Editorial

Suffer the little children

The World Summit for Children, to be held at the United Nations buildings in New York, Saturday and Sunday, is truly a unique event.

It is not a United Nations summit as such, but rather a concept that was identified by one UN agency, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in its 1988 annual report and acted upon by six initiating countries including Canada, Egypt, Mexico, Pakistan, Sweden and Mali.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney will act as co-chairman of the summit, along with President Traore of Mali.

It is expected that over 80 Heads of Government and Heads of State will attend the summit, the largest-ever of its kind to be held in history.

The summit is expected to cover subjects as diverse as health, nutrition, education, refugee children, AIDS, child labor, street children, prostitution and children during wartime.

Some may say that such a summit has been a long time in coming and they would be accurate in their assessment of the virtual neglect of children's issues worldwide, including here in Canada.

It wasn't until 1959 that the United Nations adopted a Declaration of the Rights of a Child.

Little changed in regards children's issues as the declaration merely offered a point of view on behalf of the world body, albeit a needed one.

1979 was declared the International Year of the Child, mostly window dressing with some help directed to Third World children.

Last year, the United Nations endorsed a Convention on the Rights of the Child and because the document was declared a convention, it is legally binding on United Nations members with a 10-nation committee being established giving authority to investigate and make public, violations of children's rights under the Convention.

Thus, this weekend's summit, with UNICEF urgently requesting that each attending nation donate five per cent of their annual military budget to help aid the world's childrens' plight.

Canada's share under this formula would amount to $600 million.

In reference to the summit, Mr. Mulroney was quoted as saying, "Ideally, childhood should be a carefree time of discovery and hope. It's a time to grow, to play and learn in a secure and loving environment. But for millions of the world's children, the reality is far different...Far too many - perhaps 40 thousand a day - lose that battle."

Our Prime Minister will undoubtedly wax eloquent in his speeches at the summit, but here's hoping he is also willing to come to the aid of children in need here in Canada.

It is estimated that one million Canadian children live in poverty and that fully 560,000 Canadian children a year depend on foodbanks for sustenance - fully 40 per cent of all food bank users.

Similarly, infant mortality among native people is an issue that must be addressed.

A study has shown that the infant mortality rate for native Indians per 1,000 was 18.8 and among Inuit 27.6, a figure that puts these Canadian babies at a higher risk to survive past their first birthday than babies in Cuba and Singapore.

Before Mr. Mulroney even thinks about castigating other countries and their treatment - or lack of same - of children, he should first help alleviate the problem in his own backyard.

Letter Of The Week

Terry Fox run a success

Dear Sir:

As Chairman of the 10th Annual Terry Fox Run Committee, I would like to thank all the citizens of Halton Hills who braved a rather chilly Sunday, September 16th to run, walk, jog, ride and wheel for cancer research.

A special vote of thanks to Martin and Susan Dooley, Elizabeth Smith, Barbara Riegle, John and Janet Murphy and 13-year-old Kevin Smith. Also to David Ogilvy from [illegible] who was with us and a special welcome to Pat Lowry, a child with cystic fibrosis, participating in the run who was a guest [illegible]

Our thanks to the Lorne Scots under Captain Welch, who, although on an alert due to the crisis in Oka, allowed us to use the facilities at the Armouries and set up our registration tables outside the building.

Last, but not least, our own member of "Terry's Team," my wife, Cynthia Green, who worked tirelessly for many weeks to help make the run a success.

Terry Fox would have been proud of you all and the over $6,000.00 raised for the continuing fight against cancer.

Sincerely,
Derek Green,
Georgetown.

the HERALD

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Letters

Beachbrooke proposal galls writer

Dear Editor:

The Beachbrooke proposal for a rural subdivision in the Niagara Escarpment planning area has been in the news lately. Halton Hills Council reversed its decision from one of opposition to one of support.

At the initial meeting I had requested to make a statement. Unfortunately I was denied permission to do so. I had hoped to make the following comments in response to a statement by town planner Glen Wellings that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) always comments on the productive viability of farm land irregardless of size.

On behalf of EAGLE I have been attending Niagara Escarpment meetings regularly. I recall a presentation by the president of the Halton Federation of Agriculture to the Commission in which he stated that in their experience OMAF is not interested in farms with small acreages whether land is prime agriculture or not. Farm severances, the Foodland Guidelines and OMAF's application of these guidelines have been a very controversial subject at NEC meetings over the past year. OMAF appears to be inconsistent.

As well OMAF has now identified "areas of interest" within NEC jurisdiction where OMAF request comments related to land use proposals. Within Halton Hills there are farmlands considered prime agricultural value for which OMAF has "no interest." These areas are identified on map overlays in the NEC boardroom.

Southwestern Ontario constitutes well under 10% of Canada's farmland but on the basis of climate and soils, it accounts for 20% of the value of agricultural output. Only 3% of Ontario's population work the land while farm related products compose the 2nd largest industry ($22 billion - 1988).

With 37% of Canada's class one agricultural lands within site of the CN Tower it is imperative that we cease this continued destruction.

Pat Woode,
Acton.

A victory for Ontarians

Dear sir:

The NDP's stunning election victory is not so much a victory for New Democrats but a victory for all of us in Ontario.

A point that will be clear when the coming recession will demand creative, effective actions by governments.

Ontarian's will have reason to thank their lucky stars to have a man in the premier's office who is not captive to the odious dogma "Money Counts - People Don't." It's something new and exciting to look forward to. Anyone who follows the confused utterances in Press and Media can't help but conclude a bad case of intellectual incest seeks to manipulate the public.

Clyde Wells of Newfoundland understood and said so - David Peterson of Ontario did not. Ontario's election points out, expert opinion is suspect. Only two years ago, Robert Campeau lectured anyone willing to listen how wonderful free trade is going to be. You will probably say "who is Robert Campeau?"

I rest my case.

A. Tuchel,
Georgetown.

Colorful character lost

Dear Sir:

Georgetown's Main Street lost a little bit of colour over the summer with the death of an old gentleman whose name many of us didn't even know.

The girls in the drug store said his name was George. He lived in the hotel and for the past few years he was a common fixture on the bench just outside Young's Drug Store.

Unshaven, and a little unkempt at times, he always had a bright and cheery word for anyone who would take the time to speak. He had difficulty walking, and I am sure there were probably times when things were something difficult for him, but his gruff bouncy voice never betrayed him. He was the colourful kind of character that is so lacking in our unimaginative and sterile world of today.

As I pass that bench, quiet now, I will remember his "good morning, love" and silently say hello to George - the man I never really knew.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn Livingstone
Georgetown.

Write us a letter!

The Herald wants to hear from you. If you have an opinion you want to express or a comment to make, send us a letter or drop by the office. Our address is 45 Guelph St., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 3Z6.

All letters must be signed. Please include your address and telephone number for verification.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters due to space limitations or libel.