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Save Our Farms

A veteran grass roots Ontario agriculture expert sounded a note the other day which sure should be closely heeded from one extremity of our land to the other. And nowhere more than here in York Region is there more evidence of the destructive trend against which he sounds a warning.

Here we are in the midst of what has long been one of Canada's richest farm food producing areas. Yet how few and far apart are the real farms now, especially in this southern part of the regional municipality.

Our province is losing its best agricultural land at the rate of 40 acres an hour, says Ministry of Agriculture Middlesex County Representative Sandy Forsyth. He is particularly aware of what is going on after 16 former years at his job at one of the fastest growing Ontario urban districts, Waterloo County. He has since spent eight years in the area around London where urban expansion is more muted, but no less apparent.

Former King Township Reeve Gordon Cook, when in office and at a recent meeting, sounded the same kind of warning after township officials plotted on a map the frequency of land sales as speculation swept that York Region municipality. By then the waves of speculative buying generated from the Metro urban centre to the south of us had swept up almost all the farms in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

Agricultural Representative Forsyth told last month's Waterloo Soil and Crop Improvement Association meeting that planners are now beginning to realize the preservation of good farm land must take precedence over everything else. He said only about 10,000,000 acres or about 10 percent of our province's land can be consid-

ered good for agriculture and most of it is concentrated in southern areas like here where urban sprawl is exploding.

Forsyth said Waterloo County lost about 15,000 improved farm acres between 1966 and 1971, dropping from 225,000 to 210,000. There was a further 3,000 acres not in crops in 1971. Middlesex lost 67,000 improved acres in the same period, dropping from 550,000 to 483,000, even though the actual number of acres in crops went up from 365,000 to 399,000.

The number of Waterloo commercial farms with annual sales of over \$5,000 dropped from 1,520 to 1,448 and in Middlesex from 2,673 to 2,588 during the same period. The loss figures certainly must be much worse here in York Region, the municipal remainder of old York County's prosperous farm country.

We agree with Forsyth that concern about this serious loss of farm land to residential-industrial development and highways should be impressed upon the public and government. As this thoughtful agriculture expert says, the farm land waste is likely to hit us in the not too far distant future just like the energy crisis is hitting now.

Forsyth feels we can't rely on imports from other countries and provinces to fill the food gap if we don't produce enough food for ourselves. We are finding out, as in the case of energy, that we can't depend on our neighbors or other countries.

In all this there is certainly plenty of food for thought about the terrible pace at which food producing farm land is being wasted. Time is fast passing by and government must act quickly if agricultural areas like our York Region are to be saved and urban pressures are to be transferred elsewhere.

Gordon Sinclair's Views About Our Canada Today

I'm departing for the usual news formula, ere, to speak an editorial.

This is by a Toronto-born Canadian. It is not a warning because the time for warning is late. It is an appraisal of how the people who want to take over Canada have done it with a bloodless revolution.

The ever-increasing hatred of, and pressure against, business, the idea that the state tells us where to work — and where to live, and eat — rushes forward. It gets closer every minute. Business is to be hated.

Here in Canada the legally elected government bows to a gloating minority of Socialists who discover that, as the third most popular party, they can, and do, cause the majority party to dance to their tune.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYED
Our universities are filled with teachers who have never worked for any organization except government. They went from kindergarten (state supported) to grade school, to high school, to university as staff.

Always from birth to death, feeding out of the public trough and hurling insults at business which puts into the public trough.

Countless Canadians of this hour have been persuaded by those people that Bell Telephone, as a sample, should be nationalized. That would mean that the hundreds of millions of dollars now paid by Bell in taxes would cease. It would not mean one extra job — not one!

All dividends would cease. Hence income tax would drop. But it doesn't matter to these haters of business.

Destroy Our Farms

(New York Times)
"Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms, and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

That may have been over-dramatic even in the time of William Jennings Bryan, who said it, when farming played a much larger role in the economic life of the country than it does today. Nevertheless, now as then Bryan's hyperbole conveys a kernel of truth that Americans can ill afford to ignore, especially at a time of growing food scarcities worldwide, of sharply rising food prices even in this agriculturally rich country, and of relentless urban encroachment on farm land and other environmentally

essentially open spaces. Citizens of New York State, where pressures on farming are particularly acute, can find encouragement from reports of initial success for a two-year-old state program to protect farms from real estate speculation and suburban sprawl through creation of special agricultural districts. Already 119 districts have been formed, covering 10% of the state's 10.1 million farm acres.

Farmers in the districts are protected against arbitrary seizures through eminent domain and from local ordinances that would interfere with necessary farm operations. They are taxed on the basis of the assessed valuation of their property for farm production rather than on its potential devel-



Given proper care and nutrients, a poinsettia plant will continue to thrive indoors and can be planted in the garden in the spring-time for year-round enjoyment.

Colorful Poinsettia A Lasting Delight

If you are lucky enough to get a poinsettia plant for Christmas don't make the mistake of thinking of it as a seasonal decoration. According to Flowers Canada the poinsettia, given proper care, can be a joy to the owner indoors and outdoors the year round.

Historically the poinsettia dates back to the Aztec civilization of Mexico. The brilliant red color of the plant's bracts symbolized purity to the Aztecs, who were engaged in extensive cultivation of the plant.

It was not until the 19th Century, however, that it became known to countries to the north. In 1825 Joel Robert Poinsett, a reputable botanist, was appointed the first ambassador of the United States to Mexico. Ambassador Poinsett collected and shipped many of the plants to his home in South Carolina, and to the English-speaking world the plant has immortalized his name.

On his return to the U.S. Poinsett grew the plants in his own greenhouses. For years they were grown only as a novelty plant and were not adopted for commercial promotion until the 20th century.

It was Albert Ecke of Los Angeles who began to specialize in poinsettia culture, and over the years the Ecke family has been instrumental in developing new varieties

and promoting poinsettias throughout North America. The yellow flowers of the poinsettia are very small and inconspicuous surrounded by large, colorful bracts which many people mistake for petals. The most common bract color is red, hence, the poinsettia has become a traditional Christmas plant.

Scientists have to their general satisfaction disproven a belief that any part of the poinsettia plant, if eaten, is poisonous. The various parts, when consumed by rats, had no ill effect, and there is no case on record in continental North America that any person has ever reacted negatively from eating any part of the plant.

Flowers Canada points out that the plants are grown in greenhouses under strict quality control conditions, and current research has helped development of new strains that are healthier, harder and longer lasting. Present hybrid poinsettia strains are guaranteed to maintain their health and look beautiful over an extended time period. A potted poinsettia purchased as a gift or decoration for the holidays, will stay alive for months given regular watering and application of quality plant nutrients when needed.

The result is a healthy, hardy, long lasting plant

that can be planted outside in the garden in the spring, providing a beautiful enhancement to the house and garden all year round.

Flowers Canada, in repre-

senting the Canadian floral industry is actively engaged in research with many specialized organizations such as the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation.

Letters to the Editors

SPRINKLE MOBILE HOMES THROUGHOUT COMMUNITY

Dear Mr. Editor— "Beware Modular Homes" of January 3 provided some much needed counterbalance to the article on the same subject entitled "Factors in Low Cost Of Mobile Homes" as submitted by J. M. Langton and Mrs. Ruth Cook and printed in the same issue of "The Liberal".

Your editorial aspiration that "Our citizens should look to the regional planners for some leadership on the mobile-modular home questions and other solutions to the housing crisis" seemed liberal and positive to me and contrasted sharply with the "I'm all right Jack" tenor of the Langton and Cook letter.

Most citizens know that the major inflationary elements in single-family housing costs have been land costs and on-site building costs. The supply of land is relatively fixed, of course, and hence, sharply rising demands for it have accelerated its costs dramatically. Perhaps the only solution to this is limited public ownership of residential building properties or the now familiar "land-bank" idea. As for the cost of building houses, it is clear that factory assembled units are less expensive by a wide margin than conventionally built housing.

In the United States, where the climate is, on the average, only somewhat warmer than our own, over 1/5 of all single-family housing is now factory made in the form of so called "mobile homes" though actually immobile. Canadians can hope by producing hundreds of thousands of manufactured homes for location on single properties and on

parks owned by our governments to bring lower cost housing within the reach of all income levels. I believe that there are few, if any, technical or legal aspects of such a solution to our housing problems which cannot be resolved if we really desire social equity for all.

The Langton and Cook letter makes derogatory and beguilingly misleading references to the ways in which the Housing Minister Robert Welch is possibly being subjected to the pressure of a lobby. While I have not supported the present government at Queen's Park and while I hold no brief for the Canadian Mobile Homes and Travel Trailers Associations, I certainly hope that if they are lobbying for manufactured housing of high quality, which will enable all income levels to share decent housing, they will be very successful. It is inequitable and unjust to present an argument for public consideration which suggests that we who may be living in conventionally built homes or apartments in Richmond Hill must be wary of interlopers who may come to Richmond Hill in manufactured homes.

Remove land speculation; change bylaws to permit the siting of low cost, high grade manufactured homes, and sprinkle the same throughout our community and in closely associated parks, and housing supplies will become more accessible to all. This will remove the "we" and "they" stigma which is implicit in the Langton and Cook letter even though it may create attendant but lesser social problems.

JOHN LOUNSBURY,
188 St. Anthony's Court,
Richmond Hill.

Gibson House

"Meet Me In The Village" is the name of a current display in the upper gallery of the museum wing of the historic Gibson House in Willowdale.

In the gallery behind the pre-Confederation country home, the North York Historical Society has reproduced a hardware store, clock shop, barber shop, toy shop, china shop and a dressmaker's and haberdasher shop — all in the form of various attractive store fronts.

Articles used in the exhibition are authentic 19th Century and are on loan from the Toronto Historical Board, Black Creek Pioneer Village,

Gibson House and private individuals.

Each store front, designed by historical board craftsmen, has recaptured the way the shop would have been over a century ago.

"Meet Me In The Village" will continue in the upper gallery until the end of March, and will be open to the public during the hours when the house itself is open: Monday to Saturday 9:30 am to 5 pm and Sunday noon to 5 pm. Admission is 50¢ for adults and 25¢ for children.

The house is located at 5172 Yonge Street, behind Willowdale Post Office. The telephone number is 225-0146.

County Board May Change School Lunch Policy

By MARGARET LADE

When Hamilton Board of Education set up a special committee to investigate the idea of expanding the school lunch program, trustees were shocked to learn that more than 1,000 elementary school children in the city are already staying at school instead of going home to lunch.

In a story published last month in a Hamilton newspaper, the committee is reported as being "very surprised at the magnitude of the present problem", adding that this creates a tremendous burden on school staff who have to look after them, that the teachers say it is not their duty to babysit at lunchtimes.

Citizen groups and home and school associations have come out both for and against an expanded program for lunches in elementary schools, some feeling it is a social necessity now that more mothers are going to work, and the number of single parent families is increasing.

THREAT TO FAMILY
Others regard an expanded school lunch program as a threat to family life if the parents are not responsible for making their own arrangements for children's lunches.

When the York County Board of Education was formed in 1969 there was some difference of opinion regarding policy on school lunches before an official policy was implemented, says Acting Director of Education Ron Hall, but recently there have been no complaints from schools or parents.

Mr. Hall pointed out that there are many schools in the area where all pupils are bused, and all take their lunches. In such schools, teachers usually take their turn at supervising the lunch period.

The board's busing policy provides for busing of kindergarten children who would have to walk more than three-quarters of a mile to school, and the distance is extended to one mile for children in grades 1 to 6.

UP TO PRINCIPAL
Whether a child who does not arrive by bus may be allowed to take his lunch to school or not is a matter for the school principal to decide, and so far the principals seem to be coping quite well, says Hall.

The board does not look with favor on parents who want to foist off their responsibilities and turn teachers into babysitters for their own convenience, Hall told "The Liberal". "We want to leave the decision in the hands of the principal, to leave flexibility in the policy, not set down a lot of rules. We will be reasonable as long as the parents are reasonable."

In some rural schools parent volunteers have helped to ease the burden of teachers by supervising lunch rooms. A goodly number of York's 28,051 elementary school children live in urban areas, however, and the majority of these are within walking distance of their schools.

TEACHER TAKES TURN
At McConaghy School in Richmond Hill Principal John Hincks reports that just one bus is needed to bring children to

school from points beyond the limit set by board policy.

These children and a few others take their lunch to school, Hincks reports. The school is an educational institution, not a social agency, he said, but exceptions are made for some, usually where there is an emergency situation in the family.

The teachers take their turn at supervising the lunch room, and do not consider this an imposition. The lunch "hour" in elementary schools is from 12:30 to 1:30 pm, and the children have usually finished eating by 12:30. They then go out to play, or if the weather is bad arrangements are made for indoor activities.

MAKE GOOD USE OF TIME
At Oak Ridges School, where most of the children arrive by bus, Principal Ed Burlew and his staff make use of the time for extra-curricular activities which, in urban schools, would normally take place after 3:30 pm.

Principal Nathan Davidson of MacKillop School in Richmond Hill has one bus load of children who take their lunches to school. He also has a few who live within walking distance.

Board policy is flexible, says Davidson, allowing for cases of "undue hardship" and each case is different. If both parents are working they are expected to make their own arrangements for their children's welfare during the lunch period, he said, but the school's prime consideration is the welfare of the child. The lunch room is open from 12:40 to 1:15 pm, and the

school's vice-principal and a teacher share the responsibility of supervision. To compensate, these two are not required to take their turn at "yard duty".

The school has had "surprisingly few" requests for lunch privileges, Davidson reports.

SPECIAL ED CLASSES
Walter Scott School, also in Richmond Hill, is in an area of fairly high density and has no children arriving by bus. There are, however, 18 students in either full-time or part-time special education programs. They come from all around the area and are transported by taxi.

Aside from this small group, says Principal William Kinsley, there are few requests for lunch privileges, and these are usually cases of dire emergency. As at McKillop, the two teachers who supervise the lunchroom are relieved of yard duty. There is no pressure, said Kinsley. The teachers prefer indoor supervision to outdoor supervision of the school-ground.

PARENTS NOT HOME
There are many families in the area where parents are not at home at noon, Kinsley said, but when contact is made with the parents, it is usually found that arrangements have been made for a neighbor to provide lunch, or for a high school student to be in the home when the elementary school child goes home for lunch. If there are children who go home to empty houses or apartments it has not been brought to the attention of the principals interviewed. Jefferson School, where Kins-

In the Spotlight



By DIANA COOK

Fledgling Racing Car Driver Lives In Richmond Hill

Making a career out of racing car driving is quite a difficult proposition. To begin with, the constant upkeep of a good car demands a great deal of time. That in itself, however, is not so bad, as most racers have an almost fanatical love for their machine, and enjoy the hours of work it demands. What actually presents the biggest problem is money. Racing is a very expensive pastime. In order to cover the cost of maintaining a car, paying for equipment, as well as track and club fees, a driver must obtain a sponsor.

Rupert Bragg-Smith, a twenty-four year old resident of Richmond Hill who plans on making racing his career, realizes that "most drivers have to start at the bottom." He drove his first race at Mosport last summer, and can still remember the feeling just before the start. "The engines are running, but you really can't hear because you've got all this gear on . . . it's the only time you can really hear yourself think. Then when the flag drops you forget everything, even what lap you're on . . . but you know when it's finished."



RUPERT BRAGG-SMITH WITH HIS RACER

Rupert drives a \$6,800 Formula Ford, which is a scaled down Grand Prix car, powered by a Ford engine. Although the car can travel at over 140 miles per hour on the straights, the amount of danger involved, according to Rupert, is far less than imagined by the general public. "In a way it's safer than being on the road — you know that your fellow driver has had to pass certain safety regulations to get on the track."

A grade "A" mechanic who first became interested in sports cars through fixing up his brother's Austin Healey, Rupert attended Gary Magwit's racing car school in Scarborough last summer. He graduated with the best lap time and lap consistency from a class of twelve. One of the most important things he learned there was how to take a corner. There are ten on the two and a half mile circuit at Mosport.

Contrary to the situations depicted in the movies, there is very little competitive animosity between drivers on the track. They all want to win, of course, but, "if anything you feel close

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ley served as principal for three years before moving to Walter Scott in September, follows the same procedures as Oak Ridges. Since almost all of its students arrive by bus, the lunch break is the time set for special projects and programs.

The schools with the problems, says Kinsley, are those that have half the student body staying for lunch and the other half going home. In such cases it is very difficult to plan extra curricular activities that can involve the whole student body.

HALF AND HALF
Thornhill School falls into this category, with from 50 to 60 percent of the pupils staying for lunch. Six buses come and go each school day—two of them bringing in 27 children for special education classes, the others transporting children who live beyond the limits set by board policy.

Last year, says Principal Ed Wells, for about four months, parents helped supervise the lunches, but the parents did not like the arrangement and now teachers take turns staying in the classrooms set aside as lunch rooms. Parents, however, still come into the school to listen to children read and help in other ways under supervision of the teachers.

All of the special education students, who come from all parts of the board's area 3, stay for lunch, and there are a few who could walk home to lunch, but there is no one at home to supervise them, so Wells makes some exceptions in these cases, allowing the children to take their lunch to school.