

Arts and Ideas

Separation will not be the end of Canada

History is a dynamic and largely unpredictable process. We don't have to know much about history to be aware that countries and boundaries are in a constant flux.

The map of Europe changed considerably after 1918 and 1945, and the great colonial empires that existed before the last war are all gone now.

To try to freeze these constant changes is as futile as trying to stop the tectonic plates on the surface of our planet from moving and causing earthquakes. History is a force too powerful to be stopped. All we can do is to keep cool, to try to understand the viewpoint of others and, yes, to try not to fall in the trap to use rhetoric. If we do neither, the result will be, and has been in the past, war, and war, as we know by now, has become, in the age of atomic weapons, an enterprise so risky that it is better avoided.

Even in the past, a war created nothing but bad feelings, and seldom solved anything.

Last week, in this paper, our representative in Ottawa wrote about his feelings with regard to a possible separation of Quebec from confederation. It honors him that even the idea of separation causes him grief. Naturally, if something comes to an end in human affairs, there will be pain and bewilderment, and the nagging thought that some timely gesture on our side might have prevented the outcome.

But in spite of it all, we must not start to talk irresponsibly. We



Ideas and The Arts
by
John Sommer

must let reason prevail and we must not make points that do not bear close inspection. The prejudice of others cannot be rendered harmless, if we simply hold our prejudices against them. When we come to the end of our rope, we like to engage in rhetoric as a last resort, but what good does that do? According to my dictionary one of the definitions of the word "rhetoric" is "the undue use of exaggeration or display, bombast."

An example. Our representative in Ottawa writes that "no country ever got stronger or wealthier by getting smaller." What an astonishing and sweeping pronouncement from somebody as versed in history as our esteemed representative in Ottawa.

As short a time ago as 1905, Norway separated from Sweden, and both small countries did a lot better for themselves, after separation, than before.

Several countries were released into independence after the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire in 1918, and some of them, notably Czechoslovakia, but also Austria, the now smallest country of a formerly bloated empire, did well, until Hitler reversed the flow of history again by creating a mighty Giant Germany, that, mercifully, only lasted a short time.

In 1945 Germany was reduced substantially in size and the western part of it became wealthier than it had ever been before. The eastern part might have done equally well, had not the Russians kept it in an ideological deep freeze until recently.

Whether the two Germanies will do well together is far from sure. What is scary about countries like Russia and China and America is their monstrous size. Their size makes bullies out of them, to the discomfort of us all.

A part of Canada's difficulties is caused by the fact that only some of our provinces generate wealth, whereas other provinces perform poorly. It's not that these poor provinces are inhabited by lazy people, but a vicious dependency to the more economically powerful provinces, is keeping them down. We all remember what happened to when Alberta tried to raise the price of its oil in the 70's, to benefit from higher oil prices elsewhere. The Prime Minister of Canada at that time, vetoed this sensible idea, because the rich provinces, in particular Ontario and Quebec, thought that they "deserved" cheap energy. The rhetoric becomes truly dangerous, in my opinion, when

our present Prime Minister says that he "is not going to treat with kid gloves those who are set on destroying our country." No sensible person outside Quebec wants Quebec to separate, but if it does, is the Prime Minister going to start a civil war? Does he see himself already (since he seems to have a weakness for American role models) as a Canadian Abe Lincoln, who is going to put those pesky separatists down, once and for all?

Let us hope that we find a way to stay together, but let us also hope that our leaders stay calm and reasonable if Quebec decides to opt out. Nobody can say what our fate will be should separation occur, but one thing is certain, separation is not going to be the end of Canada.

There might very well be "dream merchants" in this country but there are also "fear-mongers" here. Let us not listen to either of them.

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The Credit Valley Artisans are offering a four session spinning course for beginners starting March 23. The course will consist of one Saturday workshop and three Thursday evening classes.

Rockwood resident Norma Goring will be the instructor.

During this course the student will learn all aspects of spinning including sorting of fleece, carding, spinning on the drop spindle and spinning wheel, plying and yarn finishing. Students must have a spinning wheel in good working order and a pair of carers. The class size is small to provide individual instruction.

For further information contact Frank Anthony, Registrar, at 877-5856 between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Deadline for registration in this course is February 23, 1991 to give the instructor ample time to obtain the supplies.

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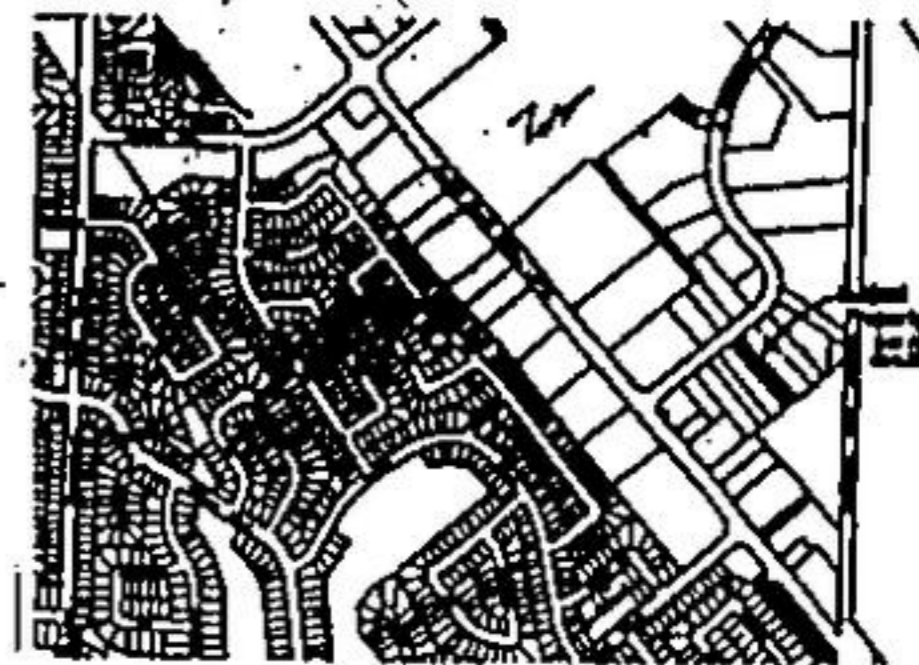
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COURTESY NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

WARD 3/ARMSTRONG AVENUE



Council for the Town of Halton Hills will conduct a Public Meeting to examine and discuss a proposed revised amendment to Zoning By-law 57-91 and Amending By-law 87-102 to permit the legalizing of an existing industrial use occupying an area of .46 hectares (1.13 acres). The Amendment would change the zoning from M2 Industrial to permit a variety of industrial uses for the storage and recycling of materials.

The subject property is described as Lots 12 and 13, Registered Plan 617, Town of Halton Hills (Georgetown) and is located at 309 Armstrong Avenue.

Further information is available in the Planning Department.

ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS ARE WELCOME

Time: 7:10 p.m.
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 1991
Location: Council Chambers
Civic Centre
1 Halton Hills Drive
Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ont.

Ad. No. 1361

File No.: 014/MO

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