

The Liberal

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Our Municipal Government

As the "So many days to Christmas" ads begin to take their annual appearance so, seasonally, do thoughts begin to turn to municipal elections.

A would-be councillor starts a little quiet canvassing to find out how good his chances are. An incumbent, doubtful of his hold on public opinion, suggests diffidently that he might not be a candidate this year and awaits reactions.

All to what purpose? So that once more "government of the people, by the people, for the people" may find expression in the field where it comes closest to the immediate activities of those people — the field of domestic affairs.

Thoughts of forthcoming elections prompt a few observations on the local government of our townships, our villages, our towns, where the said "government of the people" is a closer, a more personal affair, than it is in the greater sphere of senior governments.

Joe Doakes, the reeve, is a person — not a name known only to his constituents through billboards, advertisements, newspaper reports, Bill Brown, the councillor, is a man who can be seen on Main Street any day — a man who works or does his business day in and day out with those whose votes send him to council or turn him out of it.

We have watched municipal councils operating for many years. We have, in turn, been appalled, thrilled, bored, disappointed, enthusiastic. Sometimes we have wondered what it's all about — at others felt a flash of enthusiasm over the fact that the shop-worn phrase "Democracy at the grassroots" is a little more than a mouth-filling overworked cliché.

Then we've watched bigotry, selfishness, ignorance, play their part on the stage of municipal affairs.

But, above all, we've seen one human quality — kindness — play an important part in governing the affairs of a municipality. We have had a reeve lean over and whisper — if it's alright with you would you not mind saying anything about Mrs. Blank's affairs that we've been discussing.

Somewhat it seems to us, in this edgy world of today, that municipalities governed by men with that spirit are not likely to go far wrong.

In a day and age when powers of municipal bodies, especially in Ontario, are becoming ever-increasingly restricted by this, that, and 'tother provincial regulating body, there is an inclination to wonder whether local government has not had its day. When it is recalled that control of expenditures slips more and more out of the hands of local councils as school boards and other bodies demand sums in excess of all the expenditures of a municipality the question as to whether a council has any authority or control left arises.

But somehow or other in spite of all that we are still strong for well-balanced, progressive municipal governments. We still believe that an intimate knowledge of local affairs, kindly approach to the problems of fellow-citizens, play a mighty part in what is sometimes called "municipal housekeeping" — a part that forms a solid foundation for the structure of democratic government which has been slowly, sometimes painfully, built through the years.

Local municipal government has its faults, its failings. Sometimes its slowness becomes irritating. Again one recognizes that apparent slowness as a decent, sensible determination to think the problems out properly.

Be that as it may, no better system has been devised to date. And as election day looms over the horizon, we believe that it is the duty of our citizens to recall these things — to realize that talk about democracy means little — that that really counts is a determination to make democracy work at its beginning by giving a little more than ordinary consideration to the qualities of the men who offer themselves for municipal election and, above everything else, to get out and vote.

Local Telephone Service

Those minutes before the doctor reaches the scene of an accident can seem very long.

And those agonizing minutes after fire has broken out — when the services of the fire brigade may mean not only saving of property but the difference between life and death — can seem longer.

If you want to know how long they really can appear to be just imagine, for a moment, that fire has broken out in your house. Go to your telephone to reach your fire department, which is the first and obvious thing that you should do.

The seconds tick on and on. They grow into eternities. But still there is no answer from the public utility — the telephone service — which links risk with rescue. Unfortunately the fire doesn't know that — doesn't make allowances. Its flaming fingers do not hesitate for one second. The fact that a telephone operator hasn't answered means nothing to them. And while a frantic telephone bill payer tries to get service, life and property hang in the balance.

This newspaper has hesitated for a long time before making the decision that something must be said about the state of affairs which exists in this district today insofar as telephone service is concerned.

Its frequent consultations with telephone company executives have left it with the impression that they, too, are very much harassed group of individuals. War-born problems, nation-wide shortages, have created situations with which even the most willing and able of administrators find difficult to cope.

Believing that everything possible was being done this paper has counselled patience — has, indeed, done everything in its power to help guide an impatient public through the difficult days of reconstruction. Because of occupying a position where it can see many sides of questions, it has realized both desires and difficulties. This isn't to suggest that The Liberal has, in any sense, been trying to "sit on the fence." It has simply been trying to maintain a sane and constructive view-point and to play fair with everybody concerned.

But there comes a time when every newspaper, if it is to justify the faith which its readers place in it, must come into the open. If it boasts about the "freedom of the press" it must, if it is any sort of a newspaper at all, realize the responsibilities which go into that freedom.

So today it is our very necessary duty, in the interests of this community, to say that the state of affairs which exists with regard to our telephone service has reached the stage of the fantastic.

In fairness to a group of people whom we believe to be doing their best we want to go on record as saying that our remarks are not directed in any way, shape or form, against local operators. We appreciate their desire to give the best service possible.

But that still does not answer the question.



Mentioned in a recent issue of The Liberal was the fourth license plate ever issued in the province of Ontario. Now the property of C. M. Chandler of King, it was originally issued to his father, W. Howard Chandler and covered a 1903 Cadillac. Through the courtesy of Mr. Chandler it is now on display in The Liberal's office window. Holding it for the photographer is Miss Alverna Smith.

The plain fact remains that the citizens of Richmond Hill and vicinity are paying top rates for their telephones and are getting in return a service which, in the kindest terms, can only be described as archaic.

Less than twenty miles away from one of the most modern telephone installations in the world we are receiving for our money a type of service which would be a disgrace to the days when the telephone was a novelty.

Subscribers are being asked to pay, in hard-earned dollars and cents, for value which they do not receive. Business is being hampered. Tempers are run ragged. Lives are endangered. The progress of the district is being seriously retarded.

We know that it is tough for the telephone company. But it calls for a little of the "let's do it anyway in spite of the fact that it can't be done" spirit which rose superior to emergencies in war-time.

The assurance that a dial service will be installed in 1951 are comforting only to a degree. They will help little if a serious emergency arises — if because of inadequate service life is lost. We hate to think of local business being condemned for another year to suffer the delays and frustrations which have become an hour-to-hour occurrence in recent months.

We'll get mighty little satisfaction out of being able to say "I told you so" if an emergency does arise. That's why this newspaper has decided to publicly urge the Bell Telephone Company to do something, and do it now, to improve the service under which this district is suffering.

From The Hilltop

A COLUMN OF VIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

(By F. J. Picking)

If the words of a grand old hymn ever held any significance — and I don't mind admitting that they have always held a lot for me — that significance was multiplied many times on this morning of Thanksgiving Day, 1949, as I explored one of the most beautiful pieces of Canada which I have ever seen.

Praise to our God, whose bounteous hand Prepared of old this glorious land; A garden fenced by silver sea; A people prosperous, strong and free.

It was impossible to look over the sweeping acres which I viewed this morning without those words coming to mind time and again. And all the more impact was given to them because those acres reflected the work of a man who is not a native born Canadian — a man who had come to Canada seeking opportunity — who by his courage and initiative had made good in the land of his adoption.

Thinking back over the headlines of the past twelve months — headlines which told of terror, of want, of persecution in many parts of the world it was impossible to escape from recalling over and over, on this "out of this world" October morning, that we live in a good land — a land which, in spite of all its wrongs, still has so many things right with it that it stands today as one of the few which Shakespeare's words fit — "This blessed plot of earth."

It was impossible, too, to escape recalling another stanza of that fine old hymn and to hope, as one recalled it, that its meaning and its spirit might guide this, our Dominion, in the centuries to come.

"Praise to our God, though chastenings stern, Our evil dross shall throughly burn; Thy rod and staff, from age to age, Shall rule and guide our heritage."

Now, my little sermon being over (and if you really think that it's a sermon remember that the same time that it represents the thoughts of a man whose very proud of Canada) where is this piece of land?

It isn't a place one has to travel hundreds of miles to see. It's right on our own doorstep — at Thornhill, to be exact.

Incidentally, getting out of the columnist's chair for a moment and into the editor's, it rather looks as

News Of Our Neighbours

Changeover from 25 cycle to 60 cycle power began in Scarborough township on October 5. Work was effected speedily, with customers being without refrigeration, etc., for only a few hours.

The world's largest manufacturer of paper cups and nested containers, Lily-Tulip Cup Corporation is erecting a half million dollar plant in Scarborough township.

The Office Specialty Manufacturing Company has awarded the contract for the construction of their new plant which is to be built on thirty acres of land recently purchased by them on Highway No. 11 near Holland Landing. The new building will have a floor area of 30,000 square feet.

A survey conducted by the Orillia Board of Trade to see if local merchants and members of the organization favoured installation of parking meters on the main street brought replies from 45% of those questioned. 86 were in favour — 65 opposed. 62 retailers among the group voted 33 for — 29 against.

Four buildings, each containing six apartments, have been completed by the Robinson Cotton Mills near their plant at Woodbridge. Plans for seventeen more buildings containing sixty-eight apartments are being held in abeyance pending some type of municipal sewage disposal.

Fire of unknown origin, which caused damage estimated at \$4,500 destroyed the interior of the RCA MC School Sergeants' Mess at Camp Borden recently.

If a public utilities commission were formed residents would receive better service, said Reeve Charles Reesor of Markham at a recent meeting of Markham and District Chamber of Commerce. Several members expressed their agreement.

A recent announcement by the local assessor that Stouffville had 99 widows and spinsters and an equal number of widowers and bachelors created quite a lot of attention and resulted in a considerable number of letters and telephone calls to the Stouffville Tribune and to other parties in the town.

A new hydro sub-station, necessitated by the changeover from 25 to 60 cycle, is planned for Aurora.

Building permits issued in Lindsay for the first nine months of 1949 totalled \$915,650. Included in the figure is the sum of \$500,000 for an industrial plant.

Zoning of Sutton into residential, commercial and industrial areas is receiving the attention of the village council. A representative of the Ontario Department of Planning and Development recently conferred with the council on the subject.

Two addition sets of stop lights have been suggested for Newmarket — one at Main and Water Sts. and the other at Main and Davis Drive. Reeve Evans said the matter would be taken up with the County Council.

Hold-back of 15% of the contractor's account was authorized by Newmarket town council on account of faulty construction of sidewalks which the bill covered.

hadn't been attended to, I was told, was that they were waiting for the correct figures which would come as a result of the assessor's report — and it's a sound reason. But now that those figures are available I suggest that quick action to have "1450" replaced by "1950" is very much in order. There's little point in worrying about a couple of dozen but when the figures are out by a quarter of the population there's some sense in making a correction.

Talking of population, our figures are likely to be increased by three shortly. The three will be a Royal Navy man who spent six years on service; his wife, who served as a member of the Women's Royal Naval Service, and their five year old child. The head of the household is joining the staff of this paper and, like many other people coming to the Hill, is facing that awful problem of housing. Naturally a small house or apartment would be preferred but, in order to get settled down, they're willing to take anything reasonable. If any of my readers can give any help naturally it would be very much appreciated. Just call the Liberal, please, if you can manage to get a line and have any suggestions to offer.

As I mentioned earlier, this seems to be a Thornhill issue, so I might as well go the whole hog. My purpose in doing so is to pay a tribute to the small but live population of that village and the work they have done in providing the first unit of their community centre, a swimming pool. Especially commendable is the common sense attitude which has prevailed — an attitude which will result in providing not only public entertainment, swimming instruction for the younger generation, but also a very worthwhile protection against fire. Nice going, Thornhill and Lions.

OTTAWA LETTER by "Jack" Smith, M.P. North York

I have received letters from many constituents who are concerned by news reports of the possibility of an increase in license fees for radio receiving sets. I have answered all these letters but in case others are similarly concerned I wish to assure all that so far there has been no official suggestion that the Government is considering any such move.

The whole matter of Radio Broadcasting in Canada is now under review by a Royal Commission, and in a brief submitted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation it was suggested that the Radio fee be increased to \$5.00.

No one can foretell what recommendations the Royal Commission will make, but even if it should recommend an increased fee the Government would not be obliged to accept the recommendation. It might be that the Royal Commission will recommend that radio broadcasting is so much a part of our national life, and contributes so much to our national welfare that any expense in connection therewith should be paid out of general revenue. If such a recommendation were made it might or might not be adopted by the government. There definitely will be no change in the present radio license fee until the Royal Commission has reported to the Government — and expressing an opinion as a private member and in no sense speaking for the Government, I would say that there is little likelihood of any increase in the radio license fee, and I am hopeful that before long the present fee will be completely abolished.

P. M.'s Residence There has been for some time a growing feeling that this country like others should provide a home in Ottawa for the Prime Minister. It is felt we should have an official Prime Minister's residence here corresponding with the famous No. 10 Downing Street in London. This week Trade Minister Howe acting Prime Minister during the absence of Mr. St. Laurent announced that the government has decided to make provision for such a residence.

Some years ago the government purchased the large Edwards property located on the banks of the Ottawa river. It has for some time been rented to the Australian government and used as a legation. The government will ask Parliament at this session for funds to rehabilitate this house for the use of Mr. St. Laurent and succeeding Prime Ministers. The house is beautifully situated and will be an official residence which will be a credit to Canada.

Trans-Canada Highway A trans-Canada highway has been a dream of Canadians for a

SUNDAY AFTERNOON DR. ARCHER WALLACE

KEEP YOUR MIND HEALTHY

One of the diseases from which middle-aged people suffer is hardening of the arteries. It is a physical condition; a hardening of the mental tissue. There may not be much more of this trouble now than before, but we hear more about it. It has become a subject of considerable research, and if such studies lessen the ailment, that is all to the good.

We are thinking just now of another condition which may come to any of us; a stiffness of mental joints which we can control. It is not to be wondered at that people who have lived fifty or sixty years and often more, should be "set in their ways."

There is a story told of a man who was so stubborn that each morning he prayed: "O Lord, I hope I'm always right, for I'm an awful hard man to turn." Note that the story is about a man, not a woman.

Yet one of the surest ways to keep the mind healthy is to be hospitable to new ideas. Once the mind is closed to new ideas old age has set in and death is not far behind. Some of the healthiest-minded people we have ever known have been over four score years; their minds were young because they welcomed new ideas and that kept them fresh and eager, and they are greatly loved by young people.

And thought-control is possible. The late Dr. Frank Crane said: "The art of happy living is closely connected with the art of controlling one's thoughts. The cause of much despondency and even of suicide is thinking constantly on unpleasant subjects — it will sap your mind and deplete your capacity. Learn to reject thoughts which get you down." Such thoughts come and seek admittance; resentment, bitterness and even hatred. They need not be admitted and if they are turned away they will come only rarely, and finally not at all. We all create mental habits and our thoughts follow brain tracks just

long time. It was first mentioned many years ago and back in the thirties some work was done in some of the provinces. Then came the war and the project was forgotten for a few years. Now it is coming to the fore again and it is hoped to take a real worthwhile forward step at this session. The actual work will be done by the provinces but the Federal government can play an important part by supplying some of the necessary millions. The day may not be far distant when one will be able to drive from the Atlantic to the Pacific on a smooth ribbon of modern highway, all on Canadian soil. It is a dream worth dreaming and one which merits general support of Canadians everywhere.

Party Standing The party standing in the House of Commons following the June 27th election was: Liberals 193, Progressive Conservatives 41, C. C. F. 13, Social Credit 10, Independents 4, Ind. Liberal 1, Total 262. Resignations due to appointments have already accounted for vacancies, and death has caused two more. The by-elections to fill the 8 vacancies will be held October 24.

Women in Parliament Fifteen women were candidates for Parliament in the June 27 election and all were defeated. Five women have held seats in the Commons. Miss Agnes MacPhail was elected as a Progressive for East Grey in 1921 to be the first of her sex to represent a Canadian Constituency. Mrs. George Black represented Yukon from 1935 to 1940 when her husband a Conservative was absent due to illness. Mrs. Doris Neilson, United Progressive won Battleford North in 1940 and Mrs. Cora Casselman, Liberal was elected in a 1941 by-election in Edmonton East. Both were defeated in 1945. Mrs. Strum, C.C.F., was a member of the 20th Parliament but was defeated on June 27.

Lost Deposits In the general election on June 27, 344 candidates lost their \$200. deposit by failing to poll one half of the vote of the winning candidate. C.C.F. losses were 119, Conservative 101, and Union of Electors 52.

Record Majority The largest majority gained by any candidate in the last election was won by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Louis St. Laurent. His majority in Quebec East was 17,956. The smallest majority was in Annapolis-Kings, Nova Scotia, where A. A. Elderdin, Liberal, won by five votes.

During the Session I will be at my office in Richmond Hill every Saturday for the convenience of constituents who may want to see me personally.

as an engine keeps to the rails. We hear a lot about bad habits and these can be steadily built up and made permanent. A sense of humour is a sign of a healthy mind. Some well-meaning people have supposed that a hearty laugh indicated shallowness. That is a great mistake. It some sobersides would laugh more — they would be easier to live with and do more good. The famous Scottish writer Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) used to say that he never knew trouble to break out in a family where the parents teased the children in a good-natured way. We feel sure there wouldn't be many divorces if married couples cultivated a good sense of humour. Good humour oils the machinery.

There is a passage in the Bible, written twenty-five or twenty-seven centuries ago, which reads: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." (Proverbs 17:22.) The writer of that verse was not afraid of cheerfulness. He knew it was a spiritual tonic and he wanted to develop his sense of humour and have others cultivate theirs also. Above all, don't get sorry for yourself. The world is full of people who meet hardships and seeming disaster, but they keep their minds healthy and refuse to become bitter or cynical or self-pitying.

The other evening I was present at a service club. About sixty men, mostly middle-aged, had a wonderful time. They slapped each other on the back, used Christian names and roared hilariously at feeble jokes. Some people sniff at that but not I. A friend of mine, who criticizes service clubs, says the men behave like children. No doubt he is right, but isn't there a saying of Jesus that we must become like little children? And bursts of exuberant good nature help to keep minds healthy.

Our quotation to-day is a sensible slogan: "If you want to have a better world, start in your own community."

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