

LIVES ENDANGERED

False alarms tempt tragedy

It's a warning not to be quickly dismissed when local fire department officials express concern over false fire alarms in apartment buildings.

Halton Hills' largest apartment complex, the Silver Creek Towers in Georgetown, has seen firefighters swarm around it a number of times in the past three weeks. Officials believe the false alarms are caused by vandals.

Regardless of the cause, though, the sound of fire alarm bells is common enough in the

halls of Silver Creek that most tenants barely flinch, confident that the superintendent is already attempting to cut the alarm off and there is no danger.

Thus, if and when there is a real fire at the Towers or any other apartment building subject to false alarms, human lives will have been placed in jeopardy because of the childish thoughtlessness of some prankster.

It's a point about which children should be coached.

Ditch demands rapid action

From the safety of apartment tenants to the safety of neighborhood children, parents have an important responsibility in teaching their youngsters safety precautions.

We have no doubt that the town will act rapidly regarding the drainage ditch brought to council's attention Monday night. Four feet deep in places and filled with water during run-offs, the ditch running through a residential neighborhood in Acton is one big temptation to unsuspecting children.

While the means of ensuring safety around the ditch should be left to the experts, namely the town engineering department, we hope that a lack of readily available funds

cited Monday won't prevent virtually immediate action on the ditch.

As it stands, storm sewers which would replace the ditch are in the works, but aren't scheduled to materialize for a while yet. Engineer Bob Austin suggested that several thousand dollars might be better spent in the interim to make the ditch shallower.

How shallow must a creek or drainage ditch be before it becomes harmless?

With all due respect to the engineer and those responsible for our annual budget restraints, this might be one project best expedited. The storm sewer work has to be done eventually; maybe we should move the schedule up a few years.



Bishops' economic critique shows scale of discontent



Ottawa Report
By Stewart McLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald
Regardless of what one might think of Roman Catholic Bishops becoming directly involved in the government's economic policies, it's a clear indication of the depth of discontent that envelops the country. For the bishops to have issued such a provocative paper even 10 years ago would be unthinkable.

What the eventual fall-out might be, both within and without the church, is anyone's guess. The disagreement over the bishops' Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis began the moment the paper was released, and this will no doubt continue for months to come. While Emmett Cardinal Carter of Toronto squirmed uncomfortably over the actions of his bishops, the Anglican Primate of Canada extended a hearty round of applause to

the Catholic initiative. Letters to editors across the country suggest the divisions cross all religious and political lines, as many criticize the committee for its heading plunge into economic activities while others take aim at the committee's alleged left-leaning viewpoint. Then there are others who applaud the bishops on both counts.

FUSS EXPECTED
The bishops obviously knew they would create a fuss when they issued their report - some have termed it a "manifesto" - because of the way it criticizes current government policies. The report is unprecedented in this respect.

While government policies place a priority on fighting inflation, the eight-member committee of bishops cites unemployment as the No. 1 enemy. And with some phrases that could easily have come from New Democratic Party Leader Ed Broadbent, the bishops accuse the government of fighting their economic battles on the backs of workers.

"Working people, the unemployed, young people and those on fixed incomes are increasingly called upon to make the most sacrifice, for economic recovery, for it is those people who suffer most from layoffs, wage restraints and cutbacks in social services," says the committee's

report. At another point, the bishops say that "the rights of workers are more important than the maximization of profits."

There is no question about the report being a highly political document.

BEGIN DEBATE
It's doubtful whether anyone would agree with everything that is in this starchy critique of the government's economic policies, and it goes without saying that most members of the Trudeau government won't be seeking autographed copies. But it certainly provides a positive response to that televised plea from the prime minister for more public participation in the economic debate. In his serialized sermonettes to the nation on the economy last October, the prime minister urged Canadians to begin a dialogue on the economy.

The Roman Catholic bishops have clearly done that.

And by doing so, with such sweeping criticisms of current government policies, they let us know something about the extent of our economic unhappiness. The eight authoring bishops are bright individuals, and when they lead the church directly into the political arena they must have had a pretty clear idea of public opinion.

Judge must settle score before matter sorted out



Queen's Park
By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald
Let us be clear that there are two separate, if intertwined, questions at issue in the strange goings-on surrounding Provincial Court Judge Reid Scott.

And we need answers to both. Originally, Scott was the second judge to hop onto the bandwagon of people using the new constitution as a vehicle for pushing all kinds of partisan viewpoints.

Provincial Court Judge William Sharpe had disqualified himself from a case until higher courts ruled whether the provincial government's control of judges' pay and pensions contradicted the Charter of Rights' call for an "independent" judiciary.

If the judiciary were not "independent", the right of an accused to a fair and impartial trial might be jeopardized, he suggested.

Scott then joined the parade by going a step further. He refused to hear any more cases at all until a higher court ruled.

WANT MORE
Interestingly, provincial court judges are currently involved in a dispute over pensions with the province - they want more money - and a Supreme Court ruling could help them in that struggle.

Still, the issue is straightforward enough. Are provincial court judges "independent" enough under the new constitution to give accused persons

fair and impartial trials? Walls of anguish from the Attorney-General's ministry bring no sympathy from me. The Ontario government was a leader in imposing the constitutional charter upon us in the first place.

It is simply living with the consequences of that decision. But there is a second aspect to Scott's participation in this affair that goes beyond the constitutional question that will, after all, be decided by higher courts in the near future.

WHAT HAPPENED?
In a radio interview Scott used for an example of the need for independence an incident where, he said he was approached by a cabinet minister about a case. And that is an entirely different matter.

Provincial government guidelines published in 1978 state specifically "no member of cabinet (except the Attorney-General, obviously) may communicate" with judges about matters before them in their courts.

Although the most recent published reports indicate Scott is downplaying what happened - he now says it was an incidental conversation at a cocktail party - that isn't good enough. Scott must name names and give a written report of the event to the Attorney-General's office.

MUST RESIGN
If a cabinet minister did violate such specific guidelines, he must resign. Former Solicitor-General George Kerr had to do so when he tried to help a poor weebegone consultant in 1978 - an action that prompted the guidelines in the first place.

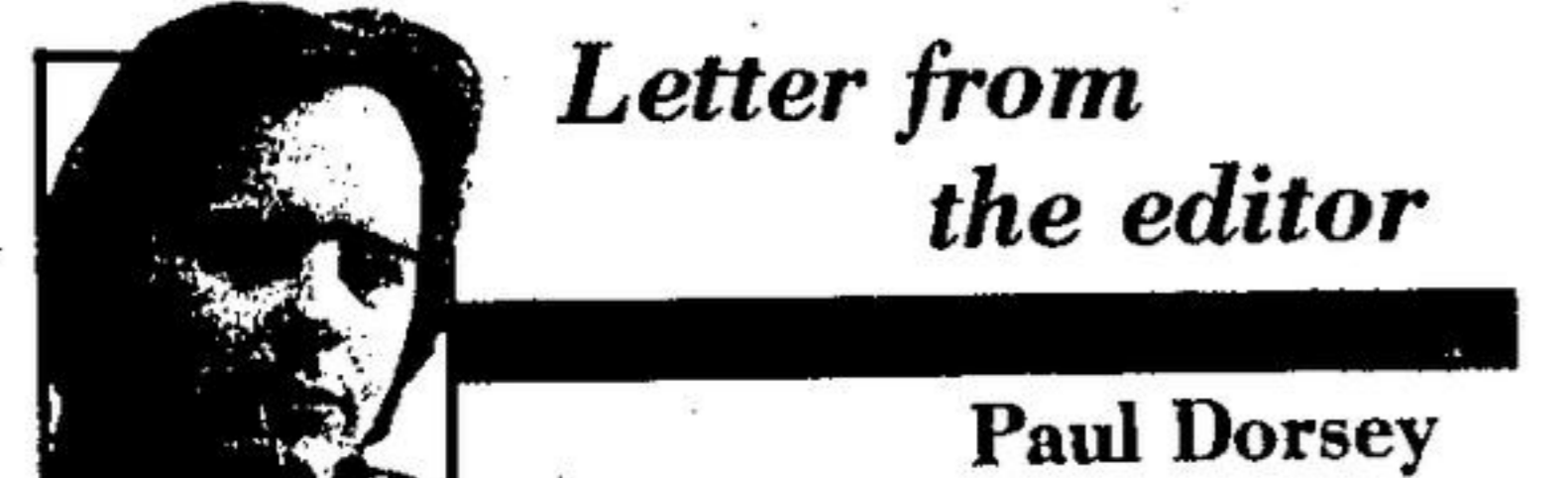
On the other hand, if Scott was exaggerating to make a point, then that, too, should be made clear and the cloud that now hangs over the whole cabinet lifted.

Certainly the Attorney-General's ministry has taken Scott's charge seriously. Perhaps overzealously, it even flew a police officer to California to interview Scott about his allegation.

Strangely, Scott considered that visit intimidation.

In fact, the visit is barely the beginning. If Scott's charge is valid it is more than time for him to stop delivering damning information in tantalizing dribs and drabs. Was there an improper action or not?

Then we can all return to the constitutional question Scott and Sharpe have raised.



Letter from the editor

Paul Dorsey

Promises, promises

Just thought I'd like to share an amusing bit of mail with you, one that just about everyone can identify with. It's one of those attempts by a company to personalize its form letters by inserting your name here and there in the midst of pre-printed text so that you come to believe you're special or something.

This one came from Canadian Family Publishers, who are running one of those Readers Digest-type sweepstakes that each and every one of us "may have already won".

I never get junk mail like this without recalling the magazine cartoon showing a

humanized hot dog pulling his mail from the post box. Sure enough, there's an "irresistible" offer, complete with typographical errors.

"You may already be a winner," the envelope tells him.

Anyway, the package from CFP was addressed to "Halton H. Herald, Automotive Editor, 45 Guelph St., Georgetown". I'm not kidding.

Inside was a mock stock certificate ostensibly worth a million dollars with the large-type inscription "Pay H.H. Herald One Million Dollars". It had a series of

ABOUT THE HILLS

R.W.T. Haddon and physiotherapy consultant Susan Alcott. Take place Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Flood protection

Riverbanks homes adjacent to MPP Julian Reed's dam off Regional Road 19 near Nobel Street in Norval are to be protected against flooding by a \$31,000 Credit Valley Conservational Authority project. Ontario's natural resources ministry last week announced approval for a \$17,050 contribution to the construction of a low hill and drainage ditch to divert capacity flows from the Reed dam spillway.

4-H financiers

With financial management a key interest to all farmers, it's only fitting that the Halton agricultural office should launch a 4-H financial management club, starting Feb. 7 at 8 p.m. at the office. If you're 16 to 19, take an interest in the club's full roster of events and activities. Call 878-2314.

Fellowship meets

Halton Hills Christian Women's Fellowship holds its first dessert and coffee meeting of 1983 next Tuesday (Jan. 18) at St. George's Anglican Hall from 1:15 to 3:15. Judy Pattison of J and M Books

Ltd. in Brampton will be the guest speaker. Jo Anne Beaulieu of Colours for All Seasons will demonstrate a new fashion co-ordination concept and Elizabeth Sterritt of Brampton will provide the music. Cost is \$3.25. Nursery facilities are available. Reservations can be made by calling 877-4158.

Deficit reduced

The projected 1982-83 budget deficit for the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded was reduced from \$35,000 to \$28,000 at a board meeting in November. Because of the remaining deficit, altered by forecasts for the balance of the fiscal year, emphasis is being placed on fund-raising and increased donation support. Among recent fund-raisers were two dances which together raised \$1,799 thanks to Halton police officers and the Newfoundland Club of Georgetown.

World Youth

Some 800 young Canadians will participate in the 1983 Canada World Youth exchange program, now in its eleventh year of placing 17 to 20-year old citizens in foreign centres for up to seven months at a time. If you're interested in learning all about cross-cultural communication by working in community projects abroad, let the organization know by Feb. 18. Write Canada World Youth, 627 Davenport Rd., Toronto, M5R 1L4.



THIRTY YEARS AGO-A district school burned to the ground early Friday morning and 26 pupils have been routed to another school two miles away for the present. Destroyed by fire was Union School 3A Esqueving and No. 3 Chinguacousy where children in the Terra Cotta and Union districts receive their primary education. The cause of the fire hasn't been determined. It was first noticed by neighboring farmers at 5:30 a.m. and had made such headway that no calls were sent for fire brigades. Only the stone walls are standing and everything else was lost in the fire except the teacher's wastebasket which was still standing in its usual place. There will be no disruption for the pupils, who with teacher Miss Jean Ballantyne, are being bused to No. 7 School two miles away. This year, enrolment has been 14.

TWENTY YEARS AGO-Georgetown must make a concentrated effort this year to attract industry, Mayor Jack Armstrong, said at the inaugural council meeting Monday as he began his seventh year as mayor. He said he is going to recommend the establishment of an industrial commission. Anticipating mail delivery before the end of the year, he said it will be necessary to erect street signs and this will be one item on the year's agenda. Town clerk Clarence Benham administered the oath of office to the mayor, Reeve Doug Sargent, Deputy Reeve Walter Gray and councillors Garfield McGilvray, Alfred Sykes, Ern Hyde, Fred Harrison, John Gunn and John Elliott.

TEN YEARS AGO-Reeve Anne McArthur of Nassagaweya weathered a threatened upset Tuesday afternoon and was officially elected warden of Halton county, confirming the unofficial election Dec. 28. In the two-way race with Reeve Ric Morrow of Georgetown, Warden McArthur won by a two-vote margin. In nominating Mrs. McArthur, Reeve Leslie Preston said she had the necessary experience and was the senior member of council.

ONE YEAR AGO-For the second weekend in a row, high winds and unstable weather conditions throughout Ontario slowed or shut down commerce, forced school buses off the roads and encouraged residents to remain indoors. The weekend cold snap, coupled with gusting winds reaching at times up to 80 kilometres per hour, may have contributed to a power failure Saturday night which left half of Georgetown and southern Esqueving without light and many homes without heat. As winds whisked the limited snowfall into blinding gusts and hazardous drifts and temperatures plummeted to 30 degrees below zero, police were forced to direct traffic at the Mountainview and Guelph Street intersection in Georgetown because streetlamps and traffic lights had blinked out with the power failure.

POET'S CORNER

Life Unlearned

I reflect on life in a simpler form
When cares were less and next to nil
I was young and had many thoughts unborn
I also had my own free will
We all grew older and with our age
Responsibilities came more to use
Making us wiser - we emerge from our cage
To conquer new problems - we found and abuse

We're all older now - adults who decide
The outcome for next year, balancing and breaking
Our opinions changing countries who ride
A lot of times we're wrong in what we're making

So we must depend on the children in loag
Their less complicated states may right our wrong
-By KELLI FITZGERALD, AHS student

Sunrise

The eastern sky lights in flits and starts
first an old woman's rouge
the flame of a candle
a touch of azure and ochre
multicolored fingers
on a blue canvas.

The new day full of surprises
is nonetheless dependable
eternally fresh
sometimes unfriendly
but always there.

Praying forms stand devoutly with outstretched hands reaching out to touch and welcome the offered grasp of a bright new day in the morning.
-By MARLOWE C. DICKSON, RRE Beeton

Langdon won't hear case

Brampton judge Kenneth Langdon, a Georgetown resident, has become the third provincial court judge to disqualify himself from hearing a case because of an alleged lack of the independence required under Canada's new Charter of Rights. Like Milton judge William Sharpe, who set the precedent last month, Judge Langdon adjourned an impaired driving hearing last week after being challenged by the defence. The Ontario Supreme Court was scheduled to consider the matter yesterday (Tuesday), required to decide whether the judges' relationship with the Ontario attorney-general's office constitutes a lack of independence and thus an inability to hear a case impartially.

Family asthma course

The Halton Lung Association's family asthma program resumed Saturday at the Georgetown District High School indoor pool. If you're interested in enrolling your child for structured swimming lessons, physical conditioning and relaxed breathing at no cost, call the Association at 877-7973. The seasons, under the medical direction of Dr.