

The Liberal



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Holding The Tax Line

It is increasingly apparent that Richmond Hill's 1959 Town Council will need the courage to say "no" to many requests and suggestions for worthy projects and needed undertakings if they are to hold the tax rate line.

Despite remarkable growth and increased demand for services the 1958 council did keep the tax rate from getting out of control, and it is important that this year's council if possible, repeat the performance. Mayor Tomlin has on occasion pointed with understandable pride to the fact that Richmond Hill's development program has been accomplished without imposing any undue increase in municipal taxation. In striving to maintain this position we feel sure he and members of council will have the support and co-operation of the ratepayers.

The extension of our boundaries and the substantial increase in population make continually increasing demand for necessary services, and despite a few difficulties the local administration has kept pace with these demands in a very satisfactory manner. It must be remembered however that meeting the demands for the necessary services creates considerable strain on local resources and that until such time as we have achieved the degree of consolidation which can be accomplished only with the passing of time, care and caution are imperative in municipal financing.

Municipal council has been presented with many requests for worthy projects and worthwhile undertakings which now are the subject of study and review by the finance committee. We suggest that if we are to hold the tax line again this year they will have to wield the economy axe with considerable force and determination.

The budget presented at the recent council meeting by the Recreation Committee should have most careful consideration. The Committee has been

doing a good job and should be continued, but the extent to which recreational activities should be subsidized by taxpayers' money is a matter on which there is a difference of opinion. The Committee when first organized asked council for a few hundred dollars. Last year the amount was \$1,200, and this year the request is for more than \$9,000.

We have heard ratepayers say that this is "recreation gone wild". There certainly is a question as to the right of council to levy taxes on real estate to subsidize some of the activities included in the budget. The temptation to spend money to earn provincial grants is a pitfall to be avoided. Without a lot more explanation the budget presented by the Recreation Committee is altogether too large and we trust it may have the sharp pencil treatment by the finance committee. It would be too bad to have the future good work of the Recreation Committee impaired by endorsement of items and amounts which do not have pretty general community support.

We received a letter this week from a citizen who complains of high taxes, high water rates, the high hydro rates and in declaring his intention to move out says this soon will be a ghost town. We do not agree at all with the writer of that letter, but we do want to guard against the possibility of such conditions developing. Practice of economy in administration and a close and watchful eye on the tax rate is the best insurance against such a possibility.

Municipal taxation in Richmond Hill is at a level where it is important that the line be held. No matter how worthy a project may be it must be judged among other standards, by our ability to afford it. We know municipal leaders are well aware of these facts and will face up to their responsibilities. We hope the ratepayers will understand the situation and refrain from making undue demands on the treasury.

Water By Pipeline

An assured water supply is necessary for Richmond Hill and all municipalities in the district. To maintain an adequate supply and secure additional water as it is needed for new development is a problem for this and neighbouring towns and townships.

Finding new deep wells of capacity sufficient to meet the ever-increasing demand is precarious, and expensive. It doesn't seem economically sound for every municipality throughout the area to be engaged in the never ending search for water.

We welcome therefore the recent suggestion of Markham's Reeve W. L. Clark that the Province of Ontario should take the lead and by pipeline supply municipalities with water. We would like to see the Province embark on some such scheme which would be so helpful to the municipalities.

Last week Richmond Hill's Councillor W. J. Haggart suggested the County of York should give consideration to some such project to supply the needs

of municipalities. This too is an excellent suggestion and we hope the County Council will give some thought and study to the idea.

In recent years there has been some demand for the abolition of County Councils as part of our municipal administration. In support of the argument it is pointed out that in recent years the Province has more and more taken over responsibilities and that necessary services rendered by the County have been steadily diminishing.

Sponsoring a project to pipe water from Lake Huron to supply municipal needs would give County Council a really worthwhile mission. We have not the facts to judge whether or not such a scheme is possible or economically feasible, but we would be very interested to find out.

A pipe line supplying water to all municipalities in the County of York is a challenging project and we hope York County Council will give it some consideration.

The Week Parents Go To School

Classrooms traditionally are places for questions and, it is to be hoped, answers. Next week the questions will be coming not only from pupils but their parents as well.

The occasion will be the annual observance of Canadian Education Week, which formally starts March 1 and runs to March 7. A large number of Canadians — including many who do not have children in school — are expected to visit their local schools this week.

Most schools will hold special assemblies, exhibits and conferences to acquaint the citizens of the community with the school program.

But the real importance of these programs is that they should serve as an impetus for the redoubling of efforts to support and strengthen our public schools.

To make the most of a school visit, parents should "observe with a purpose" in an effort to obtain the answers to questions concerning the quality of education. Some of these questions which

visitors should ask themselves are: What is the age and condition and state of repair of the school building? Is there a seat for each child in the classroom?

Are modern tools of education — such as audio-visual aids, slides, films, television, radio, and maps — used as an integral part of the program? What is the textbook situation?

Are the creative arts a vital part of the program? How are the shop facilities in the secondary schools?

Does the school have a well-stocked library, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and a separate lunchroom? Are sanitary facilities adequate?

Most parents will be able to think of many more questions. But the one which cannot be reduced to a simple question and answer concerns the very heart of education: WHAT IS BEING TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS, AND WHY.



Facts and Faith

A Weekly Comment On Christian Life And Action — By Calvin H. Chambers —

God's Promises

AMBITION
 Spinoza, the great Jewish philosopher of the 17th century said, "Avarice, ambition, lust are nothing but species of madness, although not enumerated among the diseases." But perhaps he should have defined what he meant by ambition. There is good and bad ambition. Joseph Chamberlain in his diary writes: "All ambitions are lawful except those which climb upward upon the miseries and credulities of mankind." In Paul's epistles we read of some of the lofty ambitions which he cherished. In his letter to the Thessalonians he says that he sought constantly to be quiet and reverent in nature. In his letter to the Corinthians he declares that his ambition is "to be in all things pleasing to God." In his great document to the Romans he tells of his passionate desire to "preach the gospel to the regions beyond." These were wholesome and honourable ambitions.

It is right and proper that all of us have high ambitions which promote and further the glory of God and the work of His kingdom. Alfred Lord Tennyson was once conversing with a friend who said that his ambitions were to have a clearer vision of God. Christ revealed the ambition of his life when he said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

But unless ambition is motivated by love for God, it can degenerate into a selfish and sometimes wicked thing. Human history tells an awful story of how man's selfish ambition has led to the destruction of life and the collapse of culture. In the early chapters of Genesis we are told that men in their selfish ambition to create a world organization which would safeguard their existence built a high tower. They said, "Go to, let us build us a city and tower, whose top may reach to heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. Here was an ambitious attempt to create world unity. Unfortunately it had no room for God. The most repeated word in this ambitious statement is the word "us." We know the tragic end to this ambitious scheme. It ended in a confusion of tongues.

This is the ultimate end of ambition uncontrolled by God. It matters little whether it is a scheme for one's own personal advancement, or a method to produce world order. If it leaves God out, it can only end in disaster. If there is anything which we need to learn in this fearful atomic age, is that there is no scheme for world peace, no matter how cleverly devised, which dares ignore the living God. The abolition of war, the creation of international security is a vain and hopeless thing if it is undertaken in our own strength, without reference to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The tower of ambition will topple over if it is not built upon the foundation of God's saving truth. Man's personal and social salvation is something which cannot be achieved apart from faith and trust in the living God whose grace is offered us in Christ. Ambitious self seeking, in all its many and varied forms, leads only to confusion and bewilderment. But if our ambitions are purified by God's Spirit, then what noble and worthy achievements they may accomplish! The chief ambition of every sincere Christian should be to promote the glory of God in daily life. This is the chief end of life. To fulfill it we must have the spirit of John the Baptist who said, "He must increase, I must decrease."

NEWMARKET — Town council has passed a by-law for the annexation of 550 acres of Whitchurch Township. Newmarket wants the land for industrial expansion. The proposed annexation is subject to review by the municipal board.

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Over Hill, Over Dale

by Cicely Thomson

In the Middle Ages when schooling was preserved by the monasteries alone, the process of getting an education was conducted very much as on a debating platform. It seems to me that the scholars of that day had a tremendous advantage over the scholars of today. For one thing not so much had happened. For another, a great many of the things that had happened were totally, as far as they knew, lost. So from that angle there wasn't so much to learn about. Their discussion methods took time, but how well would the pros and cons, the varying points of view, be presented by this leisurely but intensive education method.

Another advantage that the Middle Ages' student had over us was that things happened with extreme slowness. So that the urgency of current affairs was not pressing upon student and pedagogue alike. And in that connection the spreading of the news was not conducted on a day to day basis of hysterical headlines . . . a great advantage to those who have trouble anyway with their sense of analysis.

Technically also, there was not the great variety of detailed knowledge needed for any of the thousands of careers that we now offer to our young people. So no doubt, they learnt a little Latin and a bit of Greek, for after all any youth with an active mind is going to learn something and at that time most other languages were considered not quite nice to use for written work. Now with the appalling vastness of the almost numberless areas of knowledge open to us, perhaps the most important thing we can do in our educational programs is to struggle for a sense of proportion in the emphasis that we give to the various areas.

We are also in the process of hurtling into the nuclear age, which will inevitably face our children with problems beyond our imaginings. How best can our schools and colleges, technical institutes and universities serve the generation of tomorrow? How can they make youth aware of the responsibilities of their coming lives? How can they choose and discriminate for these young people who will live out their lives in an environment as yet unseen?

That the whole question of education is of national, indeed international, concern is indicated by the very frequency with which it is discussed, whether in home living rooms, across board tables, in popular, scientific or intellectual journals. What we local parents and citizens, yes, those of us who have not school-age children should be as vitally interested in the teaching of the child of today, can do is to become as informed as possible in all the aspects of the schooling of our town's children. We must take the opportunity offered to visit the schools on Monday evening on their open house to see and evaluate for ourselves the work displayed. During the year we must assess our local school board members so that as each December election comes around we elect those who are most concerned with the integrity of education and with the quality of the teaching.

Judging by last December's turn out at the polls we are getting a very much better school board than we deserve, who are giving countless hours to balance the costs that our almost explosive and uncontrolled growth have brought, with the resources of the teaching plant. The past few years have seen changes in our public schools that have brought benefits to all the children that have been involved. The system of steady progress at the pupil's own speed will have been welcomed alike by the parents of the slow learner and the gifted child.

The rotation classes in the senior grades has been in my opinion, a very good compromise with the defeated suggestion of a senior school for grade seven and eight children. At least in the rotation classes of science, art, music, and social studies the teacher with a special interest can communicate to the students in her own field, and at least the children have the benefits of a fresh voice and approach in each of these subjects. And at the most the joy of teaching one's "own" subject can be the spark that lights the fire of discovery in the pupil.

(May I say here that I would consider it impertinent in myself to attempt in any way to assess the teaching quality in any phase of our local education. The teaching staffs are professionally trained men and women and as such their work can only be assessed by another professional.)

However, on the non-professional level I would like to state that I feel the strength of our home and school associations has been in a great measure responsible for the strength of our school boards, and of the public's increasing interest in our school system. We have always almost dedicated heads of the different H & S associations who have brought programs to the meetings that not only help parents understand the school, but which also broaden the interest of parents as people to the community picture beyond the classroom.

Our school board too has shown that same interest in the community of which the schools are but a part. The valuable school buildings are available as often as possible to outside organizations and at no charge if the meetings are of a non-money-raising nature, and do not involve caretaking outside the usual hours.

Just last week too the board turned over to the town and recreation committee the school grounds to be used as desired, subject to the board approval of activities and equipment involved. The board in short is making the schools a very part of the community and not an area paid for by the general taxpayer, but set aside for the one purpose only and locked up after half past three. Our school board is seemingly aware of the greater contribution that can be made to the community welfare by the full-time use of the grounds and buildings.

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