

the HERALD

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One lost, one won in budget battles

It's springtime, when a politician's mind turns to thoughts of money.

This time of year is always intriguing for municipal government observers; in these harder financial times, it's a lesson in political attitudes, when those duly elected to serve our needs struggle after that holiest of grails, the Bottom Line for this year's spending.

To Halton Hills budget chairman Harry Levy and members of town council who voted unanimously last week for an admirable and practical budget, we extend our thanks and congratulations. Town council's budget deliberations, particularly since Mayor Peter Pomeroy and Coun. Levy assumed their respective positions, have been down-to-earth examples of which we can all be proud.

Ignoring that example, on the other hand, is the Halton board of education. To Halton Hills trustees Betty Fisher, Arlene Bruce and (in absentia) Betty Walker, good luck in next fall's election. We admire the conscientious jobs you do through the term, but if you and your colleagues cannot hold budget increases to a fractional minimum in a time of declining enrollment and fiscal restraint, perhaps we need new people to try a different approach.

Education director Wally Beever did little to ease the pain for annoyed Acton ratepayers who attended his drop-in session recently. The school budget, as we see it, is most certainly NOT "pared to the bone", Mr. Beever.

Still to come, Halton region's municipal budget, due next Wednesday. Elaborate hiring proposals from most of the regional departments have already made a mockery of regional council's former commitment to a grandstanding hiring freeze, but outside consultants decided last year that Halton can't do its appointed job unless the bureaucracy grows along with the budget. Much of the hiring, department heads say, will merely bring Halton into line with regional administrations elsewhere.

Two points come to mind here: first, the key word "appointed". Halton taxpayers did not ask for a modernized version of the old county system; the Old Way could work no longer, to be sure, but it's only fair that the provincial government that forced regionalization upon us eight years ago should continue financing its concept, rather than cutting back on regional funding or adding to its workload by shuffling off some previously provincial responsibilities.

Second, regional councillors seem ready to grant department heads their requested additional staff but won't do the same for Police Chief James Harding. The chief's request for additional officers to fight a rising crime rate is the reason why the police budget was recently referred back to the police commission for further trimming. Regional council wants to hire more bureaucrats to upgrade its own services but won't do the same for the police. Maybe the police commission should have hired its own outside consultants, not that the need for more policemen is in question here.

Does crime pay?

With a bit of a shock, Halton Hills witnessed its own miniature version of Clifford Olson recently when the crown attorney introduced former hired killer Cecil Kirby to testify in the Dominion Hotel murder trial.

Revealed following last week's verdict against the Acton hotel's former owner were a few facts about the crown's witness, an ex-biker who'd made a considerable fortune blowing businesses up, burning them down and generally accepting people's money to do their dirty work for them.

Kirby was granted immunity by Ontario's attorney-general in late 1960 so he would inform police about criminal activities in which he'd been involved. He turned up in the Dominion Hotel trial recalling how the owner had initially asked him to burn the establishment down as an insurance con. Owner Cosimo Mercuri subsequently decided to do the job himself, killing a hotel resident in the process, a jury concluded last week.

With Mercuri headed for jail, justice seems to have been accommodated, but in Kirby's case, we wonder just how much of a judicial trade-

off we can tolerate.

Canada's solicitor-general and national police force created a storm of controversy last year when they admitted they'd paid convicted killer Clifford Olson \$900,000 to provide them their only substantial evidence against him. The B.C. murderer of young innocents goes to jail, of course, but his wife benefits from his crimes.

So it seems with Kirby, whose police-solicited testimony has admittedly put five murder conspirators behind bars. In exchange for his testimony, we are angered to learn, Kirby is paid \$23,520 a year in expenses, gets free accommodations and depends on round-the-clock security guards.

What do the cases of Kirby and Olson convey to our young people? "I thought you said crime doesn't pay?" we can hear them ask.

Valuable testimony or not, police cannot morally offer such deals to those whose criminal affairs warrant only punishment. Rather than bartering for testimony with handsome incomes and virtual freedom, perhaps we should offer them their very life in return for justice.

April is Cancer Month

The cost of cancer

Cancer research is costly. An average of 61 cents out of every dollar raised by the Canadian Cancer Society's April campaign goes directly to research.

Charles Cliffe, Ontario Division Volunteer Campaign Chairman, said "without the generous support of the Canadian public, our support of cancer research would not be possible. Nor would the Society be able to continue its programs of public education and cancer patient services."

The Society's 1982 theme, "We need you now - more than ever," refers to the Society's concern that some people may feel that due to the success of the fund-raising efforts of Terry

Fox, continued public support of the Society is not necessary.

Mr. Cliffe stated "Terry's wish was that all Marathon of Hope Funds would be used for new innovative research programs that could not have otherwise been funded. For that reason 100 per cent of the Terry Fox Funds went to the National Cancer Institute."

The money raised during the Society's Annual April campaign will fund existing research programs as well as the Society's ongoing Education and Patient Service programs. The latter two programs represent 14 and 16 per cent of the Society's income respectively, leaving

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PQ Constitution opposition should prompt royal restraint



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

Even as the big event draws nearer, it's still difficult to see why the government feels it necessary to bring the Queen to Ottawa to proclaim our new constitution.

In fact, the closer we get to the ceremony the more we wonder about the government's single-minded determination to turn the patriation pageant into an event of majestic proportions. We can only hope that the Queen will manage to avoid any embarrassments during the three days she will spend with us.

It would be different if Canadians were all united around our new constitution and were itching for an excuse to have a national blow-out. But so long as one province, in this case Quebec, is stoutly opposed to the new constitution, it seems to me it would be prudent to display some restraint.

And so long as the country is

divided, I am not so sure it's fair to bring the Queen into an alleged national wing-ding. It's not as though she has to be there - she could easily send the new constitution by courier and it could be proclaimed without any royal assistance.

WANTS PARTY

But the Trudeau government, from the beginning, has been determined to couple patriation with a party, that it be a great state occasion during which all Canadians should celebrate. And given Prime Minister Trudeau's life-long obsession with giving Canada a new constitution, one can understand his enthusiasm.

If all 10 provinces had agreed on the new constitution, it would be very difficult to argue against such a celebration. But the fact is, we didn't get Quebec's agreement and so, unfortunately, the new constitution remains divisive. What we are doing, in effect, is bringing the Queen into the midst of an internal disagreement.

The prime minister has made it amply clear how he feels - that the separatist government of Rene Levesque would never agree with other governments on a new constitution; that on constitutional issues it is the federal government, and not the provincial government, that best represents the people of Quebec, and that there is no reason why the Parti Quebecois should spoil a national celebration. As the prime minister told a news conference, he "couldn't care less" whether Levesque comes to the

ceremony.

I suspect a great many people agree with Trudeau on that.

STARTS SMARTING

But, just the same, there is no point in pouring salt in existing wounds. And as Premier Levesque talks about "counter-events", it would appear that he is beginning to smart from the salt.

Quebecers, he said, "do not accept the Queen of England bringing us our symbolic independence". And officials of the Parti Quebecois said they are trying to organize massive anti-Ottawa demonstrations in both Montreal and Hull.

Demonstrations in Hull could probably be seen from Parliament Hill, where the Queen will be proclaiming the new constitution. In fact, there is little to prevent the demonstration from crossing various bridges into Ottawa.

In any event, you can be sure that television cameras will be carefully focused on the demonstrators, thus ensuring that the Queen won't have the whole day to herself.

And if she has to be wrapped in a blanket of security, it won't do much for the party atmosphere.

I would much prefer, under existing circumstances, to see Canada get a new constitution in a simple, low-key and dignified ceremony that would involve all federal party leaders and agreeable premiers. Then, when the dust settles, there is no reason why the Queen couldn't come to Canada and perhaps even enjoy herself for a couple of days.

Awaiting Miller's budget a matter of crippled economies



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

What is Treasurer Frank Miller setting us up for?

Are we due for a stiff round of tax increases in the budget expected later this month, as any reading of Miller's statements as they appeared in newspapers the past couple of months would indicate?

Or is Miller pulling the federal government trick of being ultra-scary right now so that when his budget does come in, the tax increases in it won't seem so bad after all?

Miller does have problems. Government in Ontario is committed to delivering a vast range of services to the public. These must be paid for, and contrary to the professional protesters' cries of "cut-backs", as sacred cows these programs are incapable of being trimmed.

In 1981 the price tag was \$20 billion, up from \$17 billion in 1980. Moreover, it is obvious from the high percentage increases the province is promising groups like universities and municipalities, that 1982 spending is going to pass \$23 billion, and maybe \$24 billion.

DEFICIT GROWTH

It looks like government spending will outperform inflation again this coming year, as it tends to do in a recession, meaning an even greater proportion of the goods and services

produced by the people of Ontario in 1982 will have to go to feed the tape worm of government.

Miller's problem is how to pay for these soaring costs.

He has only two options: increase the deficit or raise taxes. In 1981 the deficit, predicted to come in at under \$1 billion, actually exceeded \$1.5 billion. And because of the recession, which depresses revenue, 1982 is bound to be worse.

And that's if Miller does nothing more than last year. In fact, as mentioned above, the province is bumping expenditures on its own, while Miller will also have to do with a smaller increase in grants from the federal government than usual.

LET GROW

Why then not just let the deficit climb? After all, future generations are the ones the government is borrowing from, and they don't vote in the present.

Economist John Keynes' theory of deficit financing is what governments like to say they are following: they aren't, of course.

His theory said in bad times government borrows to stimulate the economy, and in good times govern-

ment pays the money back. That makes sense. Governments, unfortunately, always find new "needs" to spend cash upon in good times and never do pay anything back.

Quebec leads provincial governments in the borrowing league. Its \$21 billion budget includes \$3 billion in borrowing, a proportion so high the New York credits markets expressed alarm.

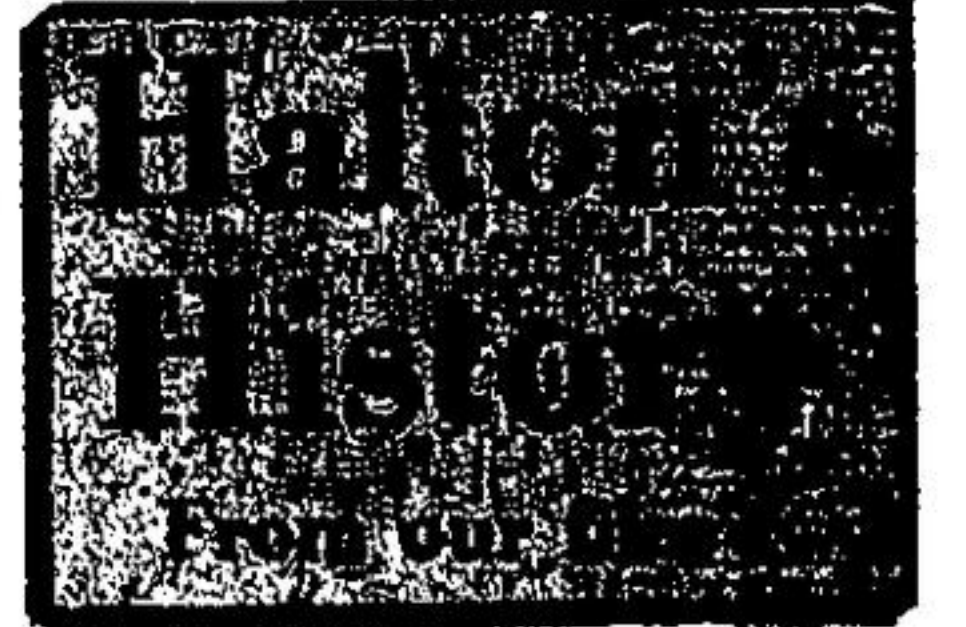
Bingo, Quebec now talks about "restraint".

TAXES UP

Ontario is nowhere close to being in a financial mess equivalent to Quebec's, but still, to retain our Triple A (best) credit rating there are limits to what Miller can seek.

So that brings us back to taxes. OHP premiums and the usual "sin" taxes (alcohol, tobacco) are bound to go up, and I suspect the base rate for the provincial income tax may be shifted again as it was last year.

In the short run this juggling of deficits and taxes will work. In the long run, as the experience of country after country has proven, you cannot spend to infinity and tax to extravagance without crippling your economy. How far are we down that road?



THIRTY YEARS AGO—Three municipalities have agreed to North Halton school board's plan to build new high schools at Georgetown and Acton and add a gymnasium at Milton. Esqueping opposes the plan because they say the cost involved is too great and favors no building at all until the municipalities are sharing costs on actual assessments rather than on arbitrary figures. When that is done, Esqueping suggests building one high school in Acton at a figure whereby the government subsidy would apply to the total cost. School board members expressed surprise at Esqueping's decision.

Esqueping council accepted the bid of Matalack Company of Toronto for spraying weeds at \$8 a mile on both sides of the road. Council will purchase 140 gallons of Green Cross commercial weed kill No. 96 at a price of \$7.54 a gallon.

President of Halton County CCF Association for a second term is Stan Allen of Georgetown. Mr. Allen, who is a member of the Georgetown Council, is employed by Smith and Stone where he is president of the IBEW Union. He was re-elected to office at the annual meeting in the Farmers' Hall in Milton. Committee members are Frank Parmeter of Georgetown and William Coleman of Acton.

TWENTY YEARS AGO—Night school classes in Georgetown are dead. At an open meeting to stir interest in the ill-fated classes Tuesday night, eleven people, most of them committee members, turned up to draw the curtain on night school which began here nine years ago. Miss Jean Ruddell pointed out that this year's enrollment was below last year's, with expenses the same, but revenue sagging badly. The committee had threatened to call it quits last year but public response at a similar meeting had been sufficient to give them the green light for this past term. It was the small turnout this year that rang the death knell for night school.

Paul Armstrong, chairman of the Georgetown Unit's B.I.T.s campaign for the Canadian Cancer Society asks Georgetown citizens to support the campaign to the best of their ability. Georgetown's quota is \$2,600 for this year's annual April drive.

To the average Halton resident just what does the Coun. Council's \$2,300,000 budget mean? There are approximately 116,000 residents in the county. The entire population is bound to raise \$1,335,914 of the total county expenditure on a mill rate of six mills based on their 1981 assessment. This means each man, woman, and child in Halton owes his County Government \$9.80 this year. Residents of the five North Halton municipalities have an additional 91 cents per capita to raise this year to pay off outstanding debenture on the new Acton, Georgetown and Milton high schools. The total payment of \$115,035 is due this year from the northern towns and townships.

TEN YEARS AGO—A nutty navy composed of barrel rafts, rubber boats, canoes, kayaks and some craft which would look more at home in a junk art exhibition, will cruise down the Credit River from east Glen Williams to Norval Saturday in the Georgetown Jaycees' sixth annual Crazy Boat Race. Jaycee publicity officer Don Bick told The Herald he expects 100 entries. Since the original race, the number of entries has been steadily growing and last year hit the 75 mark.

Should Georgetown have a municipally operated tax-subsidized bus service? Residents are being asked to fill out questionnaires this week. The survey, being made by the Toronto firm of Dekeuw Cather Company Ltd., was ordered by town council. It is the second stage in an \$8,000 study. The first phase which the firm presented to council in February indicated the firm's opinion that a bus service is needed here. A private service has been operated for several years by Georgetown Transportation Company. At present, there are four trips from the east end to downtown mornings and two trips mornings and one afternoon from downtown to the east. If a Georgetown system were approved, the Ontario government would subsidize yearly deficits by 50 per cent. With 4,900 households, including apartments, in Georgetown, estimated yearly deficit for a bus service would be \$20,000.

The villagers of Limehouse won their battle against tax Tuesday afternoon when Halton County Road Committee unanimously rejected the design study by DeLew Cather which proposed various roads through and around Limehouse. The same firm of consultants were asked to study alternate truck routes with special emphasis on the Fourth Line out to Highway 7. A delegation of Limehouse residents appeared before the committee and presented a petition of 249 names. Residents urged the retention of Limehouse as it is, the preservation of the railway bridge as a unifying link for the community, no new roads, no tax hike to subsidize the extractive industries, no heavy truck traffic through the village, the maintenance of the present road for existing traffic and the improvement of Fourth Line to Highway 7 by widening and paving.

ONE YEAR AGO—More than \$1,140,000 worth of health and social service programs, nine staff positions and road reconstruction projects that were to include the regrading of the hazardous Mountainview-River Drive intersection, may have all fallen victim to regional budget cutbacks. The cuts were recommended Wednesday by the administration and finance committee with almost all of the region's 24 councillors present. Chief administrative officer Ernie Reid is taking the budget back to the region's individual departments to see if there are additional cuts that could be made. The budget will then be presented to council for approval Wednesday.

Halton MP Otto Jelinek is "delighted" with his appointment as corporate affairs critic in the Conservative shadow cabinet. Mr. Jelinek said Thursday he knew the week previous that opposition leader Joe Clark was giving him the post since the Tory leader is aware of Mr. Jelinek's interest in small business. "It enlarges my interest in strictly small businesses to medium and large corporations as well," he commented. "It will be a very challenging portfolio to handle," he said.

The only negative aspect in an otherwise smoothly-conducted 12-day strike by Halton region public works employees took the form of a traffic injury Thursday morning which left one of the strikers hospitalized following a mishap at the picketed Oakville landfill site. Halton regional police charged a 25-year old man from Longford Mills, Ontario with dangerous driving after the small dump truck he was driving ran over picketer Bernard Guillivert, 53 of Oakville.

POET'S CORNER

Always Missed

Freda was always there.
Her gentle heart
kept time
to the eternal
clock.
She was this "Man's Best Friend".
Her persistent nose urged me
from my sleep.
Her knowing voice signalled
the arrival of an
unfamiliar presence.
There were times when her
attention
annoyed me.

The harshness of my words
struck her
as no blow
could.
It's been about a year now,
since she quit this
existence.
I mourn the loss of her
furry being
and look eagerly forward
to the reunion
of two friends.

—By Marlene C. Dickson
RR2 Beeton