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The Canadian Champion

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Is this democracy?

The American Revolution was fought under one guiding principle — no taxation without representation. Now, Canada isn't America, and in many respects we can be thankful for that, but it would be a shoddy democracy which wasn't democratic when it came to spending money.

The basis of Canadian government is that Canadians cannot be taxed without the opportunity to change governments. However, there is one aspect of provincial government with which residents are taxed and they can't change the fundamental make-up of the governing body.

It is outrageous and strange we hadn't objected in the past. We refer to the local police commission, where a five-member board decides the budget for the regional police force. Of the five members, three are appointed by the provincial government and two are elected members from Halton Region.

This board determines the budget and while the region can reject it, it's a futile exercise. They pretty well get their way.

This is wrong. If the taxpayers are paying almost 80 per cent of the police budget share, they (or their representatives) must be allowed a say in the proceedings. And they must have control.

Oakville councillor John Graham has made it his personal quest to make the police commission more democratic and for that we must take our hat off to him. It's not often an elected official will take on a sacred cow when he has much to lose.

We agree with Mr. Graham. A review of Ontario police commissions is warranted. And the intention of it must be for them to become more responsible to the public.

Rural inequality

It's like a recurring dream, or more true to fact, a nightmare. Once again the Meeting Hall has been the focus of controversy and once again the issue is money.

Fee structures for users of that hall and the recently opened Nassagaweya Community Centre were presented to councillors Monday night. After much debate they approved in principle a plan to charge users of the rural hall twice the fee the renters of the urban hall will pay.

It was argued by director of leisure services Larry Arbic that the Nassagaweya facility is much larger than the building next to town hall. That was the justification for the fee structure.

That logic didn't sit well with some of our elected officials and it doesn't sit well with us. The Meeting Hall renovations cost twice as much as the construction of the Nassagaweya Community Centre. Residents are expected to raise \$60,000 toward the cost of the rural hall — not so for the urban version.

The Milton Historical Society is to be allowed free use of the Meeting Hall while its Nassagaweyan counterpart will be expected to pay the \$10 fee. Other users of the Meeting Hall will pay \$5.

The Meeting Hall, renovated at a cost of \$640,000, won't generate much revenue at that rate. It's too small for many purposes and is likely to be used less than the rural centre.

In Nassagaweya, the hall is large enough to accommodate dances and receptions which will bring in \$100 a throw on weekdays and \$200 weekends. Those are bargain prices and will make that facility attractive to party organizers.

The spirit of unity between rural and urban Milton which was felt just two weeks ago will be fleeting. Old wounds are opening by the discrepancy in user fees. The rural community will feel slighted. The unfairness is blatant.

Looking Back



These five young ladies were part of the Sixth Annual Rhapsody on Ice held at Milton arena in April 1964. The dance act performers are from left: Shirley Mollin; Jean

Wilson; Linda Griswold; Pat Bell and Joanne McCuaig. Olympic figure skating star Donald Knight was the special guest at the show.

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the April 15, 1987 issue

• All gas furnaces in Milton's Dorset Park subdivision were fine and properly checked during the warranty period, says Grant Mills, the executive director of the technical standards division of the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Mr. Mills was referring to an on-going provincial investigation. His department asked Union Gas if it had properly inspected 29 homes in Dorset Park which had been red-tagged by the gas company. Being red tagged means the furnace is a health hazard and home owners are given 30 days to repair the problem or have it shut down. "We checked to see whether or not Union Gas had inspected them (the furnaces) within the 10-year period," said Mr. Mills, "and they had. Their inspections do include inspecting the heat exchangers."

20 Years Ago

From the April 20, 1968 issue

• A plague of grass fires during the last three weeks has cost an estimated \$40,000 to the taxpayers of Halton County, Milton Fire Chief A. E. Clement suggested to-

day. The fire situation has reached emergency proportions in the county, and the five county fire departments have answered literally hundreds of calls, he said. Milton Fire department had another 12 grass fire calls in the past week, including five on Friday. "Since March 28 we have practically nothing but grass fires in our log," said the fire chief. Most of the fires have been blamed on human carelessness. Open fires and bonfires, whipped by winds, have spread to fields, bushes and stump fences.

50 Years Ago

From the April 14, 1938 issue

• The weather man seems to have transposed the months of March and April.

• Georgetown Golf Club opened the season on Saturday, April 2. The members found the course in good shape.

• Burlington town council wants motorists to slow down to 30 miles an hour on the Middle Rd. while driving through Burlington.

• Clarence Vance had his right hand severely lacerated while operating a buzz saw at Thomas Hillock's wood cutting bee at Altou last Saturday afternoon.

Pud

