



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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LOOKING BACK



Indians and outlaws were a hit with the judges when the Italian-Canadian Club held its carnival costume ball at the legion in February, 1970. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Riggo (left) won first prize with their Indian costumes while visitors Gino Cadarin and George Pigozzo came second.

Marking time

The federal budget has come and gone with scant notice. It's back to business as usual, ignoring many economic problems in hopes they'll go away.

Today's paper contains two stories about regional and local government bellying up to the tax trough for infrastructure money — read new debt.

The usual warnings are being issued; at Milton council, for example, it was noted that if the Town doesn't appropriate its share of the pseudo-windfall, Halton Region likely will.

The only person to see this boondoggle for what it is and term it repugnant was Ward 2 councillor John Chalinor. To be fair, Wards 1 and 3 regional representative Barry Lee, a man of some common sense, was nervous about it too.

The argument has been advanced by some that this money is a bargain at the local level, since municipalities must only pay one-third of the costs associated with chosen projects, while the province and the federal government pick up the remainder.

No doubt the same contention has been made by provincial and federal politicians and bureaucrats.

It is easy to dispense with this rationale by harkening back to what has become a truism: There is only one taxpayer. Jane and Joe Deepockets will end up being fleeced while the politicians collectively crow about the astute bargain they have struck at one another's expense.

While it is true that we must invest in infrastructure — bridges, roads, water treatment plants and whatnot — the timing of this is wrong.

The government probably would have been better advised, if investment is a key goal, not to have abolished the lifetime \$100,000 capital gains exemption. This was a lure for investment, and not a haven for rich people. Rich people don't really worry overmuch about the taxes on \$100,000.

But that tax credit gave relatively small investors the opportunity to shelter income by channelling it into productive, wealth-creating (and job-creating) projects. Now that enticement is gone.

We hear murmurs that the federal government plans more assertive economic steps in time. Hopefully that is true. If last week's budget is anything of a trendsetter, we will merely mark time on the road to ruin. The honeymoon is waning, Mr. Chretien.

Outstanding effort

An outstanding effort was turned in by a multitude of volunteers who collected 15,000 pounds of food for the Salvation Army food bank on Saturday. Once again, Milton's generosity is showing.

Taken on a per capita basis, every man, woman and child in town contributed almost half a pound of sustenance. That's impressive.

It also points to the magnitude of the need, because this isn't the first time the food bank has run dangerously low and it won't likely be the last. That's a sobering thought to counterbalance rightful pride in this accomplishment.

PAGES OF THE PAST

One Year Ago

From the March 3, 1993 issue

□ Controversy over the municipal bus transit contract emerged at a town council meeting. The council spurned the lower tender, a decision which would cost the Milton taxpayers an extra \$35,000. In a 6-5 vote, council opted to accept the tender of Milton Bus Lines instead of the challenging bid by Ken McClean. Milton Bus Lines had held the municipal contract for 20 years. The council was divided over whether to go with the cheaper bid by an untried supplier in Mr. McClean or stick with Milton Bus Lines. Mr. McClean's backers said his credentials were solid, his bid lower, and to reject him was to seriously compromise the whole tendering process. Those siding with Milton Bus Lines said the difference in price was minimal and it was better to go with the company they knew.

□ The first Milton junior women's curling team to advance to the provincial championships placed fourth in the event. The young women won the right to take part in the Ontario Pepsi Provincial Championships. The members of the team were Kirsten Harnack, Catherine Kemp, Andra Harnack, Mandy Craven and Tara Faggion.

□ Halton regional government was preparing for a public relations push to reassure potential neighbours about a planned 41-townhouse project near the Milton Fair Grounds. Regional officials were hoping to secure provincial funding for the townhomes in September and build the government-subsidized housing in 1994.

20 Years Ago

From the March 6, 1973 issue

□ A change in the provincially-operated ambulance service would see Milton's ambulance service detached from the control of the local hospital and linked up

with a new Halton-Peel region ambulance service. The directors of Milton District Hospital decided they could not legally oppose the switch, but were determined to press to keep the ambulances based at the hospital if at all possible.

□ The firing of 65 truck drivers at Dufferin Quarry led independent truckers to boycott a number of quarry firms in the Halton-Peel area. According to Angelo Natale, the truckers were fired because they joined the Ontario Haulers' Association. Mr. Natale was president of that group. About 70 truckers parked their trucks at the Chalet restaurant on Highway 25. They set up headquarters there and proceeded to extend boycotts to about one new quarry each day of the week. According to Natale, 900 truck drivers joined the protest.

□ About 1,400 people made use of bus service in town each week, according to a report filed by Dave Lewis, the owner-operator of Milton Bus Lines. Mr. Lewis was concerned about a recent story which reported Mayor Anne MacArthur as suggesting "sloppy" business methods had been used when the agreement between Mr. Lewis and the town was drafted. The mayor felt the town should have more control over the operation than currently existed. She made it clear, however, that her criticism was directed at the town rather than the bus operator.

50 Years Ago

From the March 2, 1944 issue

□ The interest shown by parents and the general public was appreciated when the Boy Scouts, Cubs and Girl Guides of Milton held their "Open Night."

□ Mr. John Jackson, caretaker of Milton District High School for 23 years, was honoured by his friends with the presentation of a lounging chair. Mr. Jackson provided unfailing service, winning the respect of both staff and pupils, since the building opened in 1921.

PUD

BY STEVE NEASE

