

## National park around Metro?

Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex Chairman Peter Honey made the perilous situation faced here in York Region very clear last week when he told an interviewer no community "wants the overspill of a large metropolitan area. But this will happen if development is permitted to go north along the Yonge Street corridor."

The task force and many observers see the Toronto-Centred Region Plan of the province as relatively ineffectual in the face of the terrific growth forces generated by Metro Toronto.

The Toronto-Centred Region Plan is just about all that stands in the way of unbroken spreading urban development. The Toronto urban area creeps inexorably toward Lake Simcoe.

We most strongly support those who feel this endless spread of urbanism is undesirable. There must be some form and shape imposed upon it. There must be major reserves of undeveloped

land. We don't think existing measures, legislation and regulations can cope with the problem. There must be a new and more powerful form of action taken.

Such action would have to be taken at a political level powerful enough to be effective. An example of such action could be the creation of a Metro Toronto greenbelt national park.

Such a concept could have a great many desirable possibilities. For instance, the irreplaceable rich farm land the Honey task force worries so much about could be held in Crown ownership and leased on a long term basis to food producing farmers.

Perhaps a greenbelt national park isn't the only imaginative and effective answer to the Metro Toronto urban sprawl problem. But certainly some major new initiative must somehow be generated.

## Government spending and poor working slob

In a recent speech in Ottawa former auditor-general Maxwell Henderson accused the federal government of waste, extravagance and non-productive spending. The auditor-general's role, he said, is to safeguard parliamentary control over public funds. In 1968 a public accounts committee was set up to consider action on reports from the auditor-general.

Yet, Henderson charged, the 1970 and 1971 reports are still awaiting committee consideration. The committee meets for 90 minutes twice a week and it takes from 18 months to five years to have the report considered. Meanwhile this management of public funds continues, and few of the "million-dollar spending messes" turned up by Henderson's staff seem to seriously concern the government.

Is this sort of thing unique, the prerogative of only federal administrators and representatives? Or is it applicable, too, at provincial, regional and municipal levels? Are the financial watchdogs alert and on the ball, or are they slumbering and bumbling along with their Ottawa counterparts?

As one observes public works in action, one wonders how long a

private business would survive if it were operated on similar lines. There are probably dozens of examples, but one of the most obvious and most annoying is the question of roads.

Do various controlling groups get together with utilities before ripping up roads, or do they take turns haphazardly? A road is widened and resurfaced, then dug up to lay sewers or water lines, or bury utility cables. Every motorist in the region suffers, the ratepayers and taxpayers and users of the utilities pay the shot.

Another example we have encountered may be laid to computer inefficiency. But there is also a human element. For example, why does a woman who has been married for more than a year continue to get notices from OHIP in her maiden name notifying her that payments are overdue. This when her husband has been paying through his payroll deduction plan, religiously taking his wife's notices to his own payroll department as they arrive, and advising OHIP in writing of the change in her status?

It seems the more money they rake in from the poor working slob, the more they squander. Maybe Dr. Parkinson has an answer. We don't.

## Early-leaving plan is also reversible

Guest editorial from The Mirror of Don Mills

The promised new provincial legislation that will allow youngsters to leave school before the age of 16 is a most welcome measure and something that's been needed for a long time.

We all want the best that modern education and an affluent society can offer our children. But, for a variety of reasons, many just can't fit into the system. To force them to continue in a formal school setting is just asking for trouble.

Where a youngster just can't take the system, telling him to continue just because the law arbitrarily says he can't leave until he's 16 forces him into rebellion and delinquency. The harm done to the child is sometimes irreparable.

Not only the child is hurt. Problems are created for the family, the school and the community, who all suffer to some extent.

One of the problems in changing the law has always been what to do with the youngster who does drop out before the age of 16.

The new legislation introduced by Education Minister Tom Wells seems to have come up with an ideal solution.

To start with, if a 14 or 15-year-

old wants to leave school, the school must receive a written request from his parents. The request will be considered by a special committee of social workers and school authorities, who will consult with the student's teachers, guidance counsellor and principal.

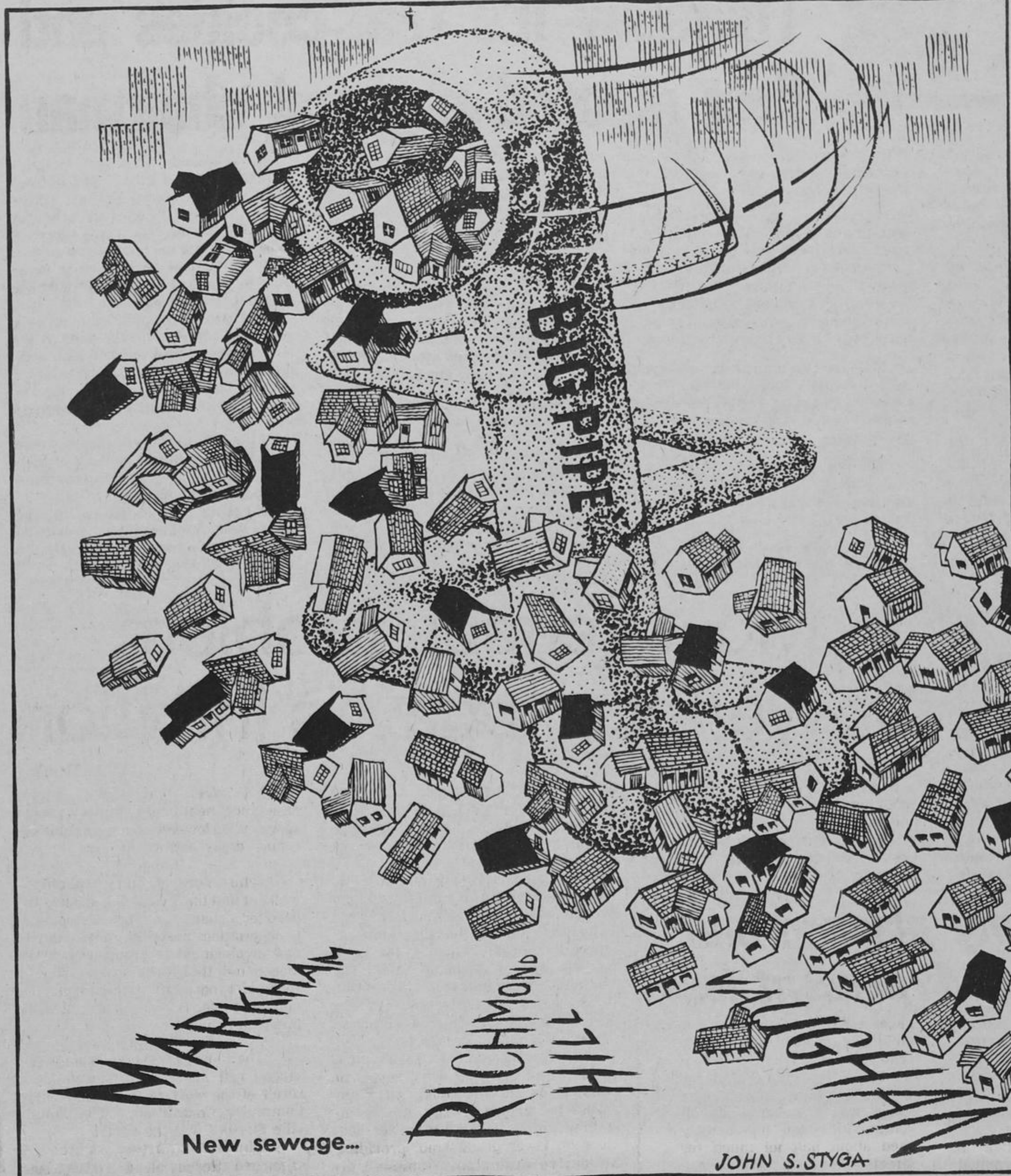
The committee can turn down the request, consent to the child attending school only part-time, or excuse him from school if he works in a program set out by the committee.

Even in the latter case, he is still the school's responsibility until he is 16, and if he does not conform to the program set out for him, he must return to the regular school system.

In addition, the child will be able to change his mind at any time and return to school.

This proposed system ensures a 14-year-old will not be turned loose to fend for himself in society without adequate preparation. He will still be under proper supervision — on parole, as it were.

Both North York and Scarborough school authorities approve the new legislation. It will be up to them to establish the necessary review committees and guide them through the initial experimental period to make sure the system works and is not abused.



**SINCLAIR STEVENS**  
REPORTS  
SINCLAIR STEVENS MP  
YORK SIMCOE

The non-medical use of drugs is a serious problem which affects many Canadian families, and could impair the health and welfare of future generations.

Based on the LeDain Commission interim report on such drug use which was tabled in the House of Commons in June 1970, the government has introduced a bill which would transfer cannabis (marijuana and hashish) from the Narcotics Control Act to the Food and Drugs Act.

The bill, which will be debated in the House of Commons after the Christmas recess, would lessen the impact of the law for the offence of simple possession of cannabis, and provide the courts with greater flexibility in the application of the law regarding this drug in general.

**Present penalties**  
Under the existing law, simple possession carries a penalty for the first offence of a fine up to \$1,000 or imprisonment for six months or both. The proposed penalty for first offenders would be a fine of up to \$500 or imprisonment for up to three months if the fine is not paid.

Subsequent offenders are now subject to a fine of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment for one year or both. It is now proposed this fine be reduced to \$1,000 or imprisonment for up to six months if the fine is not paid.

Trafficking in cannabis at the present time is punishable by imprisonment for life. It is now proposed the penalty for summary conviction be a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment up to 18 months or both.

If the trafficking prosecution is preceded by indictment the maximum penalty provided by the proposed legislation would be imprisonment for up to 10 years.

**Ancient drug**  
Cannabis, obtained from the flower tops of hemp plants, is a very ancient drug. The use of hemp probably originated in Asia and spread throughout nearly all regions of the world.

The Chinese employed cannabis as an anaesthetic in surgery 2,000 years ago. Marijuana is the name for a mixture of crushed leaves, flowers, twigs and often seeds of the plant cannabis sativa. Hashish is the name for the resin obtained from the same plant by shaking, pressing or scraping the leaves and flowers of the plant.

In introducing the bill on behalf of the

## Fear and heavy penalties in Egypt on long experience with marijuana

government in the Senate, Senator Joan Nieman stated the government is concerned, "that long-term, heavy use of cannabis may have several kinds of serious consequences, physical and mental. Nevertheless, the government is aware much more study, lasting perhaps for several years, is needed before anyone, or any group of experts will be able to bring in a verdict.

I do not think we should expect this bill to answer, or anticipate the answers, to questions about long term effects of cannabis," she said.

**Reason for fear**  
It appears those countries that have the most experience with the use of drugs, including cannabis, have the greatest fears of its adverse effects and the harshest penalties for its misuse.

The Narcotics Intelligence Bureau of the Egyptian government has stated that, "the prepared product of the cannabis sativa plant is capable of profound disturbance of the brain cells and of inducing acts of violence, even murder; that it is in effect a thoroughly vicious and dangerous thing of no value whatever to humanity and deserving of nothing but odium and contempt of civilized peoples."

In Turkey, possession of hashish brings an automatic two to three year jail term.

**Much to question**  
While few would agree with the harsh comments of the Egyptian Bureau or the severe penalties in Turkey, the desirability in Canada of lessening penalties for the possession of or trafficking in cannabis is still open to question.

It has often been argued the use of such a drug is only a danger to the person using it and the law should not be designed to prevent individuals from exposing themselves to such dangers. Surely, however, this is an oversimplification which ignores the injury to the user's immediate family or to the public if the person intoxicated from such a drug injures another in a traffic or other mishap.

**Insidious drug**  
Unlike intoxication from alcohol, there is no practical means of determining the presence of cannabis in the body.

It is likely the proponents of the legalization of cannabis do their cause more harm than good by comparing their "drug of choice" to alcohol. The appalling social costs of alcohol abuse

and the accompanying damage to health and longevity suggests restriction of legal intoxicants rather than more permissiveness.

If you have a view on the government's plan to relax penalties with respect to cannabis possession or trafficking, please write to me at the House of Commons, Ottawa. No postage is necessary.

Mr. Stanfield has announced the appointment of new Progressive Conservative caucus committee chairmen. I was pleased to be named

co-chairman, with Mr. Stanfield, of the finance committee in caucus.

This committee is one of the most active. It is charged with the responsibility of responding on behalf of the Official Opposition to all statements or actions taken by the Department of Finance whose minister is the Honourable John Turner.

This appointment will make 1975 a very challenging and busy period for myself.

My wife Noreen and I would like to wish all constituents of York-Simcoe a Prosperous and Happy New Year.

## Saturday Night situation seems double slap in face to many Canadian people

(From The Independence, a magazine published by The Committee for an Independent Canada, December edition.)

Recently it was announced that the Canadian magazine, Saturday Night was suspending production because of financial difficulties. A few weeks later, Imperial Oil, came partway to the rescue of the magazine by offering \$100,000 of the \$400,000 needed to get the magazine rolling again.

For many people, the Saturday Night situation is a double slap in the face. It is absolute proof of the sad state of affairs of our magazine industry.

To get an expert's opinion on the recent developments, the editors of The Independence visited Senator Keith Davey.

"It is regrettable, in fact, the word really is ironic, that the current situation has finally triggered a realization that the magazine industry in Canada is finished unless something is done."

This quotation summarizes the feelings of Senator Davey. As the Chairman of the Special Senate Committee on the Mass Media in Canada, Senator Davey was most willing to talk to us about the recent developments.

Senator Davey is very annoyed with the climate surrounding our magazine industry. "Time and

Readers Digest are involved in an uneven competition in Canada and are siphoning-off advertising dollars," he said. He went on to suggest, "Time and Readers Digest should be repatriated to create a proper climate for Canadian magazines."

Given this action, Senator Davey felt that, "people would see Time coming into Canada as an American magazine, which it really is."

As for the current developments with Saturday Night, Senator Davey said "I don't like the Imperial Oil situation. It is really smart public relations by Imperial Oil." He added, "it was absolutely terrible that Saturday Night has to be supported by a multinational corporation."

The Senator was emphatic in talking about the need for new legislation. "If the proper legislation was introduced to handle the Time—Readers Digest situation I would guess that some 16 million of advertising dollars would be available to the media which, of course, includes magazines." Senator Davey suggested that this sum of money would be sufficient to create about six new Canadian magazines. He also pointed out that proper legislation would prevent the Imperial Oil situation. "We have legislation designed to encourage film development, how about some to encourage magazine development?" asked the Senator.

## Course in gifted child education at York U

The education of the gifted child will be the topic of a 12-week non-credit course to be offered at York University centre for continuing education, beginning February 6.

Although the emphasis will be primarily on the intellectually gifted child, the course will also consider children gifted in other ways — for example musically or athletically — within the context of their educational needs.

The program is intended for teachers, parents and all others interested in the educational process. Those attending will be given an opportunity to study the main aspects of the problems posed and experienced by gifted children in this and other societies.

The aim of the course is to facilitate a better understanding of the needs of gifted children and it is hoped those attending will develop an increased capacity to program more effectively for such children, in or out of school.

Course topic will include programming for elementary and secondary students, integration versus segregation, and studies of programs for gifted children in Russia, France, United States, United Kingdom.

The program will be conducted by George Robb, associate professor with York's faculty of education.

It will be held at the main York Campus, Keele Street at Steeles Avenue, Thursday evenings, and the course fee is \$75 for a total of 36 hours.

For information contact the centre for continuing education, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview; telephone 667-2502.