solve all the related problems.

The master parks and recreation plan notwithstanding, engineering problems like these demand quick solutions; this one's been crying out for one for years, and we'd like the town to move in just as soon as is practical - and thus maintain a virtually sterling record of good municipal service.



MORE TO COME?

Winter scenes like this could still fall upon us as the community settles for some unseasonably balmy weather last week. The above pictures were taken during the Feb. 10 snowstorm which dropped a blanket of snow over urban and rural Halton Hills.

(Herald photos by Chris Aagaard)

Placing the constitution before the Supreme Court



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

Since the Trudeau government has never displayed much of a hankering for compromise in its pursuit of constitutional patriation, there is probably little point in even mentioning this. But it seems to me that the prime minister would have a good deal to gain, and nothing to lose in the long run, if he placed the package before the Supreme Court of Canada.

It's going to end up there anyway as the various provincial challenges work their way, laboriously, through the lower courts. The fact that the issue will eventually come before the Supreme Court in the way of a provincial appeal, as opposed to a direct federal initiative, really doesn't change anything. The Supreme Court will, at some point, make a decision on whether the government's unilateral approach to patriation is constitutional.

And since there is every reason to assume that the British Parliament, which must ultimately approve or

reject the Canadian resolution, will want to hear the Supreme Court when it was originally brought before Parliament, the court's decision would have been handed down long before the parliamentary committee became bogged down in legal arguments. And if the government now had the court's opinion that it is acting legally, then much of the stem would go out of opposition. The arguments basically involve the process, not the contents, and if the court upheld the government's approach, there would undoubtedly be a marked increase in public support.

NO DOUBTS
The government's official explanation is that there is really no doubt about the legality of the resolution, which is entering its final parliamentary stages. And the first provincial challenge, in the Manitoba Court of Appeal, has upheld that view, even if it was a split decision. Other provincial appeals are in various degrees of progress.

In each case, federal lawyers are in there arguing on behalf of the central government - while their political masters stoutly maintain there is no reason to refer the matter to the Supreme Court. As Justice Minister Jean Chretien explained it to a national television audience, there is "something abnormal" about taking legislation to the courts. "There is a danger that if you mix the two, the court becomes caught in political debates," he said.

"A responsible government makes its mind, does what it thinks is right, and if it is constitutionally wrong it's for the court to decide."

What we seem to be quibbling about here is who should refer the matter to the courts. And, while I am not a lawyer, I can't see much difference between a federal initiative and a provincial initiative in the Supreme Court. The arguments are going to be the same.

Had the government referred the resolution to the Supreme Court when it was originally brought before Parliament, the court's decision would have been handed down long before the parliamentary committee became bogged down in legal arguments. And if the government now had the court's opinion that it is acting legally, then much of the stem would go out of opposition. The arguments basically involve the process, not the contents, and if the court upheld the government's approach, there would undoubtedly be a marked increase in public support.

And such a court decision would certainly take much of the heat off British parliamentarians who will undoubtedly want to delay the measure - if the federal Tories don't do it for them - until such a decision is handed down. Consequently a great deal of potentially disastrous bickering could be avoided.

But what if the Supreme Court rules that the government's patriation process is not constitutional? Well, if that happens the whole business goes down the drain anyway and, it would be ludicrous to have all this political bloodshed over an illegality.

It would have been far better if the Trudeau government had sought an opinion from the Supreme Court at the beginning of this marathon exercise, but it isn't too late. Even at this stage, the government could save itself a good deal of time and trouble with a court reference. However, I am not holding my breath.

Election 'odds' not decided by public opinion polls



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

Free elections are like fair horse races. No way exists to predict the winner short of a hot line to Heaven.

That doesn't mean you can't give odds for who's the probable winner and who's the long shot.

When it comes to politics the equivalent of the pony player's tip sheet is the public opinion poll, which records how people would vote as of the moment the poll is taken.

On those grounds the Conservatives will win the election, the Liberals come second, and the NDP last, in terms of popular vote.

But votes elect people, not odds or polls, and there are anomalies in this campaign that could change any prediction along those lines.

Even so, it should be remembered there exists a difference between

possibilities and probabilities, and the chance of certain results is much more realistic than that.

NO WAY
For example, neither the NDP nor the Liberals can form a majority government, barring earthquake and revolution during the campaign.

But it is not impossible for the Liberals, given the right split by the Tories and NDP, to form a minority regime.

Becoming the government at all seems beyond NDP reach for now, but in certain circumstances the party might edge the Grits for second place.

The reason, and the key anomaly of Ontario politics, is that all three old-line parties of the Progressive Conservatives, Liberals, and NDP have solid province-wide cores of support.

For most of the past 40 years the Conservatives have taken 40 to 50 per cent of the vote, the Liberals 30 to 40 per cent, and the NDP (and its CCF predecessor) 15 to 30 per cent.

A party may have no chance in a riding, but how its followers vote can throw the riding to one or the other of the remaining two main parties.

BIG HOPE

A classic case is northern Ontario, where in 10 or so of the 15 ridings the Liberals run a distant third and couldn't win if they stuffed the ballot boxes.

Yet Liberal Leader Stuart Smith was in Ottawa a while back trying to line up federal Liberal MPs from that area behind his campaign.

(The standing belief is that Tories and Liberals in the North do a "deal" every election, the Liberals disappearing during provincial contests and Conservatives during federal. That way Grits beat the NDP federally and Tories knock them off provincially.)

WHY THERE?
If federal Liberals work this time provincially they'll likely split the anti-NDP vote and see New Democrats elected.

So why was Smith trying to drum up support?

The simple answer is that every seat the NDP take in the area means one less Tory in the Assembly, and Smith's best hope of taking power is to do so with a minority.

Every one the Conservatives lose means one less victory the Liberals must win to overhaul and pass whatever the Tory toll may be.

Another anomaly this time around appears to be the lack of an emotional issue such as the separate school question that stirred voters in 1971, or the anti-Davis tide that hurt the Tories in 1975.

That kind of vote is "soft" or not overly committed, and can be swung, as the Tories learned to their sorrow in 1967, by a good opposition campaign.

POET'S CORNER

Nuclear haste makes waste

A chain reaction we have to face
To our scientists is a serious case
It would be better to mine the coal
Ships could sail and trains would roll.
They can do more than shake their head
Chemicals have made our lakes and rivers dead,
Why do they let industry steal our prime land,
Food supply for tomorrow, I don't understand.
Man is not sure, has done many a fool thing
His experiments are bound to sting.

Disaster in the air, on land and sea,
Smoked and burnt, who next will it be.
Education and science has done great harm.
Families tricked out of homes, and growers off farm,
Scientists were born to a land fresh and green,
Trees and flowers and grass so green,
Lakes and rivers where fish did swim,
Today it's foul and dirty, a pitiful scene.
Look at Hiroshima, a great disgrace
It was murder to attack that place.
Nuclear waste is much alive, multiply

a million fold,
Becomes a great monster and gets very bold,
This world could become a burnt-out place,
Just like the dusty moon, way up in space,
Reactors, world over, sooner or later one will explode,
It's chain reaction, would be the end of the road,
We must insist that they drop,
Nuclear reactors have got to stop.
—By Albert Brooks,
RR2, Acton.

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO—A veteran Georgetown businessman, who had from small beginnings created one of the largest and most modern clothing stores in this part of Ontario, Hyman Silver died in Toronto Monday. In addition to the Georgetown store, Mr. Silver owned a men's clothing store in Orillia. Both have been managed by his son, Sid, since Mr. Silver suffered a serious illness in 1942.

Clifton "Pat" Patterson, the OHA referee who often handles games in Georgetown, has purchased a farm near Norval. Mr. Patterson, who is sales manager for the adhesive products division of the Sell Company, has bought the old Joe Hunter farm at the top of the cemetery hill from the present owner James Emalle, and intends to move out from Toronto later this year.

Delmar French, a former Georgetown man who has been working for the past three years for a Guelph automotive supply firm, has recently joined the staff at Ken McMillan's implement agency. He will be stockkeeper there.

Hugh Leslie, champion Canadian tractor plowman, arrived home by air last Tuesday, following a tour of the British Isles, Denmark, Belgium and Holland, which he won in competition at the International Plowing Match last fall. Hugh had the honor of winning the Festival of Britain Cup for the best work done in any class by entrants from outside Britain at the International Plowing Match near Belfast.

TWENTY YEARS AGO—The possibility of a recurrence of the flood which threatened Glen Williams homes for two days is apparently unlikely. According to area residents, the combination of abnormal weather conditions which froze the water of the Credit to the riverbed were responsible for the natural freak which developed early Friday morning. By 6 a.m. Friday morning the huge chunks of ice locked solidly a few hundred yards upstream from the old lower paper mill had created such a pile-up that the water flow diverted from the regular river course and split into two branches just above the bridge at the corner of the Ninth Line and Guelph Road.

What could be a nicer present for a new mother than a washer and dryer? While in Humber Memorial Hospital, where she has just become the mother of a new baby daughter, Mrs. Frank Spingola learned of her good fortune. She had filled out an entry form at the IGA store in a Heinz baby food contest and was chosen winner of a washer and dryer from Westinghouse.

Representing the Telegram, a former town man, Jim Emmerson, was member of a panel who interviewed CCF leader Donald MacDonald on a CBC-TV show last week. Many local viewers watched the show and were impressed by Mr. Emmerson's performance.

Alarmed at reports that the Niagara Escarpment in the Speyside district between Acton and Milton may soon be destroyed by quarrying interests, members of the Sixteen Mile Creek Conservation Authority are determined to take immediate steps to preserve the face of the escarpment and the impressive natural beauty of the Speyside area.

The town office received a major improvement Monday when council okayed major expenditures. The town office, for which a computing machine was recently purchased, will have another step towards automation—a Burroughs cash control machine. Total cost of the two machines will be somewhat below \$17,000.

The Credit Valley Conservation Authority notified council that Georgetown's share of this year's \$181,000 budget will be \$8,722.

Though hampered by unfavorable weather, runway tests being conducted on Georgetown's Avian 2-180, which will lead up to the gyroplane's initial flight, has so far progressed without a hitch.

TEN YEARS AGO—Jim Breckenridge, a Georgetown high school student, who represented Ontario in the 191-pound wrestling class at the Canada Winter Games in Saskatoon, brought a Bronze Medal home with him Tuesday. Clive Llewellyn, another GDHS wrestler representing the province in the 136-pound class gained a fourth.

A crowd of 65 snowmobile enthusiasts jammed the council chamber Monday night to oppose some of the amendments to the proposed by-law governing snowmobiles and to ask for a meeting with the Recreation Commission to discuss it. On the whole they agreed with most of the suggestions made at committee last week, but took issue with the complete banning from Cedarvale Community Park.

A daring daylight robbery at Delrex Smoke Shop in the Georgetown Market plaza Saturday involved a haul estimated at \$2,000 in cash. The money, \$900 to \$1,200 of it in company receipts, was in a purse behind a counter at the rear of the store. It was discovered missing when one of the proprietors went to take it home with her at 6 p.m.

A public meeting of those interested in keeping Norval public school in operation was held in the school Thursday with Peter Hughes as chairman. The main purpose of the meeting was to elect a committee to represent the Norval district ratepayers at future meetings with the Halton County board of education or any other officials necessary. Those nominated to the committee were Norman Guthrie, Joanne Frost, Bob Crawford, Julian Reed, Wray Youmans and Norman Shea.

Another petition from residents of Mountainview Road N, protesting the location of a cannery on the Meadowlark Mushroom property, 100 feet back from the road, has been received by council. This brings the number of properties represented to 25, and according to the letter, more signatures are forthcoming.

The town's '54 Cadillac ambulance was sold to the highest bidder at Monday's council meeting. R.W. Francis offered \$155 for it. The Caddy will be sold as is and without licence plates.

Hicken's Shell Service, at the Maple Avenue and Seventh Line corner, will change hands next Thursday. Proprietor Ted Hicken is retiring and has sold the business to a Toronto man, Wayne Tucker.

Mr. Hicken and his brother-in-law, Ted Clapham.

ONE YEAR AGO—Halton secondary school teachers have almost unanimously rejected the board of education's final offer for their 1979-80 contract. A negotiation session has been scheduled for today (Wednesday) but if no progress is made, the teachers have the option of requesting the Education Relations Commission to conduct a strike vote next week. There has never been a strike by teachers in Halton.

A nine-year-old Acton boy will receive recognition from the Halton Safety Council for his bravery in saving a friend's life - but he'll have to wait a year for the award. Kevin Fabian pulled Robert Jennings, 10, out of Fairy Lake Feb. 15 after Robert fell through the ice while trying to pet some swans. The ice around the edge of the hole where the birds were swimming gave way, plunging the boy up to his chest in the water.

With some work from senior students at Acton High School, the Acton Chamber of Commerce should have an updated, more complete information booklet to offer new or prospective residents. The new booklet, expected to be ready for distribution by June, will list businesses of all types, including home-oriented services such as housewives who give lessons or do dressmaking.

Don't forget -

Election Day is **March 19**

-from the Heart Fund