

**Dominion Convention In Ottawa**

**Legion Plans Broaden Membership**

The Royal Canadian Legion held its annual Dominion Convention in Ottawa during the first week in June. The following interview with Retiring National President Robert Kohaly QC by Writer Jim Hayes was published in the May 30 issue of the "Ottawa Citizen".

At first glance, the Royal Canadian Legion seem to be in splendid shape.

The membership, now at more than 300,000, never has been higher. They share assets spread across the country worth almost \$80 million.

The organization has won a firm place in Canada's social structure. It enjoys important political influence. Members are tied together by emotional ties that have held firm throughout the years.

Yet, behind this appearance of prosperity and permanence lies a fatal flaw. Barring some radical changes, the legion could virtually disappear within a quarter of a century.

The membership is growing older. Veterans of the first world war, are, on the average, 75.5 years old while second world war vets average 51.4 years. Relatively few can be expected to be active participants in the legion in 25 years.

Further, it seems improbable that Canada will again be in-

olved in a conflict involving masses of men, which would provide an infusion of new veterans into the organization.

"We are wholly aware of this situation," said Dominion President Robert Kohaly, QC, of Estevan, Sask. "We know that the Legion's function and membership must be broadened if it is to survive. It will be a key topic at the national convention in Ottawa next week."

This objective will not be attained easily, he added. The Legion will face a measure of apathy from outside and hostility from within.

"The Legion has never faced a less sympathetic population. We are, in fact, regarded with outright hostility by some and with indifference by others."

"They see us as a symbol of militarism. We remind them of war and death. Yet, the truth is that ours is a peaceful face. Nobody is more opposed to war than our members who know from experience what war can mean."

Many Canadians, said Mr. Kohaly, have become so concerned with what they mistakenly see as the legion's military face that they forget the organization's efforts in the field of scholarships and sports.

"As we see it, the nation made a contract with those who served in the war. These people didn't have much choice about entering into that contract but, once caught up in it, they agreed to do their best and hoped that would not include giving their lives."

"If you ask if Canada has fulfilled its part of that agreement, the answer has to be absolutely no and it will continue to be no until positive and acceptable action has been taken to improve pensions and allowances."

"We will not accept as proper a program that allows a veteran on full pension only about two-thirds the amount paid sweepers and cleaners in the House of Commons."

Questions involving the treatment of veterans and of their widows and orphans will continue to demand the Legion's primary attention for years to come, the dominion president said.

The possibility that the organization, like an old soldier, should just fade away is not even contemplated. "We have facilities across the country. They and our experience can make a very important contribution to life in Canada in the future. You just don't abandon all that."

The Legion's determination and confidence in its survival, said Mr. Kohaly, is shown in the fact that it is involved in projects, including housing developments, that demand management and financial obligations extending 50 years into the future.

The basic requirement for survival, he noted, is opening membership to younger people who are not veterans. As a first step, sons and daughters of veterans might be invited to join.

"However, we recognize that there is no real alternative."

**County Offers Seneca New Campus Site**

If availability of land is a deciding factor in determining the location of a second campus for Seneca Community College, Aurora Reeve Evelyn Buck is in favor of deeding the former York Manor 200 acre farm on Yonge Street north of Aurora to the college.

At a meeting of York County Council on June 4, Mrs. Buck and Aurora's Deputy-revee William Trent moved that the county approach the college's board of governors with an offer of the property at nominal cost.

Revee Donald Plaxton, a member of Seneca College's 12-member board of governors and a member of the college's planning committee, said that he and York County's other representative to the board, Vaughan Township Planning Board Chairman Norn Garriock, had not supported the location of the present campus in North York.

The cost of the land at the present campus at Finch and Woodbine Avenues had been a determining factor, and since the majority of the board of governors are from the Metro area, pressure to locate a second campus in North York are strong.

At least three sites are now under consideration, including a \$4 million parcel of land in the western part of the borough.

However, said Mr. Plaxton, the board is not unaware of the transportation problems faced by prospective students from York County and of the considerably lower cost of land.

Mr. Trent said that a site in the Jane Street area south of Steeles Avenue is being considered, but that representatives of Aurora Council have met with Deputy Minister of Education John McCarthy asking that no move on the location of the new campus be made until Aurora had a chance to make its presentation.

"Seneca is not just for young people, but the distance is enough to discourage most of those who would like to take special courses," said Mr. Trent.

The college, he continued, helps people on welfare to gain skills through its Man-

power retraining program which would make it possible for them to earn a living.

The Aurora people, said Mr. Trent, will be meeting with York County Education Director Sam Chapman to prepare a brief to present to the college's board of governors and to the Department of Education.

"We are already overburdened with the cost of education," protested East Gwillimbury Deputy-revee Ray Twinnney, "and now we are talking about giving away half a million dollars."

"There is no direct cost to the municipality for community colleges," Mr. Plaxton assured him. "The cost is born by the provincial and federal governments."

North Gwillimbury Revee Wallace Donnell added, "Education is costly, but ten years hence, with a 27 hour work week, education of adults and children will be the most important part of the life of our society. This is something that is going to cost us nothing, but it will justify the existence of the old County of York and will make life worthwhile for both children and adults. It is worthy of our support."

Commenting on the location of York Manor Farm, Mr. Plaxton said, "If I were to be parochial, I would press for a site further south, closer to the centre of population, but if you reject this proposal we will have a hard time convincing them (Seneca College) to buy land in York County rather than in the Borough of North York."

He asked council to consider the many, many advantages to be obtained by having a college in the area.

"Manpower retraining will be available to any industry in York County. It will build a course around the needs of any industry provided the course is open to others than just employees of one company."

Reeve Clare Salisbury of Newmarket also supported the resolution.

"Seneca would be an asset to the whole county, and we would still have our property as a memorial to York County."

All but the representatives of East Gwillimbury supported the Aurora resolution.

**Your Legion Reports**

Branch 375, Royal Canadian Legion  
By George Wood — 884-2479

**Dominion Day Track Meet**

Our branch has the honor this year in hosting the Legion Track and Field meet which will be held at Thornlea Secondary School on Dominion Day. Our district stretches from Steeles Avenue on the south, to Huntsville on the north, so we can expect between 500 and 600 athletes participating in this meet.

The winners will represent our district at the provincial finals being held in Waterloo on August 15. The Dominion Day meet is open to all track and field athletes under the age of 16 years. We expect a good turnout from the Richmond Hill area.

Those wishing to participate may do so by contacting Sterling Reid at 884-6056 after 6 pm. We also extend an invitation to all people living in the area to come out and support their favorite competitors. Host Chairman Sterling Reid, and District Chairman Major Harry Kerrison are looking for volunteers to act as officials at the event and I'm sure that our members will not let them down.

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Sports Officer Gord Mills has entered our branch in the Zone E-2 Golf Tournament at Sharon on Saturday. Any regular or life member wishing to enter this tournament may do so by contacting Gord at Legion Hall.

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Past President Frank Barrott, was given a surprise at our last general meeting when the membership presented him with a cake complete with candles. It seems Frank was celebrating his birthday on the same evening.

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Also at our last general meeting it was agreed that our branch would not hold regular meetings during the summer months of July and August. Our next meeting therefore, will be held on September 21, at which time the membership will be asked to approve amendments to our bylaws. District Chairman Major Harry Kerrison are looking for volunteers to act as officials at the event and I'm sure that our

**Elgin Mills And Jefferson News**

CORRESPONDENT: LEONARD LOMAS — Phone 884-3000

**Church News**

The service at St. John's Anglican Church Sunday at 10 am will be a celebration of Holy Communion which will be immediately followed (weather permitting) by the parish picnic at Cedar Glen Conference Centre which is three miles past Nobleton on the King Sideroad and one mile north on the concession road. Price of admission is 15 cents per person. Dress for the church service will be informal so picnickers will not have to go home to change.

At the service of Holy Baptism last Sunday morning, Paul Charles, infant son of Gary and Janice Grierson of North Toronto, received the rite. Grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Roy Holmes and other friends of the family were present for the ceremony.

Choir members held an informal social to mark the last practice for the summer. It was held at the apartment of Sheila Norton in Richmond Hill June 24.

Congratulations are extended to Arthur Lounsbury and Gwendolyn Howell of Aurora on their marriage in St. John's June 13.

In preparation for the mission to be conducted by the Bishop of Coventry Cuthbert Bardsley, there will be a prayer vigil at St. John's on the last Monday of each month from 8 to 9 pm. The first vigil will be held June 29.

The young peoples' group held a party Saturday evening at the parish hall to mark the end of the season. The rector is relinquishing the organization of the two groups and it is hoped to arrange for another interested person to take on this responsibility.

The "Mixed Blessings", St. John's new combo group, travelled to Cedar Glen Conference Centre to sing at a United Church picnic Sunday after the morning service.

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