

First taste of the Social Contract

BY TIM MORGETROYD
The Acton Tanner

This week local government began locking its doors as public service employees had their first of three unpaid days off.

The voluntary but unpopular wage and services rollback for balancing Ontario's runaway budget — the Social Contract Act — received Council's blessing Aug. 9 when a plan listing specific cuts was put to a vote.

Public Works operations closed Monday, Aug. 16 and will also close Monday Aug. 23 and Sept. 13, these specific dates chosen to minimize any disruption of public service because no waste management was scheduled those days.

Both the unionized workers and public works foreman would be off those days.

The Social Contract Act outlines special considerations for employees of essential services to guarantee their continuous operation, but provincial regulations defining essential services exempt from closing are still being written. The recommendations Council approved assume the fire department will be essential, but all full-time fire department staff will be off during the holidays, with the exception of communications officers.

Parking enforcement officers are exempt from the Social Contract and will provide ongoing service.

Building inspectors will have unpaid holidays between Christmas and New Year's because this is the off-peak building season, and municipal law enforcement will take their unpaid days at the same time.

The Civic Centre will close Dec. 24 and reopen Jan. 4, and swimming pools will be closed between Christmas and New Year's as they have been in previous years, but the arenas will remain open because it is the peak period of usage. Arena staff have three unpaid days off when their workload permits.

The Parks and Cemeteries unionized workers will be off between Christmas and New Years, but two employees will be kept on duty to provide cemetery interments. Both will take alternate unpaid days off.

Local libraries will not be ready to negotiate until late August. Conflicting summer vacation schedules won't allow a meeting until then, but a report outlining the options for Acton and Georgetown libraries has been prepared.

NEWS SHORTS

Car robbed

A car parked on Queen Street Saturday morning was found with more than \$1,100 in stolen goods and damage after a thief or thieves broke into it for the car stereo equipment.

The black 1986 Hyundai, owned by a 21-year-old Acton man, was left parked and locked at The Beer Store on Queen Street, not far from his residence.

Between 1 and 7:30 am Saturday the rear window was smashed out of the car to gain entrance, then the culprit(s) pulled out an Audio-Vox 240 Watt amplifier worth \$206, two kicker boxes containing two 8" speakers worth \$350, and a home-made speaker box made of wood containing two 12" Pro-Plus speakers valued at \$300.

Total property stolen is \$856.

Rockwood man arrested

A 27-year-old Rockwood man was arrested last Thursday and held for bail after hitting his girlfriend at her Georgetown residence, which the couple had been sharing.

The accused was moving his belongings out of the residence between 1 and 6:45 am when tempers erupted.

There were two fights, and during the argument the accused grabbed the woman and hit her, said police.

INDEX

Editorial Comment	6	Sports	11
What's Happening	9	Classifieds	15

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"People are more cautious in what they buy; they're thinking more practically. A lot of people are still feeling the pinch. But our business is far better than last year. It all hinges on development, though."

— Charlie Kinal of Acton Home Hardware, Front Page

DID YOU KNOW?

Alfred Nobel (Peace Prize) invented dynamite. Lesser known is that he was also the pioneer of plywood.

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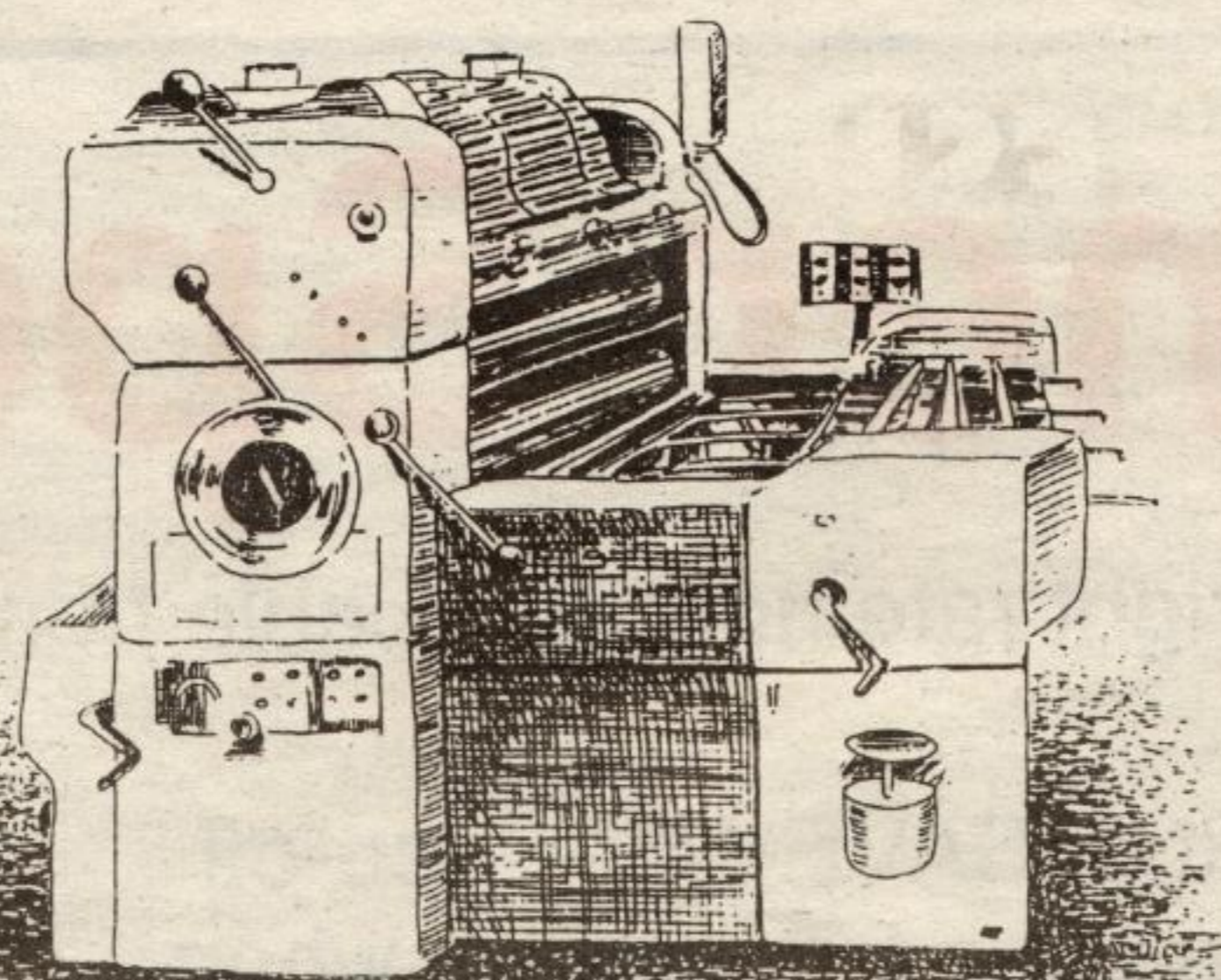
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