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Conflict Of Interest

Shilly shallying at Queen's Park may be costing many Ontario municipalities the services of well qualified, public spirited potential mayors and councillors.

Last June a Municipal Conflict of Interest Act was introduced in the Legislature. The purpose of the act was to lay down guidelines for elected officials who might directly, or indirectly, have occasion to do business with the municipality. But the act has not been passed.

The act was drafted after four aldermen in Thunder Bay were forced to resign because of their connection with companies which had purchasing contracts with the municipality. Even though they had declared their interest and had refrained from voting on the contracts, a clause in the existing Municipal Act forced the judge who heard the case to unseat the four men.

The clause stipulates that any person who has a contract with the municipality is excluded from holding office in that municipality. Latest casualty has been North York Controller Irving Paisley who, after 16 years as councillor and controller had declared his intention to run for the office of mayor.

Unfortunately, during a three year period between 1966 and 1969 when Mr. Paisley was not a member of council, he had acquired an interest in a development company, and as a director of that company signed subdivision doc-

uments in 1970 when the borough council gave the go-ahead for the subdivision.

The irony of it all is that Mayor Basil Hall was absent from the meeting when the subdivision question was put to council, and as senior controller, Paisley was acting mayor. He declared his interest in the matter and turned the chair over to Controller Paul Hunt.

Mayor Hall is retiring from politics, and Paisley and Hunt had both thrown their hats in the ring when it was pointed out that Paisley's subdivision transaction was a "contract" with the municipality. So Paisley, who has always meticulously steered clear of involvements that might conflict with his responsibilities as an elected representative of the people, announced that he was resigning from municipal politics.

Had the legislation introduced in June been enacted before municipal elections were called, his withdrawal from the campaign would not have been necessary.

Who knows how far this "conflict of interest" charge could be carried? Qualified businessmen are needed in public life, and safeguards are only necessary to keep out the shady dealers who might set out deliberately and deviously to use public office for personal profit. The proposed legislation is designed for this purpose, so hopefully it will be enacted before the next round of municipal elections in 1974.



GETHIN JAMES GUEST OF YRS

Peter And The Wolf At Langstaff

When York Regional Symphony presents Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" at two children's concerts in December, it will have as guest artist-narrator the Welsh Poet Gethin James.

Born in Aberavon, South Wales, and educated at Oxford, Mr. James now lives in Metro and is fast becoming an important name in poetry circles as well as a familiar voice and face to TV audiences.

Philip Budd, conductor of York Regional Symphony, met the poet and interviewed him on Richmond Hill Cable TV early last summer. Finding an affinity in Celtic background and artistic endeavors, the conductor interviewed the poet some time later on "Sonata con Amore", again on Channel 10.

Since then, in addition to many solo appearances, Gethin James has made other appearances with Philip Budd, more recently on Thanksgiving Night on Metro Cable TV. On this occasion the musician-host introduced Gethin James' epic versification of ancient Celtic legends of early Wales entitled "The Mabingion", from which the poet read two episodes.

Mr. James' delivery of

poetry or prose has proven to be much more than a satisfactory experience for his audiences. He evokes such remarks as "electrifying", "stunning", "thrilling".

It is expected that he will also captivate the young audiences in the two children's programs planned for December. The first concert will be held in Langstaff Secondary School on December 1, sponsored by the Maple Home and School Association. The second concert will be at Meadowbrook School in Newmarket on December 8. All children (and their parents) are invited to attend. Adult tickets: one dollar. Children: twenty-five cents.

Since these musical presentations are aimed primarily at students, part of the program will be an introduction to the choirs and orchestra sections and the significance of the type of musical instrument used.

Mr. Budd has an engaging way of telling the story of music, and often harnesses the curiosity of his young audience to better illustrate a theme.

The orchestra still has openings for a lead clarinet, French horn player, and stringed instrument players, particularly cellists. Call Mr. Butt at 488-9452 or Mrs. Beth Harwood at 884-1435 for information.



SELF HELP

Dear Mr. Editor—
Recently I have been shocked at the amount of destruction and vandalism taking place in the Town of Richmond Hill and, for that matter, everywhere. I can understand that the police can not be everywhere and

that it is very hard to catch those parties who get so much pleasure out of destruction, although they know full well that the people who pay the taxes will have to pay more.

From 1945 to 1952 I operated a nursery on Bathurst Street, just north of Wilson Avenue. During that time a lot of the nursery stock was stolen at night. One night someone broke into the sales station and office, broke open the large vault and walked off with all its contents.

My son and I decided to take some action ourselves. Just after dark each night we would drive our car to a spot on one of the streets near the most vulnerable area of the nursery. We would park and wait, with one person sleeping and the other keeping watch in turns throughout the night. We carried on this plan for several weeks with the odd break for a proper sleep at home.

On one occasion a car drove into a street next to one of our blocks of young evergreens, stopped and four men got out. We waited to see what their next move would be. When they made no move towards our nursery, we approached them and heard one of the four say, "Let's get out of here." They threw something into the ditch and took off at high speed. The article thrown into the ditch turned out to be a cash box. The following morning we learned that a North Toronto store had been robbed and a cash box taken.

As the above points out, I feel that if property owners could get together and plan to have cars with two or more chaps in them patrol some of the places where damage is done frequently, they would discourage would-be vandals. They could take turns and might catch some of these destructive people which would be a deterrent to others.

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What's In A Name?

During the pioneer days of this area, many small crossroads communities were established, usually centred around a church, a school, a general store and perhaps a Temperance, Orange or Masonic Hall. Through the years some of these settlements grew larger, at a slow pace at first and in the past two decades at an ever accelerating speed. The others remained as they always had been, a collection of a few homes and other buildings at a junction of two roads. But they still are active communities and those who live there are as proud of the history and appreciate the unique qualities of their home sites as those who live in much larger communities.

Residents of two of these communities in Vaughan, Sherwood and Carrville, were thus justifiably upset when the council changed the name of the sideroad, known as Carrville Road for part of its length and as Sherwood Road for the other part, without prior notice of intent. The first indication they had that a change was being considered was when the bylaw was given third reading in open council and passed, thus making the change effective.

The new name for the road is Rutherford Road, and the residents of the former Carrville-Sherwood Road agree that the years of service of the late Albert Rutherford to the township should be recognized. But council had many roads from which to choose and it would have seemed logical to select a new road, which did not have a history under another and a treasured name.

We must concede that council acted quite legally in changing the

name — since although known as a town under regional government in York, it retained some of the privileges of a township, such as changing the name of a road or street by merely passing a bylaw. In a town, after two readings of such a bylaw application must be made to a County Judge for the name change and every person concerned must be given the opportunity to lodge a protest if he so desires.

In the months since the name change bylaw was passed, Vaughan Council discovered that its dual personality was a two-edged sword when Bell Canada decided to pay its pole tax on a rural basis, at a great loss of revenue. The tax in the built-up areas of the Village of Woodbridge and the Police Villages of Maple and Thornhill (which disappeared as municipalities on the creation of the Town of Vaughan) had been at a much higher rate. So council has decided that it will be a town on all counts. Therefore, in name changing in the future it will have to follow the regulations for towns, and all affected residents will have the opportunity to object if they want to — and the judge will decide.

We are pointing this out at this time to remind all candidates for municipal office in this area (Markham, Richmond Hill, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville as well as Vaughan), that, if elected, they are representatives of the people who elected them. They must listen to the people and communicate with the people. It is far better to iron out misunderstandings and to deal with objections before legislation is finally passed.

Serviced Land Shortage Is Critical Problem

Ask the average man in the street the cause of the continued increase in the price of housing and in most cases he will put the blame on speculation in raw land. But, according to a brief recently released by the Ontario Association of Architects this is not so. A shortage of the basic hardware of housing — watermains, water supply, sewers and treatment plants has more to do with the rising cost of housing in Canada.

The brief outlines shortcomings in proposed amendments to the National Housing Act that could affect multi-million-dollar programs.

The brief states that the greatest of these shortcomings is the government's failure to deal with the most critical problem — a shortage of serviced building land. It's \$70-million land assembly program assumes that the basic cause of rising land costs is speculation. But the OAA says flatly that this is not the answer. Services determine development, no matter who owns the land.

The brief notes — "Speculators are not the main cause of high-priced land today, but the

governments themselves and their inability to take a proper course of action are. The problem of serviced land is critical. Apparently it will continue to get much worse.

"The large amounts of money required to make even a small improvement in a growing urban area would be far more efficiently directed to trunk sewers, treatment plants and assistance to communities where growth pressures cannot be accommodated.

"Large profits in land are not made when there is an over-supply or even an ample supply of land.

"All levels of government have been remiss in their responsibilities to direct funds to the best advantage."

The brief recommends government grants and financing to build trunk sewers extending far beyond immediate requirements and for long-range land assembly to provide space at low cost for new development 10 to 20 years after the land is acquired.

The federal plan to increase mortgage ceilings for lower-income groups and the assisted home ownership plan would also drive land prices up where-

ever serviced land is limited, the brief warns. The plans, though aimed in the right direction, would exert more demand pressures on serviced land costs.

The brief also indicates concern about possible government reaction to pressure groups, noting that the proposed NHA amendments are heavily slanted in favor of redevelopment in the centres of cities.

"Although redevelopment of existing urban areas is important, the large housing problems and needs of the next decade are not being considered adequately. This statement in the brief refers to increasing problems in suburban building. Large metropolitan areas need to expand in the suburbs to accommodate the continuing build-up of new residents.

The brief also charges that social changes that took place in Canada during the 1960s are generally ignored in the government proposals. An amended NHA that emphasizes rehabilitation in urban core areas for low-income groups is not entirely realistic. Many of the jobs available to such groups are already relocated in the suburbs.

The neighborhood improvement and residential rehabilitation assistance programs, in short, according to the brief, appear to be a poor alternative to the bulldozer redevelopment plans of the 1960s. They are designed to solve housing problems of low-income families in neighborhoods they may not be occupying in 10 years.

The OAA recommends two additional amendments to the NHA, which it feels would bring the government proposals back into balance:

Encouragement of intensive planning studies for the best forms of growth outside the centres of cities;

Additional subsidizing grants to provide community amenities and transportation in new development areas outside city centres.

The OAA recognizes the proposed NHA amendments as a timely effort to reshape national housing policies to meet the needs of a changing society. Its doubts about the effects of some of them are based on direct experience where it counts — in the market place.

The brief needs to be considered carefully before legislation is passed that misses its target by even the narrowest margin.

In the Spotlight



By MONA ROBERTSON

Tempus Fugit

So often readers ask me: "How do you find so many interesting things for your column", to which I modestly reply:

"This area is so full of interest. You just have to keep your eyes open . . . and you'd be surprised how much there is going . . ."

Last week I spent an interesting hour or so with John Cole, clockmaker, in his busy jewellery shop upstairs at 7711 Yonge Street, Thornhill — discussing, of all things, the great demand for old school clocks — partly from nostalgia, partly from the increased interest in Canadiana. They are big on the buyer's market.

John told me people have been picking up these old fashioned clocks at auction and farm sales, for some years. However, they are now becoming so scarce he is making authentic reproductions in his shop. Since the local supply of clockworks is not what it used to be, he imports the works from Germany.

But he makes his own dials, clock faces and metal clock frames. His partner, Herb Brassier, builds the authentic wooden cases in which the clocks are housed.

John Cole sells only antique clocks. But he repairs any type of clock. We saw such items as the clock works from a grandfather clock. John says it is better to leave the frame in the exact position it is used to in one's home . . . then replace the works when repaired, or cleaned.



JOHN COLE AND MONA

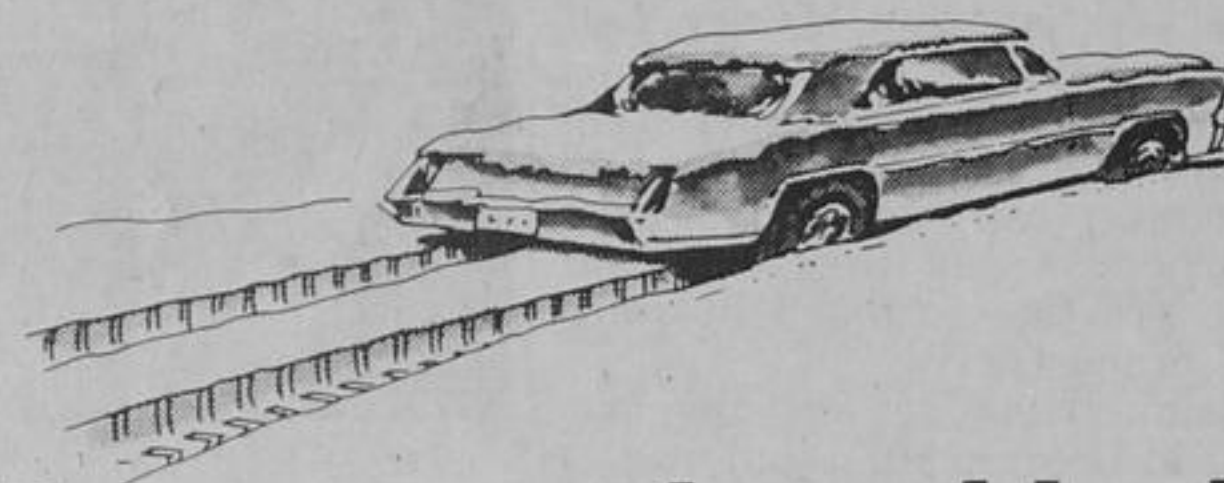
This clock took three weeks of testing, before it was determined that a tiny pin was broken, causing the clock to stop when it reached the break. Now it is ticking away happily along (Continued on Page 18)

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