



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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No cause is an island

Halton Regional Police Service Chief Peter Campbell appears to have offered a reasoned and relatively unbiased view with regard to the state of affairs in his command as he tendered his \$38 million budget.

But in so doing he warned that his officers have what amounts to a wish list to present when Premier Bob Rae's Social Contract ends. All well and good, police officers have a bargaining position just like everybody else who must negotiate wages and benefits.

Still, we must question how realistic police demands are given today's market, the looming changes in government spending, and the lack of empathy regional politicians are likely to display to officers, since politicians aren't as much in control of the police budget as they would like to be, although they must answer for it to taxpayers.

Chief Campbell indicated that come April of 1996 officers are going to want \$1.5 million in overtime, paid statutory holidays, raises and equipment replacement. Where is this money going to come from?

By then the provincial government is likely to be in the throes of true cost cutting, given an almost certain change in ruling classes at Queen's Park.

Provincial transfer payments to regional and county governments will tighten, some very tough decisions will have to be made about whether to keep programs at all, and in the midst of what promises to be substantial turmoil some people who work for the government, namely police officers, are planning to push for wage hikes and a few perks.

They may get them, but there will probably be fewer officers to share in those benefits because some of them will likely be laid off.

For those who think this is unheard of and therefore unlikely, kindly pause to consider exactly how this nation is going to go about scaling back its \$40 billion a year deficit and ever-mounting debt unless such measures are implemented? What did they do in New Zealand? What does it look like the Americans are going to do once they get through talking?

The only difference between the United States and Canada concerning cost cutting is that police services will be less affected there since crime is proportionally worse, and people are proportionally more worried about it.

Ironically, the best tactic police could employ to gain empathy from regional government would be to yield more power over police affairs to regional council.

At present the largely appointed police services board (a few politicians serve on it as well) is the civilian body which truly oversees police affairs. Regional council, grudgingly and generally after some infighting with the board, rubber-stamps the police budget.

It is a measure of how distant councillors are from police affairs that Burlington Councillor Ralph Scholtens, an astute man, had to ask if crime was out of line given the police staff complement in Halton.

There are tough times ahead in policing, just as there are tough times ahead for all of us as we re-think and re-orient the nation's economy. The recession may be ebbing, but the truly fundamental change isn't, and police officers, like it or not, will be part of that.

Police lobbyists tend to quote statistics related to safety, staffing in adjacent jurisdictions, relative importance of their work as opposed to other publicly funded enterprises. That, in the end, may prove to be only an exercise in damage control as the world re-makes itself around them.

Looking Back



A Highland dance competition was staged in Milton in early March, 1969. Over 70 young dancers from across western Ontario took part. Award winners included (left to right) Andrea McIntosh (8 and under champion); Jane MacKinnon (12 and under champion); Kirk Brush (16 and under champion and overall top dancer); Joslyn McDougall (14 and under champion); and, Susie Caie (10 and under champion).

Pages of the Past

One Year Ago

From the December 22, 1993 issue

- Harold Penson was promoted to fire chief from acting fire chief in his third attempt at the position. The decision was made during a closed-door meeting of town council. "It was a unanimous recommendation by the committee," said Milton Mayor Gord Krantz. "He's demonstrated leadership abilities during his time as acting chief." The knock against Mr. Penson in the past was his perceived lack of administrative skills. Mr. Krantz said Mr. Penson had "come a long way in that regard" since his previous application for the position.

- The congregation of St. John's Anglican Church was hoping vandals who knocked over tombstones in the cemetery would be caught. The culprits struck twice, overturning the stones at the Guelph Line and No. 10 Sideroad Church on two occasions. One tombstone was broken. The culprits also threw eggs at a large, stained-glass window.

- More than 3,000 people had been stopped in RIDE spot checks on Milton highways from December 1 to 16. However, no impaired driving charges had been laid.

20 Years Ago

From the December 23, 1974 issue

- The Milton Chamber of Commerce received a welcome pre-Christmas present — a present no Santa Claus could ever have imagined. Brothers Louis and Henry Nadalin, owners of Nadalin Electric Company Ltd., finalized arrangements to donate the heating, lighting and air conditioning equipment, all the interior and exterior electrical requirements and fixtures, plus floodlighting and parking lot lighting for the Chamber's new office and information centre at Unity Park. The building was the

former CNR station that sat for 80 years on Bronte Street.

- It was reported a plebiscite may have to be held for about 300 residents in the area of Esquesing that had become part of Milton. The plebiscite was necessary to see if residents in that area favoured legalizing the serving of liquor in that area. The Chalet Restaurant on Highway 25 made application for a liquor licence to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages with meals. The situation was a peculiar one. Esquesing township had always been considered a dry township. A plebiscite was necessary for a municipality to go from dry to wet.

- A motion dealing with the recommended site for Halton Regional headquarters was deferred once again during a meeting of regional council. Council's site and building committee toured six sites and decided to recommend a site at Upper Middle Road and Highway 25.

50 Years Ago

From the December 21, 1944 issue

- The Milton Fire Brigade was called to two Main Street store fires. A coal oil stove at Middleton's Grocery Store exploded and started a fire in the basement. A more serious fire occurred at Carroll's Grocery Store. The fire apparently started at the rear of the store in an adjoining shed. Extensive damage was done to the stock room.

- By a vote of approximately five to one, Milton ratepayers endorsed the expenditure of \$40,000 for construction of a sewage disposal plant and \$30,000 for the construction of storm sewers.

- In Police Court in Milton, Arthur Clubine pleaded guilty to a charge of careless driving and was fined \$25 and costs. The case arose from a collision of a truck owned by Gordon Snow and driven by Arthur Clubine and a car driven by Thomas Epstein of Toronto. The accident occurred on the First Line of Esquesing.

Pud

by Steve Nease

