

Torstar chairman defends purchase of Inland chain

Torstar Corp. chairman Beland Honderich brushed aside suggestions that the recent purchase by Metrospan, the community newspaper division of Torstar, of the rival string of 13 community papers in the Inland Publishing Co. Limited chain, has created a "concentration of power" in the Metro Toronto area.

Appearing before the Royal Commission on Newspapers in Ottawa, Mr. Honderich said the Metro Toronto area still has a wide choice of newspapers and other media.

Torstar, the company which also publishes the daily Toronto Star, now controls a group of 22 weekly newspapers in and around the Metro area with a combined circulation of more than 600,000.

But in the area covered by Metrospan—from Oshawa in the east to Burlington in the west—there are 66 other weekly publications with a combined circulation of over 1.5 million and that doesn't even include a wide range of ethnic newspapers, Mr. Honderich told the Commission.

He also pointed out that the area is also served by seven daily newspapers, 35 radio stations, seven television stations, and nine magazines.

"I don't know of any market in North America that has the number of competing voices that we have in the Toronto area," said Mr. Honderich.

He pointed out that by his criteria of the wide choice of alternative voices in the various Metro area communities, the takeover did not provide ground for danger.

"If I felt that in the

Toronto market our action (the acquisition of the Inland chain) was seriously going to diminish the diversity of opinion, I would be concerned," stated the Torstar chairman.

The purchase of Inland by the Metrospan Printing and Publishing Co. took place on Feb. 27. Purchase price was \$13.5 million. Metrospan also assumed some \$12.5 million of Inland debt.

Mr. Honderich said the acquisition was necessary to fill in the market gaps in the Metrospan coverage. Metrospan was not making a profit and some Metrospan newspapers might have been forced to fold up and jobs would have been lost, explained Mr. Honderich. "We were facing a situation where some of our Metrospan papers were losing money, their losses were increasing," Mr. Honderich said.

"We couldn't provide coverage throughout the Metro area, there were

too many blank spots," Mr. Honderich added, explaining some of the reasons why Metrospan was not making a profit.

Torstar hopes to continue to provide employment for the "vast majority" of people at both the Metrospan and Inland chains, Mr. Honderich said, adding that consideration is now being given to some of the papers publishing twice or three times a week.

However, he didn't give assurances to the Royal Commission that none of the papers will fold up. "I have never learned how to operate a business that didn't produce more revenue than expenses. We can't continue to operate a newspaper at a loss," Mr. Honderich said.

Last Wednesday's hearing marked the second time that Mr. Honderich appeared before the Commission. During his first appearance last February, just 18 days before the purchase of

Inland, Mr. Honderich urged tougher laws to prevent corporate mergers over a certain size unless they provide significant benefits for Canada.

Mr. Honderich insisted there were no inconsistencies between his earlier statement and the Metrospan takeover of Inland, because it may result in providing more employment in the community newspaper field.

Commission counsel Donald Affleck questioned Mr. Honderich on the way The Star played the story of the takeover. The Star carried a two-paragraph story on the purchase in its financial section, while the Globe and Mail provided a much wider coverage, Mr. Affleck said.

Mr. Honderich said that, in retrospect, The Star may have made an error in underplaying the story and suggested he must accept "full responsibility" for it.



Community effort. The Campbellville Fire Department was again this year the recipient of a generous donation from the town's "Bushwhacker's Paradise." At left, father and son Ed and Ben Parchem exchange handshakes with Campbellville firefighters Liutenant Tony Tazier and brother Michael Tazier.

CAS inks first contract

Employees of the Halton Children's Aid Society have signed their first union contract which gives them an 11 per cent salary increase this year.

Dan Horne, a member of the new Canadian Union of Public Employees local bargaining unit, said yesterday that the about 40 clerical staff, social and child care workers are "very satisfied" with the agreement they signed with the local CAS Thursday night.

The contract, which gives an immediate 9 per cent salary increase to all members retroactive to March 19 and a further two per cent hike on July 1, was ratified by nearly all of the workers.

"We're all very pleased," CAS president John Graham said yesterday. He said board members of the children's aid society unanimously supported the proposed agreement earlier this week.

Under the agreement, the employees now have a dental plan, the cost of

which is shared equally between them and the CAS.

Mileage expenses, formerly at 25 cents a mile, have been raised to 28 cents and will go up another two cents on July 1.

The workers also obtained fully-paid OHIP coverage and those employed by the CAS prior to Aug. 12 last year received a \$400 bonus for signing the contract.

Mr. Graham, 50, who became the Halton children's aid society's president at a March 11 annual board meeting, said the society spends nearly the least amount per child on care than any other CAS group in the province.

He said there is one CAS in a small northern Ontario community which spends less per child (in relationship to child population) than Halton.

"I think it's historical.

We actually operate quite stringently. I think our caseloads compared to other children's aid societies are heavy."

The Halton CAS has a total operating budget of \$2,794,500 for this year. Eighty per cent of it comes from the provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services and the rest comes from Halton Region.

Mr. Graham said the Halton society "would be spending two or three times" more than its \$2.8 million budget in order to match per child expenditures of neighboring CAS groups in the province.

Halton CAS social workers with graduate university degrees will now get up to \$24,849 a year and child care workers are getting up to \$22,587 a year. The amounts will go up again on July 1.

The new contract expires Dec. 31.



ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, that the 23rd Annual Meeting of Halton Community Credit Union Limited will be held at the Optimist Centre, 311 Commercial St., Milton on the 4th of April, 1981 at 6:45 p.m. for the purpose of receiving Reports and Financial Statements for the year ended December 31st, 1980.

Also on the agenda will be the Election of Officers, Appointment of Auditors, and any other business of an annual meeting.

Signed at Milton, Ontario this 18th day of March 1981.

E.K. McLeod, Secretary.

The meeting will be followed by the Annual Spring Dance starting at 9 p.m. with a midnight buffet. Tickets available at the Credit Union offices.

HALTON COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION MILTON:

44 Main St. 878-4138

273 Queen St. Acton 853-0911

17 Wilson Dr. 878-8835

338 Kerr St. Oakville 844-0866

80 Main St. N. Georgetown 877-6926



Sunny stroll

Tammy Wilson, 9 and her sister Sheila, 7, said they would rather be in school at J.M. Denyes than on spring break as it is hard to keep themselves amused during the vacation week. A walk along Main St. with doll carriages Wednesday afternoon under sunny skies help them put in time.

Bushwhackers do it again aid Campbellville fire dept.

By Linda Kirby The "Bushwhacker's Paradise," a group of Campbellville friends and neighbours have once again come forward with a community donation for the town's local fire department.

Members of the group presented the Campbellville Fire Station with a cheque for \$500 to be used towards the purchase of special equipment. The money was raised from the proceeds of a dinner dance held

recently and a corn roast and hay ride sponsored by The Bushwhackers.

A major portion of the cheque was used to purchase a foam ejector used in accident situations and to extinguish petroleum related fires.

The remainder of the money will be used for equipment attachments. The presentation was made Tuesday evening March 24.

The donation marks the third year the local

organization has donated money towards a community project, and the

department has received the benefits of the group.

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MY SINCERE THANKS

To all the voters of Halton-Burlington who supported me in the March 19 Ontario election.

FRAN BAINES **IFC**

Old town hall new Museum gain

By Mary Robertson The former Puslinch Township Hall has joined the ranks of those historic buildings to find a permanent home at the Ontario Agricultural Museum in Milton.

Because local halls have traditionally played an important role in rural social and political life, the museum considers this building a particularly significant addition to the site.

It was during the year of Confederation that the citizens of Puslinch Township at the southern tip of Wellington County, decided the local inn and grist mill could no longer provide appropriate facilities for their municipal functions.

A committee was appointed to investigate building plans.

The heated debate which followed lasted several months, and resulted in the controversial resignation of one councillor.

A citizen petition called further discussion to a halt and finally, construction was underway.

On Dec. 30, 1867, the first council meeting was held in the new hall, and

two months later, the local baseball club had the privilege of hosting the first social ball to be held in the new township hall.

For 113 years, the hall has served the needs of the citizens of Puslinch.

Although it is always sad to see a local landmark disappear, it is heartening to know this particular building will be relocated in an historic setting for many to appreciate.

At the Ontario Agricultural Museum, the old township hall will be restored to its original condition and will stand in a prominent position near the front gates of the museum grounds.

Upon its completion, all visitors will be directed to the hall for an orientation program which will prepare them for their experience at the museum.

It will also be available for meetings.

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Public Works layoffs...

(Continued from Pg. 1) revenue because of the higher shortfall.

Bob Moore, director of public works, said he expected \$134,000 would have to be cut from the budget because of the new revelations.

Mr. Moore also said he expected that the maintenance section of the budget was the only one where further cuts could be made "unless we start taking money from other projects."

"We have been racking our brains with the treasury people and there just doesn't seem to be any alternative," he said.

"If I had my druthers I'd leave this money in... but in trying to

abide by the instructions of the CAO and treasury staff these are the moves that I have to recommend."

"We're also going to have to look at some layoffs among the hourly rat... people because of this," he added.

After the meeting, Mr. Moore said the cuts approved to his budget "will certainly take us below the level of service we had last year. It will certainly have an effect on our operations but we won't know how large until we get the final budget approved."

In total the amounts budgeted for sanitary sewers in Halton were reduced by \$257,000.

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