

NEWMARKET: East Gwillimbury Township Councillor Alex Morning died suddenly November 30 at Toronto Western Hospital. He was recuperating from a kidney transplant operation. Cause of death was a heart attack. He was serving his second term as a member of East Gwillimbury Township Council at his death.

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(Photo by Stuart's Studio)

A deeply concerned Andrew Brewin, NDP MP for Greenwood, Toronto, was in Richmond Hill recently to speak on the Pakistan refugee problem. He addressed a local audience at St. Matthew's United on the evening of November 28. Brewin also was among the first to bring the plight of the Biafrin people to the attention of the Canadian public. He visited India, West and East Pakistan in July. He is seen (left) in the above photo, chatting with Rev. John McTavish minister of the church, before the meeting began.

Political Settlement Essential In Pakistan

BY MARY DAWSON

"We witnessed one of the most immense, most moving tragedies in all history," Andrew Brewin told a good-sized audience at St. Matthew's United Church, Crosby Avenue, on the evening of November 28.

Brewin, the NDP MP for the Greenwood Riding in Toronto, was one of the three Members of Parliament who visited India, West Pakistan and East Pakistan in July. He was commenting on the millions of refugees from East Pakistan now in India.

10 MILLION REFUGEES

At the time the Canadians were there, six million people had streamed across the border from East Pakistan, Brewin said, and since that time the number has risen to 10 million. "We saw no reason to doubt the accuracy of the figures given by the Indian Government. We were shown maps pinpointing the location of 1,000 camps, with one camp accommodating 100,000 people," he said.

"We visited a half a dozen sites and saw these people in hurriedly improvised camps on low-lying, very wet land, with the only areas above water being the road. Every possible space, every tarpaulin, every hut, was occupied, every shelter crowded with humanity — an immense scale of deprivation."

in which this immense problem was being met by the Indian Government in providing a minimum of shelter, food, sanitation and medical care." He estimated the cost of this at \$800 million for a year. World groups and other countries will have contributed some \$300 million towards this, but India will have to provide the rest," he said.

Brewin quoted India's Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi as reporting the situation in her country had begun to show much promise. Stable government had been achieved, the "green revolution" had doubled food production, and a start on curbing the flood of increasing population had been made.

"Now India has had an intolerable burden thrust upon it. India is a poor country and the burden is not only financial but social, having an impact on the cost of living, wage rates and availability of employment in a country already overpopulated and overburdened."

"Overshadowing all this is the threat of war," Brewin said. "Ever since British India was partitioned into two countries and three parts (West Pakistan are 1,000 miles apart) a partition which was accompanied by bitter religious strife and mass migration, there has been warfare and increased hostilities from time to time," he said.

India says these refugees must be able to go home. But they can't go home as long as there is a military dictatorship in their homeland.

TOTALLY UNLIKE

Brewin said the people of East and West Pakistan have a common religious background, but are totally unlike in all other respects. "They speak a different language. The West Pakistanis are more closely related to the Afghans. The East Pakistanis are more akin to the Indians, Ceylonese and Burmese. These differences are aggravated by all sorts of economic situations. In the federal civil service 90% of the employees came from West Pakistan and only 10% from the much more populous East Pakistan. The same proportion was evident in the army," said Toronto MP Brewin.

East Pakistan earned foreign currency by exporting jute, but expenditure of this money was controlled by the government located in West Pakistan. This government is controlled by the military and there is no basic democracy. Foreign aid has been poured into West Pakistan to the virtual exclusion of East Pakistan, making another sore point," he said.

"Last year, the military dictator announced an election with a subsequent meeting of an elected assembly to determine the constitution, as a first step in the direction of democracy. The Iwani League (a democratic party with a policy of remaining within the federation but seeking far greater autonomy) won 137 out of the 152 seats in West Pakistan. Unfortunately West Pakistan elected another group.

"The meeting of the national assembly was postponed and the army went into action in March. Since then East Pakistan has been in a state of turmoil with the cities occupied by the West Pakistan army. Guerrillas are being trained and armed in India, are harassing the army and constantly fighting for the liberation of their own country. All this time the flood of refugees has grown," Brewin said.

THREAT OF WAR

"Above all this is the threat of the outbreak of war between two of the largest countries in the world. No one can predict its outcome and it might turn out to be a major conflict with Russia allied with India and China with West Pakistan. While the USA has given generously to the support of the refugees, it has continued to arm West Pakistan. A war could have international ramifications," said Brewin.

"There are no simple answers," he admitted, as he suggested a massive international relief effort be made to help India bear the \$800 million burden of looking after the refugees. "So far the international community has promised to contribute \$300 million — the rest is a burden on India. The Canadian government has contributed very generously, \$22 million, with voluntary organizations adding in the neighborhood of \$2 million. But this is not enough," declared the speaker. "There must be a greater outpouring of generosity."

POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

"But this is not the answer. There must be a political settlement and the refugees must be allowed to go home. It is a mistake for the people of West Pakistan to think that through the army they can control a population which does not agree with them. But I can see no sign that West Pakistan would be willing to withdraw," admitted Mr. Brewin.

"This presents a great challenge to the world's leaders. If the world community can rise to meet this challenge, I believe we will be building for the future and security of all mankind."

In answer to questions from the audience, Brewin said the major reason the USA continues to supply West Pakistan with military equipment is the fear that if they don't China will.

"It's part of the cold war philosophy," he explained. "Many people in the Congress and the U.S. Senate are trying to stop the export of supplies which might be used for civil war."

"On the other hand," Brewin continued, "China claims to be very much concerned with wars of liberation. But in West Pakistan they are supporting the wrong side. Russian Premier Mr. Kosygin is deemed to have a good understanding of the situa-

tion. Russia seems to be building India up as a bulwark against China."

CAN'T CHANGE HISTORY

"How do we change history?" asked the speaker in answer to another member of the audience, who called the 1,000 mile partition a monstrosity.

"It is broken up. Look at Canada where we have a long common history shared by English-speaking and French-speaking people and many cultural links. But we don't find it easy to make a federation work."

"The partition of Pakistan arose out of the disorder and disunity which existed in India in 1946-47. They tried to create this monstrosity, which hasn't worked, and I don't think it will work in the future because of the bitterness about what happened March 26.

"When the army struck, the tenuous federation was destroyed. The idea of Pakistan federation is dead and it never had much expectation of life."

"The East Pakistanis, although very like the Indians, have no intention of becoming a part of India," Brewin said in answer to another questioner. "Of the refugees who have crossed into India about two million have been absorbed into the homes of relatives in West Bengal. The refugees think they can create a viable country of their own and India shows no ambition to take over."

"A separate country of East Pakistan, with a population of 75 million, is possible — a provisional government, the Bangladesh, has been set up and the country would have considerable resources and considerable skills. All that is lacking is capital."

CANADIAN ARMS EMBARGO

"The Canadian government has embargoed any arms or repairs shipments to either side," Brewin pointed out, "and has suspended some economic development aid. Projects already started are being carried on."

"The Canadian Government has taken the view that nothing will be gained by taking this to the United Nations and that discussion there would not be helpful. I would assume, I hope not too optimistically, that the world community is seeing what can be done to exert pressure to bring about a settlement. But this will be pretty hard to do."

In conclusion Brewin said his sympathies lie with the people of India and those of East Pakistan.

"In fairness however," he said "West Pakistan's story is that they were genuinely trying to establish democracy. But the Iwandi got out of hand — preaching revolt, encouraging growing disorders — so that the only action possible was military action."

Brewin said he saw instructions to the military saying any act of sabotage in a village was to result in the complete destruction of the whole village and all the people in it. "This is not unique to Asia, this is the sort of action taken by the Nazis," said Toronto NDP Brewin.

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