

Reprieve for old town hall welcome news

You've got to hand it to Acton's town hall restoration committee: they're persistent. Just when we thought ambitions to restore the century-old condemned structure on Willow Street would be put to rest by an official hearing last week, new options arise which could indeed see the hall restored as a multi-use community centre.

We thought we'd seen the last of Ted Tyler's portable signs out front of his Highway 7 business demanding that we "Save the Town Hall", but there it was again this week attesting to the shot in the arm provided his campaign last week by Employment and Immigration Canada.

What's more, the \$133,720 grant conditionally approved by Ottawa for the town hall involves a job creation program. What news could be more welcome, even if we are only talking about ten new jobs?

It was with a tired feeling of resignation that The Herald ultimately advocated demolition of the hall last year. We'd stood by efforts to restore the architecturally attractive building from Day One, but the failure several years later of Acton's citizens to raise adequate restoration funds seemed to nullify the "deal" that had been worked out with town council.

But for the apparent apathy of a majority of Acton citizens, arguments for the restoration remain valid. The town hall was and can again be a focus for community events, whether of special activities or the daily variety.

Guest editorial

Negotiations mustn't disrupt child's education

EDITOR'S NOTE: Current negotiations contract between Halton secondary school teachers and the board of education involve a number of similarities with previous disputes. The Herald asked former teachers federation president Tom Ramautarsingh, himself a Georgetown District High School teacher, to comment on the situation.

By TOM RAMAUTARSINGH
Herald special

Bill 100 made negotiations compulsory between school boards and teachers of Ontario in 1975. The Act laid down the steps (where previously there were none) for boards of education and teacher affiliates to follow. It is an excellent Act but as time has passed a second look and a review of the practices are necessary. The Act is not a panacea for all times.

In many cases, today's collective bargaining has reached a stage where frustrations have begun to develop. New changes are needed to prevent the "cat and mouse" actions, the "wait and see" attitudes and the "confrontation syndrome" which are becoming evident. The greatest losers are the students who are our most important resource.

Meaningful negotiations based on facts, goodwill, understanding and sincerity are more than ever needed to prevent a disaster in education. The framework for negotiations is certainly positive, but there are areas which need improving. In reviewing the present Act weaknesses that can be corrected are that negotiations are extended for too long a period and that teachers and trustees can disrupt students' education through strike and lock-out actions. Where these actions have taken place, they have proven to be very detrimental to the young citizens of Ontario. After all, teachers, trustees and administrators are here because they have the same objective which is to provide the best possible education for our children.

The machinery could be tightened up by simply being more firm with dates

As such, the hall could stand as Acton's last bastion to its historical autonomy, something consistently denied since regionalization. While the hall would have no official municipal status other than that of a community centre, its corridors and high-ceilinged rooms do recall an era when Acton was a municipality unto its own, and that's something that should not be forgotten - only seen in its true modern perspective.

Further, the eventual restoration of the hall would bear sound testimony to the efforts of the restoration committee and the Actario lottery established some three years ago for the sole purpose of raising reconstruction funds. Actario in itself is an ambitious venture requiring a great deal of effort that has provided many memorable moments since its inception.

The word "reconstruction", it occurs to us, is more than apt in the context of restoring the old hall. To many citizens, the regionalization of north Halton provoked visions of a civil war, one fought not with guns but with rhetoric; instead of North against South, it was Acton against Georgetown.

What followed the American civil war was a period of rebuilding historically known as the Reconstruction. Without overworking the parochial analogy, perhaps the rebuilding of the old Acton town hall can in some way help repair the wounds - and provide something of the solidarity Halton Hills has yet to enjoy.

Cartoon submitted by Joe Stamp of Georgetown



Media is often cynical, Don, but not about economy probe



Ottawa Report By Stewart

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

Donald Macdonald, now best known as the chairman of the new Royal Commission on the Economy - it actually has a longer name but we'll keep it simple - blew into Ottawa last week to talk about his new assignment and declare that, among other things, the press is cynical.

It's not Macdonald's assessment that gives rise to any disagreement - of course the press is cynical - but it's his timing that's off. What the former finance minister is complaining about right now is the way the press has greeted the new royal commission and, in particular, his appointment as chairman. And if any recent development ever begged for a touch of cynicism, it seems to me that it is.

Even such a damn-the-torpedoes type as Donald Macdonald most instinctively feel this way. As a veteran politician, he should have realized how the media would react to the manner in which his royal commission has been established thus far. Let's review, very quickly.

First of all, Prime Minister Trudeau decided to establish this massive royal commission study without even consulting his caucus or cabinet. He approached Macdonald, and secured his agreement to serve as chairman without even consulting his minister of finance, Marc Lalonde.

NO CONSULTATION

And in giving this high-profile assignment to Macdonald, he selected a former finance minister who, along with other members of Trudeau's various governments, has been blamed for some of the economic problems we face. If this weren't enough to encourage some cynicism, Macdonald is also a contender for the leadership of the Liberal Party when Trudeau finally decides to pack it in. In fact, the two men discussed the possibility of Macdonald quitting the commission early if the leadership vacancy should occur.

Is it then cynical to suggest that the prime minister may be boosting his old buddy into the leadership?

Macdonald, naturally is not yet declaring himself a Liberal leadership candidate - no one ever does until here is a vacancy - but he did declare himself in 1979 during Trudeau's brief proposal for retirement - and he has made a point of saying he wouldn't close the door on the possibility. Given his position and as a critic of media cynicism, that's about as close as he could get to declaring himself a likely contender.

But not only is Macdonald

apparently clinging to his leadership ambitions as he launches his enormous undertaking, he is also clinging to the corporate directorships he has collected since resuming his law practice in 1978. He is on the boards of the Alberta Energy Company Ltd., the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Manufacturers Life Insurance Company, Du Pont Canada Inc., and McDonnell Douglas Corp. He didn't see how these directorships would interfere with his work.

MORE COMING

Well, they may not interfere with his work but they, along with Macdonald's Liberal Party credentials, certainly appear to be interfering with the make-up of the commission. God forbid that this view be interpreted as being cynical, but what we appear to be getting, instead of a credible and efficient commission of experts, is another of those unwieldy structures that is expected to reflect every special interest group in the country. To offset Macdonald's partisan leanings we have the appointment of a couple of recycled Tories, including a Diefenbaker cabinet minister who hasn't been politically active for 20 years. And as this is being written, a talent hunt is still on for willing New Democrats. Then, typically, we have representatives from labor, the media, the linguistic groups, the regions, women, industry, academia. And don't go away, there will be more coming. If pressed, even I could probably come up with 100 or so examples of the media being too cynical. But this would not be one of them.

Inflation or jobs dilemma reveals two disparate Canadas



Queen's Park By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

"Let's get Canada working again. If the price of that is more inflation, let's have it." These are the editorial words of wisdom in the populist, right-wing Toronto Sun.

On the left-wing we have the words of MPP Richard Johnston (NDP-Toronto Scarborough West), voiced in the Legislature, where he said "jobs are the issue. Will the minister please get up in the House and say jobs are the issue, not inflation?"

This attitude, coming from both ends of the political spectrum, is likely to become the conventional wisdom over the coming months if the recession continues to deepen.

And even if the economy does begin to turn around it is likely that unemployment, or more accurately job creation as it has come to be known, will continue to be a major political focus.

Johnston caught the reason for this when he shouted across at the Conservative government benches about a factory that closed in his riding: "Does the minister not understand that it is his duty to find these people work?"

TIMES CHANGE

And there we have it, the prevailing attitude of this era. Governments are responsible for employment.

It is, unfortunately, a myth that politicians of all parties like to perpetuate when they get the chance. In the

Legislature the Liberals and NDP blame the Tories for unemployment, while the Conservatives like to take credit for "job creation".

True, governments can create jobs of a temporary nature, as the province does every summer when it hires students for short-term tasks, or enlists crews for specific jobs like fighting forest fires.

It can too hire more people to provide social services, or to push paper around office ("planning"), but these are services rather than productive tasks.

And it could disguise unemployment as some countries do with make-work projects or job-retraining schemes that really aren't.

BAD THING

To be unemployed when you do not want to be, to be unemployed when no work is available rather than because you don't like to do a particular job, is soul-destroying.

And unlike a few years ago, when most people who were unemployed were so by choice, this recession is hurting badly (12.5 per cent in Ontario).

So accepting the tragedy of the situation, should we then ignore inflation and "stimulate the economy" by having governments borrow more money to actually physically create jobs for people?

The response of the Sun and the Johnston is yes, but it is a response that says half of society can be forgotten about.

There are really two Canadas, as former Liberal Leader Stuart Smith used to point out rather eloquently. One is composed of those people with assets that grow in value faster than inflation. The other contains that part of the population that have no such assets.

NO ASSETS

I suspect Sun editorial writers, and I know that MPPs like Johnston are, in large measure, or even totally, protected against inflation, with hefty dollar increases annually (because wage hikes are calculated in percentages and the higher the salary the better you do every time around) to indexed pensions.

Most people don't have that luxury. But to those who do, inflation is actually a benefit because it keeps bumping up their relative spot on the income heap.

To suffer this recession and yet allow inflation to continue to soar would be truly obscene.

Keep real trees green for another Christmas

Pick, chop and drag your own tree

If Art Bouwman's "potted Christmas tree" idea isn't quite your cup of tea, there's always the Georgetown Kinsmen Club's ongoing tree sales at the corner of Guelph Street and Sinclair Avenue. Prices are reasonable and proceeds help the club with its community projects.

Or, if you're looking for a different approach to selecting your tree and don't mind driving to Caledon East, you can help an international charity by buying at Murray Dryden's Christmas Tree Farm, where the Newfoundland Dog

Nothing quite beats the sight of a tree decked out in glistening yuletide fare, but some people find the after-Christmas waste of real conifers a tragedy. Local garden nursery owner Art Bouwman has arrived at a solution: potted trees which can be re-planted in one's yard. It would cut down substantially on the waste of cut trees and make a long lasting addition to the house's surrounding landscape, he maintains. Mr. Bouwman's nursery is on the Sixth Line near the Milton-Halton Hills border.

Club of Canada and the St. Bernard Club of Ontario have joined forces for the annual "Christmas Tree Drag" this Sunday from 9 a.m. to dusk. All trees are \$6. Pick your own, chop it down yourself and hire a dog to drag it to your car, where it will wait patiently for your tip. All proceeds go to "Sleeping Children Around the World" through which Mr. Dryden and his wife have provided 50,000 "slumber kits" to children in 17 Third World countries over the past ten years. Each kit contains a

mattress, a rubber sheet, two pairs of cotton sheets, two blankets, a pillow, two pillow cases, two pairs of pyjamas and a mosquito net. Visit the Dryden farm this Sunday by following Airport Road north through Caledon East. Four miles beyond the village, turn left at the flashing light, proceed another four miles to the Second Line East and turn left again. There will be signs. Carling O'Keefe Breweries will provide Christmas music and the Andersons of Georgetown will provide a Johnny-on-the-spot.

Halton's History from our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO-Council agreed Monday to the new building program of North Halton high school district which will provide a four-room addition at Georgetown, one room at Milton and a new eight-room school in Acton. Mayor Armstrong said solicitor K.M. Langdon has received a letter from the Municipal board authorizing the town to proceed with construction of sewers along Highway 7 from Harrison's Garage to the town limits. This ends a long delay in installing sewers which residents have been demanding, and which have been held up because of objections by the Dominion Seed House (which owns all the property on one side of the highway) to sharing in the costs.

TEN YEARS AGO-There will be six new faces on 1973-74 Halton County board of education as a result of last week's elections. The 20-member board will receive three new trustees from Burlington and one from each of Oakville, Milton and East Halton. Board chairman Ernest Bodnar of Georgetown was re-elected. He defeated Ian Barrett, an Etobicoke high school teacher and Diane Sailer, a former secretary with the York and Etobicoke school boards.

ONE YEAR AGO-The offensive strength of the Georgetown Chrysler Raiders proved too overpowering for the struggling Barrie Flyers last Saturday night in Barrie as Georgetown knocked their opponents 9-1. Barrie's lone goal came just one minute into the second period to make the score 4-1. Four goal performances by the Raiders in the first and second periods caused havoc for the Barrie defenders. Flyers goaltender Dunc Brownell stopped 32 shots during the course of the contest while Georgetown's Doug Dragasovich held back 27 shots.

POET'S CORNER The Last Candle

Poor old Dad was but of work It was poverty everywhere The poor children were hungry and cold They must go begging, they were told All the cupboards were empty and bare Clothes were ragged, with holes and tear Broken windows, with cardboard plugs Worn out flooring, and holey rugs Was no fuel, drafty and cold We huddled together brave and bold It was our last candle, burning bright All we had, that cold, cold night Out of that candle came a great glow Christmas eve it told us now To us Christmas, the answer seemed no How much poorer could a family go.

Outside on the door, came a big knock As misery it is, so open the lock Stood an old friend, that used to be Had a strange feeling and came to see, I'll get help, and he went away Came back with a team and sleigh Brought us fuel, clothes food and supplies On Christmas eve, he saved our lives Then the good friend drove away Bless him God, we did say There are others on your street Victims of some mean cheat You must help them all you can Christ was sent, to live in man. -By Albert Brooks, Halton Hills

Friends Don't be dismayed at goodbyes For meeting again after minutes, or years... is certain for those who are friends. -Cheryl Ford (Youth Forum '82), Georgetown

An Inch from Hunger When there is no more to be survive Your body, your soul, can no longer strive Scream out, lash out Let our tiny voices be heard. Oh lord, you can be hell itself, What's all this cost me, but my health. God please grant me a way to food My soul screams out, is this so crude. Today is another day, And just another inch from hunger. -Rocky Bartholomew, Georgetown