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McCague should act

The promotion of George McCague from relative obscurity as Minister of Government Services to George Kerr's old post as Minister of the Environment moves McCague into one of the hottest seats in the Ontario Government Cabinet.

We hope that one of McCague's first official duties will be to intervene in the ongoing squabble over finding a landfill site in Halton Region.

Both Kerr and Agricultural Minister John Newman have been strangely silent on the issue, ever since it surfaced.

Chances are that the proposal for a landfill site on prime agricultural land in Milton will be tossed out—if not by the Environmental Assessment Board, certainly by the Ontario Municipal Board.

The government's policy on use of prime agricultural land for landfill sites is clear, but any definitive statement from either minister or any provincial government official has yet to come with reference to the Halton application.

There are at least two clear precedents where landfill applications have been scrubbed on the basis that the landfill sites would be on prime farmland.

The first is St. Thomas where, after a four-day hearing, the OMB dismissed the application because of the farm land issue.

The second similar case was in Kitchener-Waterloo. That region zeroed in on what their consultants felt was the best of 22 possible sites, but forgot about it after Agriculture Minister John Newman said no sites on prime farmland could be considered.

The precedents are firmly in place and one would think the implications of proceeding with the present Halton application are indeed grave.

Based on the experience in Kitchener and St. Thomas it would appear there is little chance of the Milton site ever materializing.

If it doesn't, the region could face a crisis that would see mounting piles of garbage with no place for it to be dumped.

Surely the province has a moral obligation to prevent the crisis and make clear its position on the application, without forcing the region to go through all of the onerous and time-consuming procedures. If the province is going to kill the application—and it appears there is no choice—it should kill it while there is still time to seek alternate solutions.

While in the Environment portfolio, Kerr chose to remain neutral until the application had run its course. If figures concerning the amount of time remaining are accurate, waiting is a luxury the region can no longer afford.

One of those things

Once again last week traffic was snarled when a train on the CPR track blocked town streets for 37 minutes. The 97-car train blocked traffic on Thompson Rd., Martin St., Main St. and Ontario St.

Traffic hold-ups due to train break-downs or shunting aren't new to Milton. In this instance, the break-down was due to a broken air hose, but in other instances the cause has apparently been attributed to mechanical problems with the switching apparatus.

Transport Minister Otto Laing has previously assured residents in the town that he has investigated the situation and feels "this is just one of those things that happens."

Laing should know that for Milton residents, having "one of

those things happening" is an all too frequent occurrence.

Laing should know too, that if in fact there are problems that could be cured, it is a problem too serious to ignore.

The break-downs not only snarl traffic but leave a large portion of the town severed from emergency services such as fire and hospital services.

The citizens see a grade separation, (railway underpass or overpass) as the ultimate solution, but in the meantime steps must be taken to prevent any further train break-downs or traffic blockages. The problem is too serious for Otto Laing or anyone else to slough off as "one of those things that happens."

Sugar and Spice

Back to good old normality

by Bill Smiley



One of the most pleasant experiences in the world, for those of us who, if not over the hill, are at least sitting at the top contemplating with a mixture of dismay and scared exhilaration the slippery slope we have climbed, and the greasy one we are about to descend, is getting back to normal after lurching through the "joys" of the holidays that end the year.

And if one of my students gave me a sentence like that last one on composition, I'd probably tear it to ribbons for lack of coherence and unity.

But perhaps those very things—coherence and unity—are the things so lacking in the holiday season, and to which we return with a sigh of relief in the short cold days and long cold nights of January.

We had a rather bleak Christmas this year. Our hearts were in the right place, but my teeth weren't. Several of them had joined that little limbo where your teeth go when they decide to leave you to your own devices, otherwise known as gums.

I put a good face on it, as it were, trying to conceal from my wife, with her flashing white teeth, my mental, spiritual and physical humiliation at having to exist on pea soup, soft-boiled eggs and medicinal brandy.

But it didn't work. We had the usual fight about the tree, finally getting it up after four hours of recriminations, tears and explosions of rage and frustration.

This year we put it in a bucket of wet sand, after years of trying to set it up in

pails of coal, in various tree stands, and on a flat board nailed to the trunk. As usual it toppled heavily in all directions but the right one, and we had to tie it to the wall with string.

Every year my wife says other people get their tree to stand without using string. And every year I defy her to show me one tree in town that isn't trussed to the wall in some way.

For Christmas dinner, I'd bought a fat duck. But the old lady didn't feel like eating an entire duck by herself. So we sat around rather vacantly and stared at the huge pile of parcels under the tree, which could not be opened, of course, because 90 per cent of them were for "the boys," and the boys weren't expected till the day after Boxing Day.

So the day they did arrive, noses running freely, we cooked the duck and a roast of beef, and a happy time was had by all, trying to put front-end-loaders and fire trucks and other plastic monstrosities together.

You know, there was something to be said for those old days during the Depression, when kids got a pair of mitts or Sox and maybe a 15-cent bubble pipe.

At least the adults didn't have to spend hours trying to find parts for Tinker Toys and Leggo and Sesame St. scattered all over the living room. They didn't have to try to get together stuff that would have taxed Leonardo da Vinci.

However, the boys were a roaring delight, as always, and their Gran spoiled them silly, and their mother told me what was wrong with my entire attitude to teaching (she's been at it three months and has all the questions and most of the answers), and their father drowsed quietly during the piano concert that followed, and yours truly ran out every hour to scrape 10 inches of snow off the car.

But this is not normalcy. How joyous it is to get back to the old humdrum routine. To hear that thrilling, drilling sound of the alarm clock at 7.15, totter to the bathroom with arthritic joints giving out cracks like maple trees in a deep frost, and to emerge in three-quarters of an hour, smelling of

shaving cream, toothpaste and honest soap, another chapter of a novel read.

How very pleasant it is to wade out to the garage in the barely lighted morning, snow flying in all directions, scratch the ice off the inside of your windshield with your finger-nails, and try to start the old beast, which emits a couple of grunts like a lady moose in labor, and falls totally, unforgivably silent.

How thrilling to get back to work, the salvation of many a man and woman, and exchange witty repartee about losing your boots at the New Year's Eve party, and whose snowmobile broke down, and why Jack's nose is swollen with grog-blossoms, and how much white gunk there is in the driveway.

And then there's the delight of getting home after work, and sitting down for one of those intimate chats with your wife, who

tells you, at interminable length, how to place a "dart" in a pattern for sewing, when all you know about darts is that it's played in a pub.

And to discover that for dinner you're having hamburger and onions, which you had in the cafeteria for lunch. And that the bill for the furnace repairs came to \$48, and that the man wants 50 bucks to clean the ice off the roof, and the paper boys claims you owe him for six weeks.

I don't know about you, but I can't stand too many of these holidays: the slothful lying-in in the morning, the staying up until three to watch a late movie, the one-hour coffee breaks morning and afternoon.

It's debilitating. It contributes to moral delinquency. Far better the comfortable horror of the regular routine of a Canadian winter.

Turning the Pages of the Past

From the files of The Canadian Champion

One year ago

Taken from the issue of *The Canadian Champion* of January 26, 1977

Construction of a major food store on Millside Dr. would all but kill chances of redevelopment in the central business district of Milton, according to town planner Bob Zsadyani. He told council last week that assemblies are being put together right now with a view to redevelopment in that block of land, bounded by Main, Martin, Mill and James Sts. He said a commercial, residential and office complex is being considered.

According to Halton Regional Public Works Chairman Jack Raftis, there will not be a landfill site located at Site F. Raftis made that prediction during a break in a council-staff seminar held last week. He suggested that when all of the debate is over, council will opt for three or four small dump sites and a resource recovery plant.

Halton Regional Police were called to Milton District High School early last week when an unidentified caller phoned in a bomb threat.

Canada's most famous university law student took time off from classes Thursday to speak before 400 people at Oakville's Sheridan College on two of her favorite subjects: Family Law and her politician husband from Rocky Mountain, Alberta.

Maureen McTeer, 24-year-old wife of national Progressive Conservative leader Joe Clark and a third year student at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Common Law, read from a prepared text relating her views on the relationship between the family unit and the laws governing families in our society.

20 years ago

From the Jan. 23, 1958 Issue

Milton issued \$805,015 in building permits in 1957, about \$250,000 short of the record set here in 1955. Major building projects last year included 15 homes in the Fallingbrook area, the new bowlaway, the Brewer's Retail warehouse, the W.I. Dick School the hydro garage and warehouse, an Esso service station and additions to the sewage plant, the Sunoco Station on Main St., Johnson Bros. garage, S.A. Fay and Sons, the Legion Hall, Halton Co-Op, Bank of Nova Scotia and P.L. Robertson's.

Loudon Home Builders is attempting an experiment to provide more low-cost housing in Milton. Council has granted permission for three new two-storey, semi-detached homes in the Fallingbrook area.

to be built under English construction methods. All six of the homes will have 1,060 square feet of floor area and will sell for around \$10,000—a saving of \$2,000 to \$3,000 over similarly sized homes in Milton today.

Champion publisher Jim Dills this week introduces a new column, Jim's Jottings. It will be made up of bits and pieces, he says. A financial report from treasurer Harold Kelson indicates Milton's 1957 centennial cost around \$8,000. The stagecoach, which publicized the event in several area towns, cost \$321.60, he said.

Two Stoney Creek men became Milton's first fatalities of the year when a CPR freight train struck their station wagon broadside at the Bronte St. crossing. The car was hurled along the track and down a 50-foot embankment. OPP Officers Jim Bradley and Tom Dube said the roof was sheared off and the car was split in two pieces.

75 years ago

From the Jan. 22, 1903 Issue

It is reported that a few days ago Audrey Peart, son of the postmaster of Burlington, was taken ill. Dr. Richardson was called in, pronounced the disease smallpox and ordered the patient to be quarantined. Mr. Peart is well known in Milton as a crack wing shot, having taken part in several matches here.

The number of unmarried ladies of St. George's Church, Georgetown having become a subject of serious consideration, it has been decided to hold "A Spinners' Convention" in the Town Hall on the 20th of Feb., at 8 p.m. It is to be hoped members of the church and very many sympathizing friends will make it convenient to attend, also that a becoming gravity may be preserved during the deliberations.

E.E. Benson, late of Hamilton, has gone into the manufacture of carriages, buggies, wagons, sleighs at the old stand of the late Wm. McKenzie, corner Mill and Martin Sts.

The newly elected county council will meet for the first time next Tuesday. The warden will be elected, standing committees selected the apportionment of the amount to be paid for the Hamilton and Nelson toll road will be settled, and a number of other businesses looked after.

Jas. B. Leonard, organizer for the Home Correspondent School, is in town and vicinity enrolling and starting students on different lines of study. A number in this vicinity took up work with this school last year and have found it a grand way of getting a good practical business education at a moderate cost.

On the News Beat

Regions tough to market

By Bob Burtt



In June of 1973 a Champion editorial writer indulged in some crystal ball gazing concerning the future of regional government in Halton.

"Asked for, pursued, demanded, chased. Debated, argued, feared, fought over. Conjectured, hinted at, talked around. And finally announced, polished and made law.

"Yes, regional government for Halton is on its way. Like it or lump it," the editorial read.

The same piece went on to say that the matter had been under discussion for seven years.

"Can we make regional government work? It will be a challenge, but we're optimistic enough to think we can. After seven years of preparation, we should be ready."

That probably spelled out the mood of the people and the politicians accurately at the time. But now, almost five years later, a lot of the optimism that was evident going into regional government has soured.

Now after five years have passed since county government was in vogue, there are many people who feel regional government just wasn't worth the wait.

The Liberal Task Force on Regional Government is giving residents the opportunity to express dissatisfaction with regional government.

Last week's meeting did flush out a lot of specific problems with regionalism. Growing bureaucracy, erosion of community spirit, and increased costs were key complaints filed by Halton residents before the commission.

Most people who spoke acknowledged that the county form of government needed revisions. But at the same time it seems generally agreed that the province went too far in its revisions and has done more to deteriorate local government than to strengthen it.

Liberal MPP from Essex South, Remo Mancinni said he would return to his home riding—which isn't yet regionalized—and tell his home folk to modify the county system but forget about a full blown regional government.

But Halton isn't unique in its disappointment with regional government. Mississauga Council is discussing opting out of Peel region this week, a large percentage of the population in Hamilton-Wentworth is ready to shelve the whole exercise, and the concept has never been fully accepted in Niagara.

Regional chairmen everywhere are fighting to sell the concept and keep the regions intact.

Mississauga Councillor Frank Bean describes a typical situation. In Peel there are three municipalities—Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon.

Bean explains that all three are represented at the region, but because of the distinct characteristics in each municipality it is difficult for the various municipalities to reconcile the needs of their co-partners in regionalism.

"Frankly, Mississauga doesn't have a Helluva lot in common with Caledon. Caledon is a community with no condominiums. I represent a ward with 30,000 people, filled with condominiums.

"Caledon doesn't understand our problems and frankly I don't even understand some of the people there, let alone their problems. I resent the mayor of Caledon or the regional chairman telling me how to run the city."

Bean's statement might sound a bit flippant, but it contains a lot of truth and it isn't applicable solely to Peel, but certainly Halton.

Prior to regional government different municipalities offered different services and different levels of service.

But the regional concept is possessed with the idea of standard services and because everything is lumped into a common pot, it is difficult to cater to peculiar needs any longer.

Mancinni seems to have the right slant on things. Without saying "we told you so" The Champion's editorial page did caution the county about a hokus bolus approach to regionalism. It suggested biting off a bit at a time and letting the process evolve.

But when the province handed out the rulebooks it was clear it had opted to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

After seven years of study and five years of experience, those interested or involved in the regional exercise still ask, "can we make it work?" The challenge hasn't disappeared.

One thing that has changed since those early days, is that there are fewer optimistic people.

Regional chairmen who inherit the role of selling the region have their hands full. It's proving to be a tough product to market.