



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Board move positive

It was both shrewd and diplomatic — perhaps the two are in many ways interchangeable — of the new Halton District School Board to withdraw its grievance against teachers.

There was something to be gained — at least a modicum of goodwill — and absolutely nothing to be lost. This was more than apparent after a cursory glance at the board's financial position subsequent to last fall's late and unlamented teachers' strike.

The public school board saved almost \$2 million during the work stoppage, money that can be thrown against its deficit of approximately \$3 million.

In dropping the grievance, which was originally launched during the heat of labour difficulties surrounding Bill 160, the new board has made a clear gesture that involves no risk, and has generated a positive response from the teacher unions.

No doubt secondary school teachers' union president Al Tanner recognizes the largely ceremonial nature of the gesture. He pointed that out by noting the board has no financial down side to confront subsequent to the strike.

Since the grievance was originally launched to seek punitive damages from the teachers' union over the strike if costs to the board soared, there was no rationale for keeping the complaint alive.

Burlington Trustee Michael Ellis is to be congratulated for putting forward such a motion.

Nerves and emotions may still be frayed and raw from the unfortunate November clashes, but someone on the management side has at least extended an olive branch. This does not make everything alright again in anyone's mind, but it certainly doesn't make anything worse.

Rob Kelly

Score one for Grits

One must give the federal Liberals their due. They have balanced Canada's books, something that eluded their predecessors from the supposedly right-of-centre side of the political spectrum.

If the situation was likened to that of a household, we would have a homeowner who has piled up enormous debt, but has at least stopped adding to it every minute of every day.

The question now is, how serious is the presiding federal government about whittling away at Canada's debt load?

The answer, despite protestation from Finance Minister Paul Martin, is that the Grits probably aren't too committed on that score.

The party, although thoroughly grounded in the political realism that comes from government by poll taking, is a fragile coalition when grappling with the debt.

Liberals, who range from middle of the road to well left of centre, cannot be counted on to stay the challenging course. They just represent too many divergent interests. But at least the Liberal government has carried through on an important promise and tamed our deficits, albeit with some stiff tax hikes.

That is more than the Progressive Conservative federal government ever did, despite all its tax hikes and loud, largely meaningless talk about fiscal prudence.

R.K.

OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Looking at the bigger picture

Dear Editor:

I saw a picture of myself in the paper a few months ago. I wanted to give something back for what that picture unexpectedly gave to me.

Recently, I did the one thing that I always told myself I would never do. I bought a house. Everyone dreams of owning their first home and I am no different.

Of course, I am only four payments in, so technically, I guess the word 'owning' is a touch strong, but the sentiment remains.

This isn't just any house, either. It is a terrific house. It has everything that I always wanted to have. It is perfect. There is only one thing that is puzzling. The geography.

Not only is this house located in my home town, it is smack dab in the centre of my childhood neighbourhood. I never dreamed that I would end up back here. I had big plans, bigger than I thought this place could handle, and although over the last decade I have hung my hat as far away as the Bahamas, I go for my nightly walks and see so many things that I had long forgotten.

It has become a game to test my memory. I remember where all of my school friends lived, the shortcuts and cat walks to get there faster, the hidden parks that mark where several courts converge.

I remember my walk to grade school that many times took me past the front door I have now lovingly decorated,

and the mail box that now bears my name.

On the curb in front of my kitchen window, I once sat and cried about the loss of my first love. On the street I can see from the yard, I sat in a car and kissed for the first time the man who will fill the rest of my life with love.

I played in this very spot as a child long before the builders came, and I hated it when they arrived.

The convenience store on the corner used to be a small pond where we would collect tadpoles and marvel at their metamorphosis. There was a huge apple tree in the middle of where an empty park thoroughway now cuts. That tree sheltered and protected us from any monsters that might emerge from the long grass.

On these streets I learned to ride a bike and drive a car. I scraped my knees and became a double dutch expert. One block away I nervously readied myself for my high school prom and wedding.

A few months ago there was a picture of my old Brownie troupe from June 1976 in the paper. I looked hard at the faces in that black and white print. I didn't need the caption at the bottom to identify any of them.

It was in that moment that I realized what a wonderful place this is to live. A place that remembers you as fondly as you remember your time here. There aren't very many places like it. This neighbourhood, this town, are a bigger part of me than I knew. The best part.

*Lisa Denis
Milton*

Pud

by Steve Nease