

## It's only fitting

The achievements of residents in some communities often go unnoticed because there is no fitting recognition for their efforts.

Fortunately for Halton Hills, the annual Municipal Awards Evening goes a long way towards honoring those who deserve to be singled out for their achievements.

In his or her own way, each of the recipients of these awards is an ambassador for the community when they travel to other municipalities to pursue their respective field of endeavor.

These people have brought honor to Halton Hills and it's only fitting that Halton Hills should honor them, in return.

## Scouting about



### Editor's Notebook

Mike Turner  
Herald Editor

There aren't too many people who aren't in some way tied to the Boy Scout or Girl Guide movement in Canada.

Many of us grew up with Scouts or Guides and some continued to be involved as leaders and counsellors when they reached adulthood.

Next week, Scouts and Guides, Cubs and Brownies, Beavers and Tweenies, Pathfinders and Venturers, Rovers and Sparks - and the other groups, if there are any I've missed - will celebrate Scout-Guide Week.

Too often, everything Scouting stands for is taken for granted. Some parents will send their son or daughter off each week for their meeting, and then pick them up afterwards without giving much thought to what they do at the meetings.

There are a lot of clichés associated with the Scouting movement, and quite frankly, many fit. The Scouting and Guiding organizations are, after all, totally upright and beyond reproach.

The stigma attached to Scouting is that it's almost too "goody-goody." But that's by no means a terrible thing.

Scouts, Guides and the other associated organizations do a great deal in teaching young people a sense of responsibility, and honesty, while at the same time helping them to mature into worthwhile members of the community.

Out of those who are now involved in these organizations, many will grow up to become community leaders - whether as business people, politicians, or merely as leaders in the Scouting movement, passing along the same values to those coming up.

But the other side of the Scouting movement is an important one too. Scouting can open up some wonderful opportunities to young people to experience things they wouldn't otherwise be able to.

The main thrust of Scouting is to learn through experiences. That may mean camping trips in the dead of winter, sleeping under little more than a sheet of plastic, or it could mean trips halfway around the world to share scouting experiences in another nation and culture.

I'm not sure if they still go camping in the winter. The truth is, when I was a member of Scouting, my personal preference was the summer outings.

I liked the idea of battling blood thirsty mosquitoes more than the prospect of having to sleep in sub-zero temperatures.

But one of the greatest experiences Scouting provided for me was the opportunity to visit Japan for the 13th World Jamboree of Scouting. The fact that it was the "13th" is important here, since most of the actual Jamboree was wiped out by a typhoon.

Seeing another country though, and particularly one as beautiful as Japan, with such a magnificent history, was something I could never have done had it not been for Scouting.

Today, Scouting and the people involved with its operation are making it possible for other young people to enjoy a wide variety of experiences.

Not all will be able to visit other countries through Scouting. But each of them will be better people for the experiences they share.

There was a time when public servants were known as the pussycats of the labor movement.

Tough, strike-hardened veterans of industrial and building-trades labor wars scoffed at the thought of government clerks, stenographers, teachers and other white-collar workers "hitting the bricks."

No longer. The cuddly kittens are increasingly the tigers on the industrial-relations scene.

The trend has been going on for a few years now. It started with municipal workers, represented by outfits such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and since has spread to provincial and federal employees.

The election a few years ago of Shirley Carr as president of the Canadian Labor Congress - the country's labor "parliament" - was proof of the growing power of public-service unions.

Carr's roots were in CUPE, now by far the country's largest union. No. 2 is the National Union of Provincial Government Employees, an umbrella group that also represents some of the brewery workers who will lose jobs because of the Molson-Carling merger. Ranked third is the Public Service Alliance, the largest federal-employee union.

Two decades ago, Canada's labor movement was dominated by industrial unions such as the

## Preparing for a minor shuffle

Speculation is building here about the chances of a minor cabinet shuffle in February.

Or, more likely, a major re-casting of cabinet this summer.

Much of the gossip centres on Treasurer Robert Nixon, who is said to be destined for retirement after presenting a final budget late this spring.

The question of where Nixon is bound, and when, lies at the heart of the speculation.

Until he goes, any major shift is on hold.

And since it is already generally considered too close to budget time to change treasurers (although that's only partially true), any cabinet moves this month would have to be relatively minor.

One theory is that the Liberals have been receiving such bad press over housing and health matters that Housing Minister Chaviva Hosek and Health Minister Elinor Caplan are almost certain to be transferred from their portfolios.

And the sooner, the better, the theory goes.

(Incidentally, the same goes for Liberal House Leader Sean Conway, whose partisan style is wrong for the job.)

The contrary view is that for all its so-called troubles, the government is still riding along at a comfortable level in the polls, which indicates things can't be all that bad politically.



### Queen's Park

Derek Nelson  
Thomson News Service

Besides, neither Hosek nor Caplan has really had a genuine chance to produce at ministries where the real chores are long term rather than short.

Their problems are, in many ways, ones of perception rather than content. No matter who holds housing and health - and, given a boom economy, no matter the party in power - the cost of health care and the price of housing are going to continue to climb out of sight.

Mind you, Hosek's troubles are fuelled by her lecturing, school-marmish approach to both opposition and media, while Caplan's insistence on dodging questions rather than answering them doesn't help her case.

They could both take lessons from Nixon, who actually responds to opposition and media queries.

#### NIXON'S FUTURE

The most interesting stories right now are based on speculation over what job Nixon will get when he goes.

High Commissioner or Agent-General to England are two posts often mentioned, although they

suffer as possibilities if (as some suggest) the family preference is for a genuine retirement.

More fitting in that context would be the essentially part-time jobs of Ontario Hydro chairman or federal senator.

In any case, with Nixon gone, the job of treasurer opens up, and the only name heard as a candidate is Management Board chairman Murray Elston, whose quiet ways have apparently impressed Premier David Peterson.

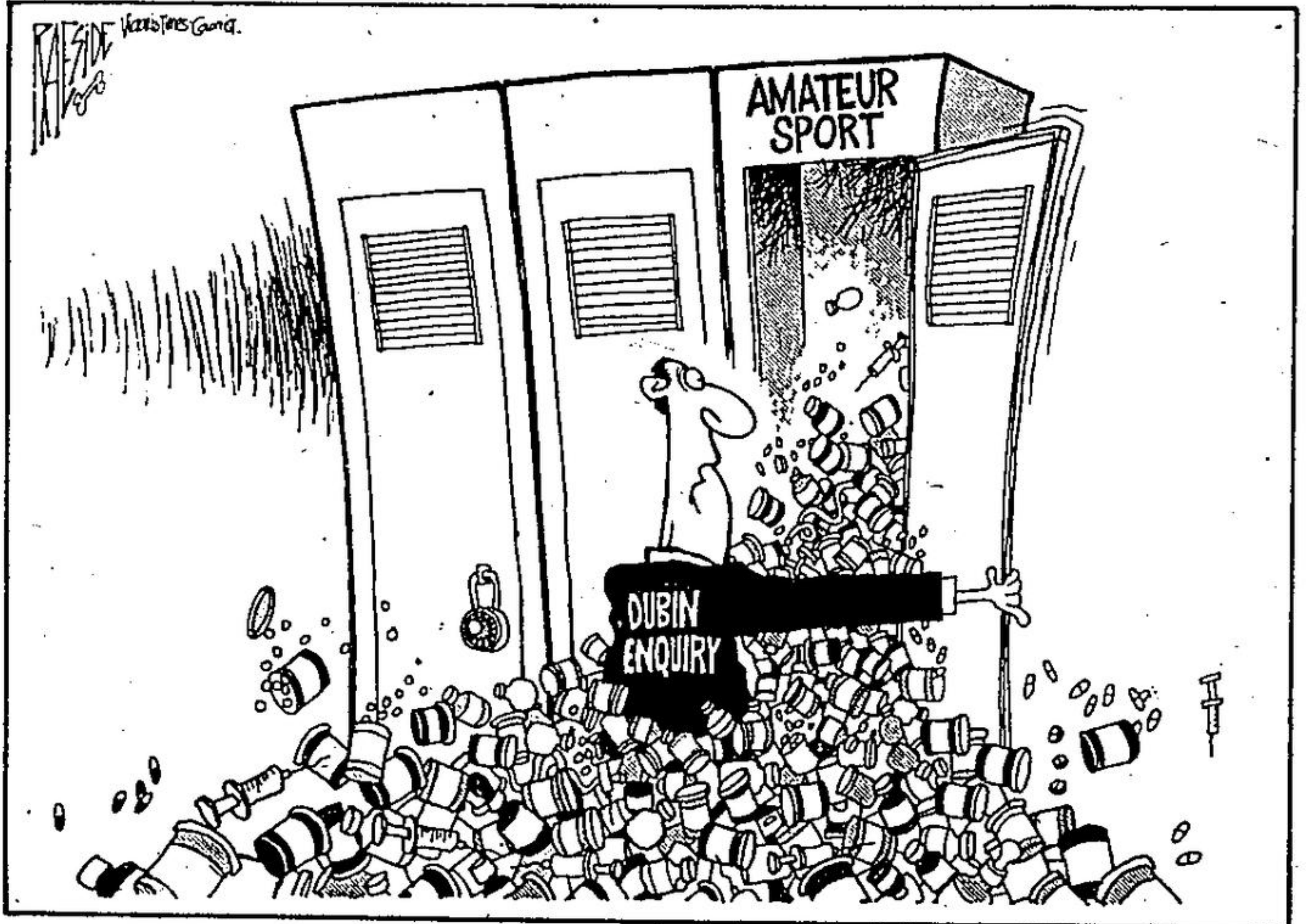
The other major post in government, Attorney General, is held by Ian Scott. There are (and have been for two years) constant rumors about Scott's unhappiness with the political world and his desire to get out.

On the other hand, it has also been said he wants to run for Ontario Liberal leader some day. The two streams of thought aren't exactly compatible.

Another consideration weighing on Peterson is whether he wants to proceed with the idea of a super-minister for the environment, which would give incumbent Jim Bradley formal control not only over that ministry, but others such as natural resources and energy.

There is also one final element to this particular cabinet shuffle that Peterson must ponder.

He has 60-odd, increasingly restless backbenchers who want some sign that they can make it to the government's front benches.



## Public servants come into their own



### Ottawa

Vic Parsons

United Steelworkers and the United Autoworkers (now the Canadian Auto Workers).

What does this mean for the public when privatization and government spending cuts are issues of the day?

#### QUIET TIME

A recent study by the Conference Board sheds light. Author Prem Benimadhu says industrial relations in private business is enjoying a period of relative tranquility. Labor and business have had some success in reducing private-sector tensions.

But in the public and so-called "para-public" sectors - including teachers, nurses and other workers - they indirectly get their money from government - the situation is not improving.

"The public-sector unions are becoming more distrustful and more militant," says Benimadhu. "This uneasy climate will materialize in an arduous negotiation process which will dominate the labor-relations scene in 1989."

This militant atmosphere is evi-

dent in rhetoric issuing from Public Service Alliance headquarters in Ottawa. Union president Daryl Beag predicts confrontation unless the government softens its negotiating stance and provides more cash and job security to 165,000 workers seeking new contracts this year.

"Strike action will have a debilitating impact on the delivery of many public services," Beag said recently.

What's behind the tough words? Beag says the government has slashed 15,000 jobs since 1984. Many of those disappeared through attrition or retirement. In other cases, the government placed those whose jobs disappeared into vacant positions. But often those left behind were expected to perform the duties of departed colleagues as well as their own. This has eroded the morale of many survivors.

#### PRaised MINISTER

There was a flash of optimism last week when Beag praised the re-appointment of Robert de Cotret as head of the Treasury Board, which negotiates with federal employees. De Cotret held the same position a few years ago when the alliance negotiated a dental plan and established master contracts for its members.

But Beag's joy may be short lived. The government has made clear its prime goal is deficit

reduction. De Cotret is unlikely to prove to be the amiable sort of bygone years.

Confronting a restraint-minded government is a union with more effective strike power. Inexplicably, Treasury Board failed to get its lists of "designated" employees - those forbidden to strike for reasons of safety and public security - to the labor board on time. That means more workers, in sensitive jobs, can walk out than in previous years.

Moreover, a bothersome issue has arisen that could mess things up. It's the federal smoking ban in government offices. Defiant workers have been lighting up where they are not permitted. Others have left work for long periods of time for smokes.

With members on both sides of the smoking issue, the alliance has had trouble coping with this one, and internal turmoil has ensued. That spells bad news for negotiations. Whenever a large group of unhappy members exists, it means trouble for both union leaders and employers, especially if dissidents show their wrath by turning down a tentative contract.

Labor relations is often unpredictable. Agreements can be reached unexpectedly, and talks that should be a piece of cake sometimes fail.

But this spring could be the time that one of the pussycats roars.