



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Test of strength

If Canadians are reputed to be so lacking in uniqueness as a people, why is it that an insistence on distinction threatens to destroy the country?

Why is it that the primary frictions in Canada today are based on our perceptions of others among us, their motives and mettle? Could it be because of their differences? If we are all so different as to cause such discord, are we not unique?

And if you will grant that we are unique, is that not the beginning of a bond that will serve to unite us as much as divide us? Couldn't a case be made for the argument that any such diverse group which manages to live together is stronger for it, rather than weakened by it?

For in the final analysis, we are not, despite our varying skin tones and ethnic backgrounds, working at cross purposes. We have all generally embraced Canada, its laws, its freedoms, to some extent or another its responsibilities. We have joined with the idea known as Canada, and most often prospered through it.

We are not Americans, by our own strident insistence despite an often-concealed affection for them. We have outgrown our role as Europe's colonials. We have thrown off those affiliations to stand, divided and wary in the face of the future, separated into two fiefdoms, one involving our French component and the other to varying degrees enfolding everyone else.

We are faced with choices. Can we make Canada work? Is it worth it? There are those who say no on both counts. They propose Quebec's separation. That is exchanging the known for the unknown. It is a bad bargain, we would suggest, when the country is already judged the best place in the world to live, all things considered, by the United Nations.

We cannot minimize the risks which threaten Canada. Even if a Constitutional arrangement is created with Quebec, the drift of events in that province is ominous over the long term, as a cursory look at the last two decades will indicate.

English-speaking Canadians are second-class citizens in Quebec, prevented by provincial fiat from ready access to their own language and discouraged from its use in day-to-day life. Quebec's legislature, in a telling label, is called the national assembly. Admittedly, much of this is a backlash against centuries of English domination, but that doesn't render it less of a threat.

There is much to do in Canada if it is to see another 125 years of existence. There are prejudices to soften, political tensions to confront, injustices to remedy, accommodations to be made. There are problems to be faced that have festered far too long.

As a nation, it seems that all those challenges are upon us at once now. We must reconcile with the native people, reassure Quebec, appease western Senate reformers — all before the first snow flies — and then turn our attention again to the underlying economic problems facing Canada, problems of productivity, planning, education.

It's a tall order. It's the kind of challenge that tries nations. And the ones that survive these ordeals are usually the better for it.

Happy Canada Day.

LOOKING BACK



Nancy McKinnoh of Milton, Halton's 1979 Queen of the Furrow was going on to compete at the International Plowing Match and farm machinery show near Chatham in the fall of that year. She's pictured with her coach, Spencer Wilson of Norval and his team.

PAGES OF THE PAST

One Year Ago

From the July 3, 1991 issue

□ Gypsy moths appeared to be on their way to Milton. Alide Camilleri, who lives in north Burlington just south of the Milton border found out first hand the damage that the moths could cause. The willows on her five-acre lot were swarming with the caterpillars. Mrs. Camilleri spent several nights with a flashlight and a jar, picking the caterpillars off the tree trunks when they come up from the ground to feed, in an attempt to save the trees. Although Milton was still relatively free of the creatures, gypsy moths had already infested Burlington and Oakville. According to John Erwin from the Ministry of Natural Resources, spraying available for a \$6 per acre wouldn't get rid of the insects for good.

□ A 10-year-old Milton girl was a heroine after steering an out-of-control car to safety on Highway 401, Thursday morning. Christina Winterburn drove the car off the highway into the centre median west of Trafalgar road after the car blew a front tire and her mother, Patricia, was knocked unconscious when her head hit the side window because of the force of the blow. The car travelled almost three kilometres while the girl attempted to steer the car to safety.

□ Halton Region extended its mandatory lawn-watering restrictions to a year-round basis. Previously they were used only in dry weather. The restrictions stated that residents could water their lawns on odd-numbered calendar days if they had an odd-numbered address and even-numbered days if they had an even-numbered address. The restrictions lowered peak demand and delayed the need to expand water treatment plants and build new reservoirs.

20 Years Ago

From the July 5, 1972 issue

□ Milton District Hospital would soon be attaining

20 acres of land at a cost of \$4,000 an acre. The land was located east of the building on Derry Road and south of the hospital on Bronte Street. Reason for the land acquisition was to be ready for future expansion of the hospital. Board members said that delaying the purchase would make the land more expensive in the future because of rising land values. The possibility of another buyer obtaining the property was another reason.

□ Albert Schouten of Milton had been buying three or four sweepstakes tickets since he came to Canada from Holland 22 years ago and never won a thing. However, this would soon change as his ticket was drawn on a horse in the Irish Derby held in Dublin. He didn't know how much he had won yet but minimum was \$1,100 to \$1,200. He said whatever he won, he would be satisfied.

□ Bruce St. Public School had served the educational needs of Milton for more than a century, however it saw its finest hour of glory when about 600 students, past and present gathered to say good-bye. It was officially closed after the Halton County Board of Education decided it would be too costly to renovate the old building.

50 Years Ago

From the July 2, 1942 issue

□ While Eccles and John McClure and John Parker were working in a field on the McClure farm, they got quite a thrill when a plane swept down from the sky and headed for the iron bridge on the C.N.R. line below town. It appeared to be headed for a crack-up but the pilot manoeuvred skillfully and passed under the bridge, gained altitude and disappeared into the blue.

□ The ringing of the curfew bell became a law in Acton. Children under the age of 16 had to be home before 9 p.m. Was Milton to be next?

□ Strawberries had been at their best for the past week.

PUD



BY STEVE NEASE

SCHOOL'S OUT?

Yo.