

Citizen comment

Working together as pals

Monsignor Athol Murray put it bluntly to the people of Penetanguishene during his speech to kickoff Saturday's centennial parade when he said, "You've got a great responsibility to Canada. You're both English and French but you're pals. You're not squabbling like they are in Montreal."

That pretty well sums up one of the two great challenges facing the people of this town as we head into our second one hundred years as a municipality. The preservation and enhancement of our bicultural identity is one of them. The need of small towns to act as leaders rather than followers of giant urban municipalities is the other.

These two challenges are what makes Penetanguishene's Old Home Week more than a big birthday party. The ability of the French and English speaking people of this town, not outside experts or highly paid specialists, to organize over 80 different centennial activities involving practically every segment of the community, demonstrates our ability to meet those challenges. In Canada's major urban centres: Mon-

tréal, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Vancouver, Halifax etc., the magnitude of our celebrations probably wouldn't seem as earthshattering. Old Home Week is a big event in Penetanguishene but it's dwarfed by occasions such as the Shriners convention in Toronto or a Grey Cup Weekend in Montreal. But while the size of our celebrations may not compare to big city parties we beat our neighbours in Toronto and Montreal by a country mile when it comes to involvement.

When a town of less than 6,000 people puts on an Old Home Week like ours, nearly everyone in the community has to pitch in to make it happen. And when it turns out to be as successful as our centennial week has become, everyone in the town shares in that success. People in large urban centres can't say that because their very size works against achieving the sense of community which is possible in a small town like ours.

It's a sense of community which is possible if the people who make up the community work together as pals. In Penetanguishene that's what we're doing.

Letter:

A true community

Dear Sir: In many parts of Canada, that elusive thing known as a sense of community exists only in the minds of the old.

Co-operative action in the village, town or city has given way to the highly-paid, often impersonal technocrats of suburbia. The common man, if such a creature exists, is felt to have expertise only in his specific field of work, with little ability to organize, create or act beyond those limits.

This notion is, of course, nonsense, but it's the result of an increasingly specialized, depersonalized society in which the individual is defined by the job he does, rather than by the person he is in fact.

This week in Huronia, in the town of Penetanguishene, a strong blast of fresh air has stripped that concept bare, as a true community has united to plan, organize and carry out one of the best parties this area has seen in years.

Six months ago, someone in Penetanguishene remembered that the municipality would turn 100 this year. Nobody knew the exact date — they had to check with county records in Barrie to find out when the place officially became a village.

Once that was settled, there was never a question about the fact that a party would be held. The decision was automatic.

But what makes this party remarkable is that it is being organized neither by hired experts, nor by that elitist group of semi-professional organizers found in many towns.

The working people of Penetanguishene, students at public and elementary schools, housewives, merchants, tradesmen and others have done the job, from making candy floss at the Lions Club carnival to operating a beer garden and organizing a baseball tournament.

There was the woman who spent an hour making hamburgers in 80 degree weather and then thanked those operating the booth for letting her help. She was from out of town.

Experts of a sort came in from out of the area, artists, actors, singers. But they came to blend in with a community event, often winding up at impromptu parties lasting until 4 a.m.

Photos and articles about Penetanguishene's Centennial Old Home Week are run elsewhere in this newspaper, and in many ways they tell the main part of the story.

But at its core is something that can only be felt, not seen. A sense of pride, a sense of self-respect, and a sense of achievement.

That can be found only in a healthy, united community.

From one who participated, thanks...
Name withheld by request

Comment by Larry Green

Turner picks our pockets

Anyone who woke up last Tuesday morning and felt like they had been the victim of mugging - one in which they lost their wallet wasn't far wrong.

That thief in the night who left your wallet a little lighter was federal Finance Minister John Turner. With all the skill and dash of the highway man of poetry fame, Mr. Turner succeeded in taking money from the innocent traveller to fill the federal coffers.

The ten cent a gallon increase in the price of gasoline came as a sudden jolt to car drivers right across the country - we will face a jump of from \$75 to \$150 a year in the cost of operating our vehicles over an average of 10,000 miles.

For most of us, who find it hard to cut down on the amount of driving we do, the new federal tax means that we will have to resign ourselves to paying more. Mr. Turner's aim at conserving dwindling gas supplies will not be achieved - but a two point increase in the consumer price index will.

After all in the Collingwood, Wasaga, Stayner area, most people need to drive their cars to work. Over 50 per cent of the labour force which man's Collingwood's factories comes from outside the town meaning they have to drive at least twenty miles a day just to get to and from their jobs.

Here there is no public transportation system which commuters can switch to. Instead, we along with many regions of Canada where public transit does not exist will be forced to pay more even though there is no alternative.

As if the ten cent increase wasn't enough, Mr. Turner announced Monday night that gas prices would jump another five cents in mid-August. It will put the average cost of a gallon of gasoline up to 70 cents - almost out of the reach of the average consumer.

If saving fuel was his aim, he should have taken two other practical steps which would not have cost the consumer anything. He could have cut the highway speed to 55 miles per hour to reduce gasoline consumption and cut oil exports to our American neighbours. The Americans have already proven that

cutting the speed limit on national highways results in substantial savings in energy. It's a more practical alternative to increasing fuel costs or gas rationing.

Gas prices were not the only blow that Mr. Turner delivered to the now over-burdened consumer. He announced an increase in the price of natural gas that will boost the cost of heating the average Canadian home by \$65 a year.

Now really, Mr. Turner, you can't expect us to turn the furnace off during the cold Canadian winter.

What bothers us most about this second increase in the price of natural gas is that the difference between the well head cost of pumping this important fuel out of the ground is just eight cents per thousand cubic feet - but the new federal price will put it to \$1.20.

Now who is getting the difference in price of \$1.12. The Alberta government, the oil companies, the federal government? If we're going to have to pay such ridiculous prices for our own fuel we should at least know where the money is going.

After the budget was dropped on consumers, the provincial government in Ontario set up an immediate outcry about the price increases.

"Ontario consumers must be protected against such unwarranted price increases," Premier William Davis fumed Tuesday.

He called the increases "a blatant tax grab" but refused to say what he would do about it.

New Democratic Party Leader Stephen Lewis told reporters the same day that the province had the power to order the oil companies not to pass the additional cost along to the consumer.

Even though that may be true it skirts the real issue. How can we save fuel in Canada to stretch out our current supplies until new sources can be found?

Rather than play politics as the leaders of all parties seem to be doing, let them get down to the important job creating energy saving programs, something we'd all benefit from.

Sugar and Spice

The joys of teaching

by Bill Smiley

One of the things I like about teaching is that you are not stuck with the same old stupid faces year after year, as you are in most jobs.

In teaching, you get a whole set of new stupid faces every year. They come in every September, an entire

new gallery of mugs, and sit there looking at you. They look pretty dumb, like any other representative group of people, and you have a moment of despair.

It doesn't help much when some of the faces are closed and sullen, and others are sneaky or insolent or just plain devised for

hellery.

"Oh, boy! This is no bumper crop. More bumptious than bumper. Looks like a rough year ahead."

But some strange alchemy goes to work during the year, and by June, if you're lucky, those faces are no longer strangers, but a

host of new friends and acquaintances.

You have discovered all kinds of things, in the give and take of the classroom about these bodies, and now you know them as aspects of the human spirit, however blurred or bent, in some cases.

That girl with the big bust and bum and the pouty mouth, whom you registered as a Fat-Lips Houlihan type back in September, has turned out to be a sweet child who blushes if you ask her what time it is.

Conversely, that angelic, straight-looking girl with the big honest eyes and the good manners, whom you spotted as a potential prize student last fall, was hauled into court last winter for being drunk and disorderly, a nice way of saying she beat up two cops.

That little ratty guy with the dirty hair and the sides falling out of his sneakers, who looked like a refugee from a Dickensian orphanage, has proved himself a track star and a whiz in grammar.

Mouthy Mary, whose vocabulary would scorch the skull of a sailor, writes tender, lyric poetry.

Jeff, whom you put down as a hockey bum in January, who missed three days a week from exhaustion, has emerged, since the ice melted, as one of the most sensitive writers you've ever taught.

Alan, the belligerent guy you tangled with on the first day of school, and the second, and the fourth, and the eighth, a real hood, has come out of his surly cocoon as a football player, a pretty fair artist, and the best mower of lawns you have hired in years. You are buddies.

Cynthia, one of the few familiar faces last September, because you had taught her the year before, hasn't changed at all. She's just as sweet and lovable and full of fun as always, and you think of her almost as a daughter.

And Joe, the other familiar face last September because you had also taught her the year before, hasn't changed a bit either. He's just as slippery, conniving, lazy and genial as always, and while you might despair of him, you've grown to accept him, as you would a member of your family with the same faults.

It's the same every year. You start out with caterpillars, and if you are patient and tolerant and allow people to find their way out of their cocoons, you wind up with butterflies, some gray and dull, others brilliant and many-hued, but all of them fluttering with life.

And you keep track of your butterflies, as best you can. Here's a doctor who didn't know a dangling participle from a ruptured appendix when you were trying to teach him Shakespeare, 10 years ago.

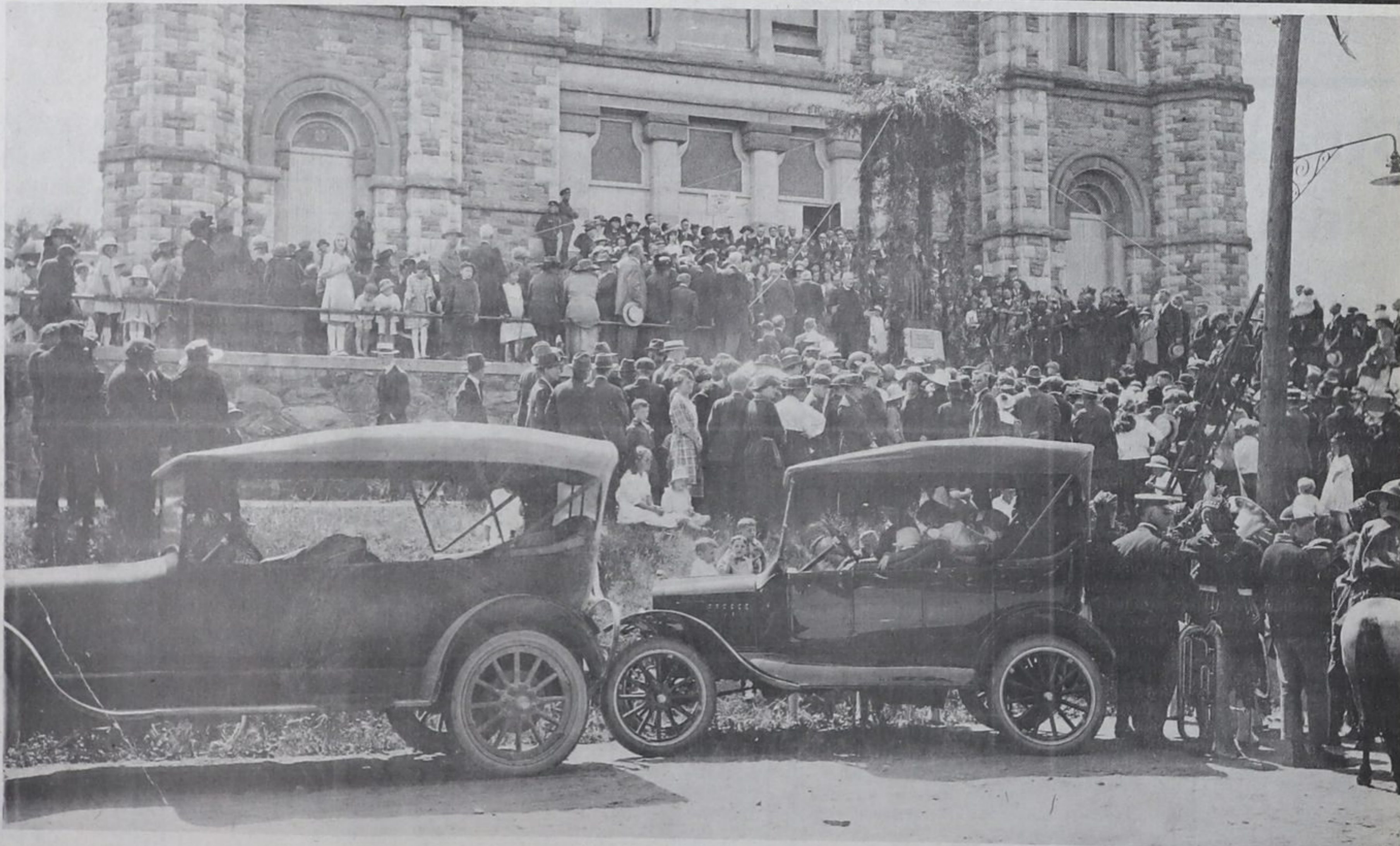
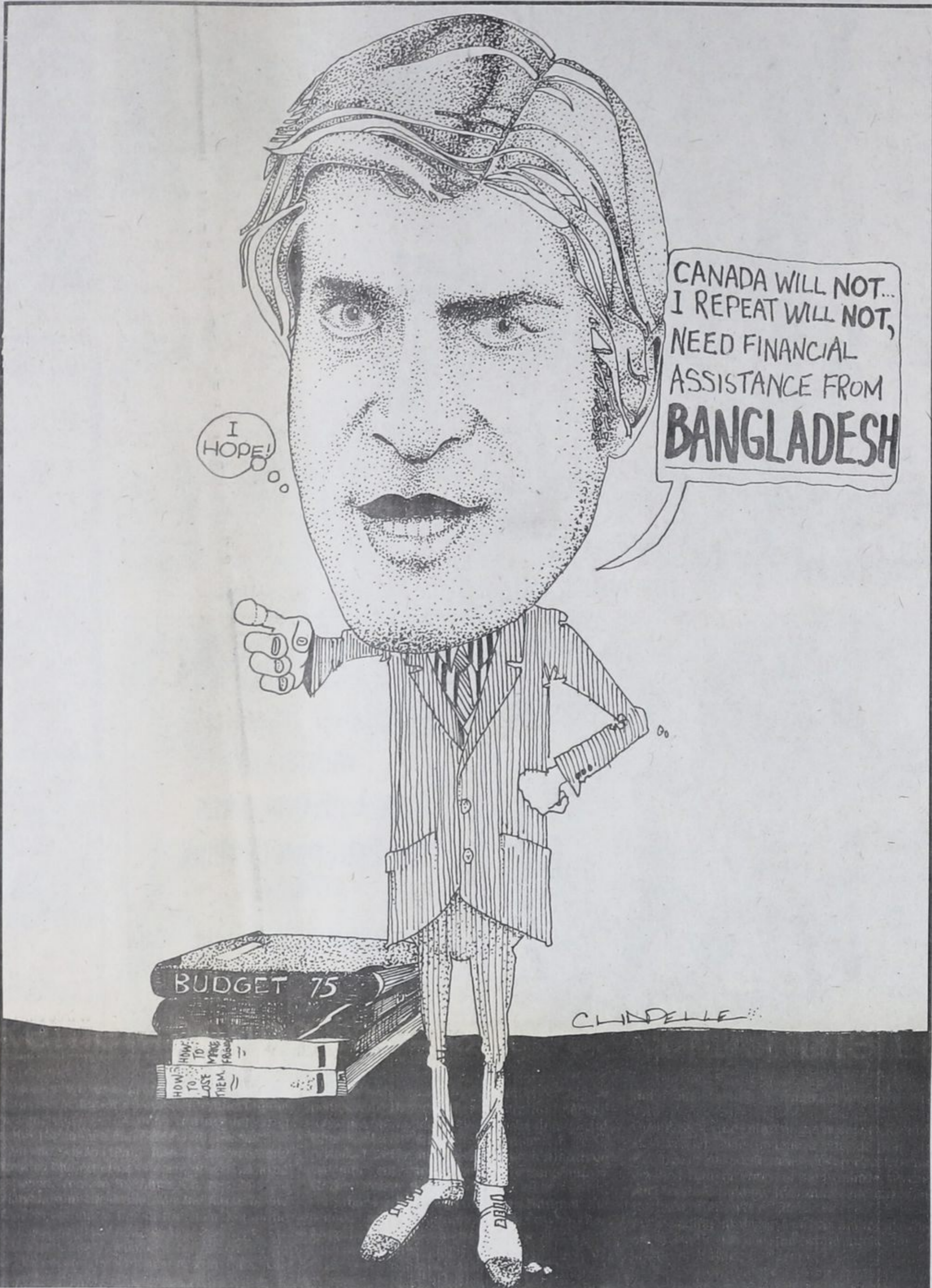
And there's a university professor, one of the swift, eager minds you touched on her way through the system.

John has become an artist, and is going to marry Trish, and you think it's a great match and hope the best for them, because you knew them away back then, when they were kids.

And another John and a Bill and a journalist, and Betty is a fine nurse, and Florence is going to be a lawyer, and Mike takes off your storm windows and Betty works in the travel agency and gives you the best of service and Pete is going to take you fishing to a special trout stream as soon as school is out and Rosemary has had four babies, every one a beauty.

It's like pulling teeth to make them admit it, but most teachers become pretty fond of most of their students over the course of a year. A few of them, of course, only a mother could love.

I can think of no fate more horrible than being a teacher who doesn't like kids, and no better life than for one who does.



Remembering the past ...

... the LeCaron statue

Usually we can give a fair amount of factual information on our Remembering the Past pictures, but this one is a mystery and most of what we can offer are guesses.

We do know that this is a ceremony marking the erection of the Father LeCaron statue in front of St. Ann's Church, but the exact date of the event and the name of the priest to the left of the statue, who is making a speech, remain unknown.

This ceremony probably took place during the Tercentenary Celebrations in 1921. The

picture was taken by W. Bald, a highly competent photographer during that period, who took many of the Tercentenary pictures. The LeCaron statue was mounted on a pedestal to the left of the Church alongside the side entrance stairway coming off of Robert Street West sidewalk.

Father LeCaron was the first priest and the second white man to arrive in Simcoe County. A Recollet missionary, he arrived in Huronia a few days before Samuel de Champlain back in 1615. He said the first

mass in Ontario at Caragouha on August 1, 1615.

Although the statue represents Father LeCaron, it was originally made for St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan Order. Since the robes of the two orders were similar and since the true images of either of the two men were not preserved, it was decided that in order to save money it was permissible to use the same mold for a statue of Father LeCaron.

Two points of interest in the photo are the

sign at the base of the statue and another on the front church door.

The sign at the base of the statue says that Father LeCaron was the first white man to come to Ontario. That is an error. Etienne Brule preceded LeCaron's arrival by three years.

Apparently trips up the tower of St. Ann's Church were popular at that time. The sign on the front door of the church offers the trips for 10 cents.

The
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