

## Arena belongs to Unionville

Markham town council should abandon all thought of taking over control at the Unionville arena.

Ownership of the property is vested in the town corporation only for reasons of legal and fiscal convenience.

The arena belongs to the community and has so belonged for decades.

If the council doesn't change course, there is a very great danger this important civic endeavor will lose its badly needed and highly desirable community support.

The Unionville rink directors have managed responsibly up until now, and are willing to continue to do so.

This has made it unnecessary for the town to shoulder any costs or to pay any staff expenses.

The fact the town makes available its borrowing powers to allow expansion and renovation of the arena is no reason to depose the local board.

Only in the event the community board proved irresponsible or incapable of running this facility should the town need to interfere.

In fact, as long as the level of good citizenship remains so high in Unionville and as long as community support remains high enough to keep the arena operating without help from the town, there is no reason why the council shouldn't contribute to the local board funds equal to the amount the town saves.

Such an annual grant would undoubtedly help to remove the one local complaint that the rink board has been so careful in its management it hasn't provided facilities quite up to the standards of the Centennial Arena and the Thornhill Community Centre.

And it must be remembered these other facilities won't always be so shiny and new, either. They will be old some time.

Over the years Unionville has invested half a million dollars of its own money in the arena.

In recent months the community has raised almost another \$100,000.

And the citizens have clearly expressed their wishes in the hundreds of signatures on a petition against the council's takeover.

## 2 milestone decisions

### Region taking control for better or worse

Regional government now is half a decade old here.

And it is beginning to show a considerable degree of influence and maturity.

For better, or for worse, two decisions of region council reported last week were milestones in the history of this new type of regime.

First, the regional councillors showed they are ready to supervise and allocate the capital spending of the local towns and townships according to a regional view.

They turned back, rather unexpectedly it seems, Markham's capital budget.

The regional legislators wanted more information as to why the region's largest local municipality proposed to spend more per capita than its fellows.

Not that there was anything in the Markham budget that isn't needed.

But perhaps a few things like tennis courts should be paid for out of current revenue and major recreation facilities like a swimming pool should be budgeted over another year.

The second milestone decision related to a former Markham area, now a part of the Gormley neighborhood within Richmond Hill's new regional boundaries.

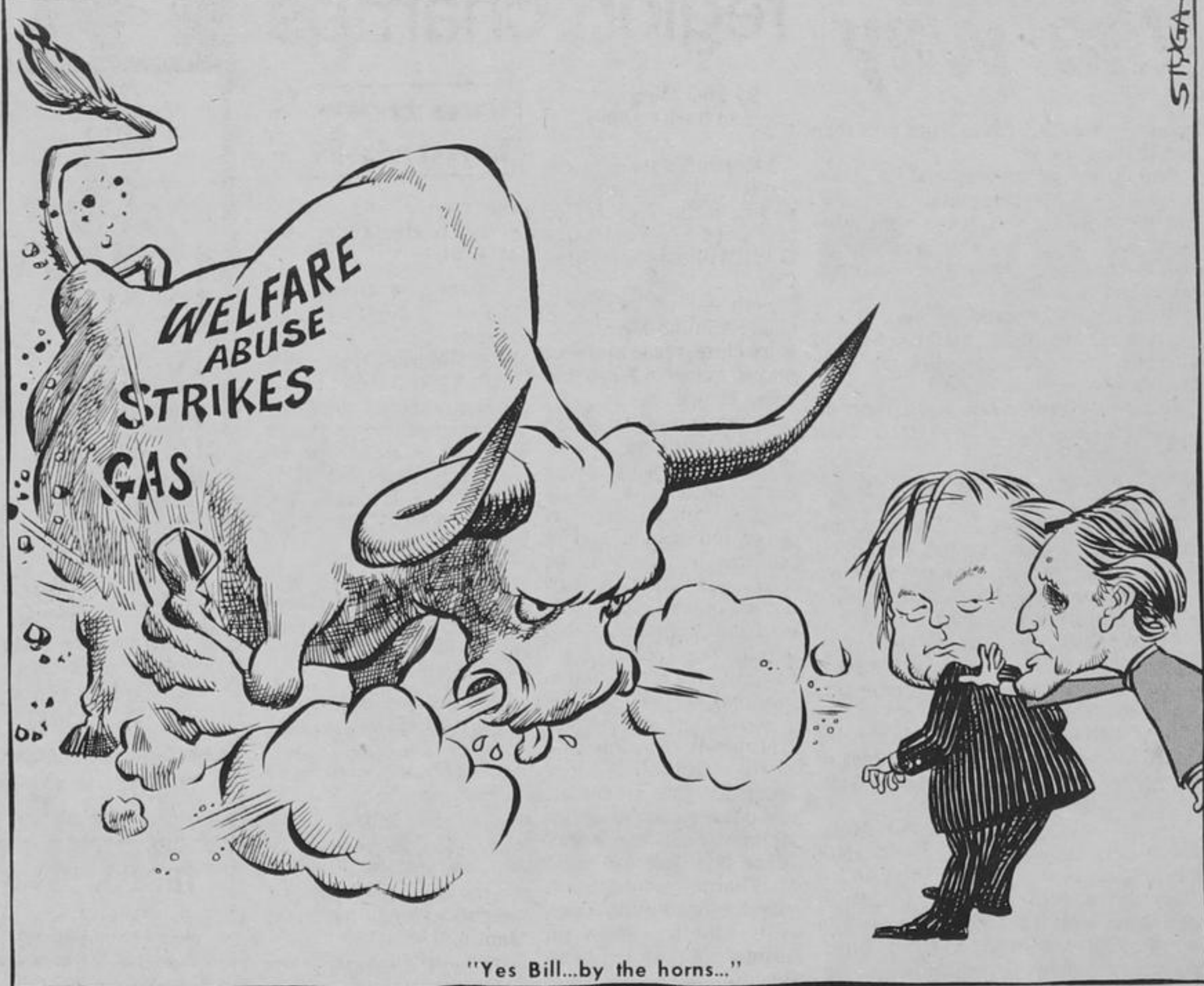
The region stepped in and required the town to take ownership of 28 acres of Oak Ridges moraine land if it is to allow subdivision of the area into country estate lots.

Here again the region found the local municipality might be ignoring the larger regional interest by allowing private lot ownership to extend into valley lands, and with lots not large enough.

Regardless of how these issues are finally decided, they are the kind of municipal business which should be watched closely by the public.

For these are the kind of things that were cited as major reasons for the adoption of regional government in the first instance.

And they are the kind of decisions upon which regional government ultimately must finally stand or fall.



## Langstaff in debate

### queen's park

By Alf Stong, MPP

I asked the Hon. Darcy McKeough if he had yet begun to negotiate with the City of Toronto to purchase the Langstaff Jail Farm to provide access to the Parkway Belt.

The purpose of such a purchase would be to avoid the complete obliteration of the Langstaff community between Yonge Street and Bayview Avenue.

Along the south side of old Highway 7 there are 84 homes, as well as 120 businesses which employ in excess of 800 people in that mile and a quarter.

The Parkway Belt has been slated to wipe out that community, whereas, if it were moved 600 feet to the north onto vacant property, the entire established area could be saved.

The treasurer indicated he met with representatives of the Langstaff community Nov. 18, which he had. My reports of that meeting indicated it was a fruitless exercise.

Because of the attitude that prevailed at that meeting, the entire issue was to be debated in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday.

### Rent control

The legislative committee considering the Rent Control Bill, of which I am a member, has completed its public hearings.

The terms of reference of that committee at the outset were it was to hear public submissions between Dec. 1 and 5 and then debate the Rent Control Bill and the amendments of the Landlord and Tenant Act clause by clause.

The time allocation has been cut short by one week over my objections and the bills are being returned to the Legislature for debate.

Real estate firms have predicted a crisis if Ontario imposed these controls, pointing out "no new investment in rental housing will take place in Ontario" in this event.

A representative of some 20 real estate companies told the committee "the inequities in rental buildings are being exaggerated" and "rent control is the first step in eliminating the free enterprise system".

The Metropolitan Toronto Apartment Builders Association in a brief to the committee warned that rent controls would cause a downward spin in the rental industry, lead to a shortage of vacant apartments and force landlords to let their buildings deteriorate.

## Langstaff angry and frustrated

By Lorna Goodfellow  
Bayview Fairways  
correspondent

Langstaff Community Association is angered and frustrated by what it considers bureaucratic indifference from all levels of government.

In 1971, Markham planning committee endorsed as a "mixed" area the community bounded by Yonge Street on the west, Bayview Avenue on the east, Highway 7 on the north and Holy Cross Cemetery on the south.

Residential and commercial development was allowed in this area, known as the Community of Langstaff.

In 1973, the province froze development in this area to create a Parkway Belt.

Such a freeze means homeowners and business people are unable to make any changes on their premises.

It also means they cannot sell their homes, for no one is interested in buying.

### Feel strain

By the summer of 1975, homeowners were beginning to feel the strain of uncertainty and banded together to enquire what might be done.

Lawyer Ross Hitch was retained to prepare a brief for submission to Markham planning committee, expressing the views of the 220 residents of this area.

In September, this brief was submitted to Markham and was endorsed by the town.

Also in September, members of the association met with civil service representatives of the ministry of treasury, economics and intergovernmental affairs.

This meeting produced no concrete results.

### No response

The association is trying to find out why their area has been selected for demolition but can get no response from the treasury ministry.

As a result of questions raised in the Legislature by Alf Stong, MPP for this area, and Ed Philip, member for Etobicoke, the Hon. Darcy McKeough

agreed to meet representatives from the Langstaff association.

Two weeks ago, they had an informal discussion with the minister.

Unfortunately, association members received no answers or explanations for their dilemma — simply heard the same position reiterated.

### Money not available

Some homeowners, tiring of being hamstrung by the freeze, asked what price the government would pay to buy their properties.

The Ontario government informed them "Money was not available at this time."

Thus, these people cannot sell nor can they improve their homes.

In the case of some small businesses, especially, this is creating hardships. Firms are working to capacity but are unable to enlarge without relocating.

As these are small firms run by local people, it is just not feasible, economically, to obtain the capital necessary to move, particularly when it is impossible to dispose of existing commercial buildings.

### Three years of waiting

The ministry suggests a hearing may be held in May, 1976.

That will be three years of waiting, and the decisions of the hearing will not be binding — so lack of action may drag on for another year.

Permission has been requested of Garfield Wright, chairman of York regional council, to present the association's submission to regional council, but to date this has been ignored.

The association states the only Ontario government member who has been at all co-operative is the Hon. Dennis Timbrell, minister of energy.

He agrees with Langstaff residents the hydro lines, planned to go through the area, could be located elsewhere.

This Parkway Belt has a 545-foot right of way for hydro high voltage lines and an additional 100-foot right of way for railway tracks. To call this area a Parkway Belt is a misnomer.

The final straw seems to have been the information the Toronto Area

Transit Authority has recommended to York regional council that the GO-Transit commuter rail station, accommodating parking for up to 1,000 cars, be located in the Parkway Belt.

### Becoming militant

The people of Langstaff are becoming militant.

They have prepared a strongly worded brochure describing the situation as a "double cross."

At a meeting at Thornhill Community Centre Dec. 2, the association received a letter of support from Markham Regional Councillor Alma Walker. MPP Stong expressed his concern.

At this meeting, frustration and dismay boiled over and the association members drove to Buttonville demanding a hearing from planning council.

The association has been granted a hearing Dec. 16.

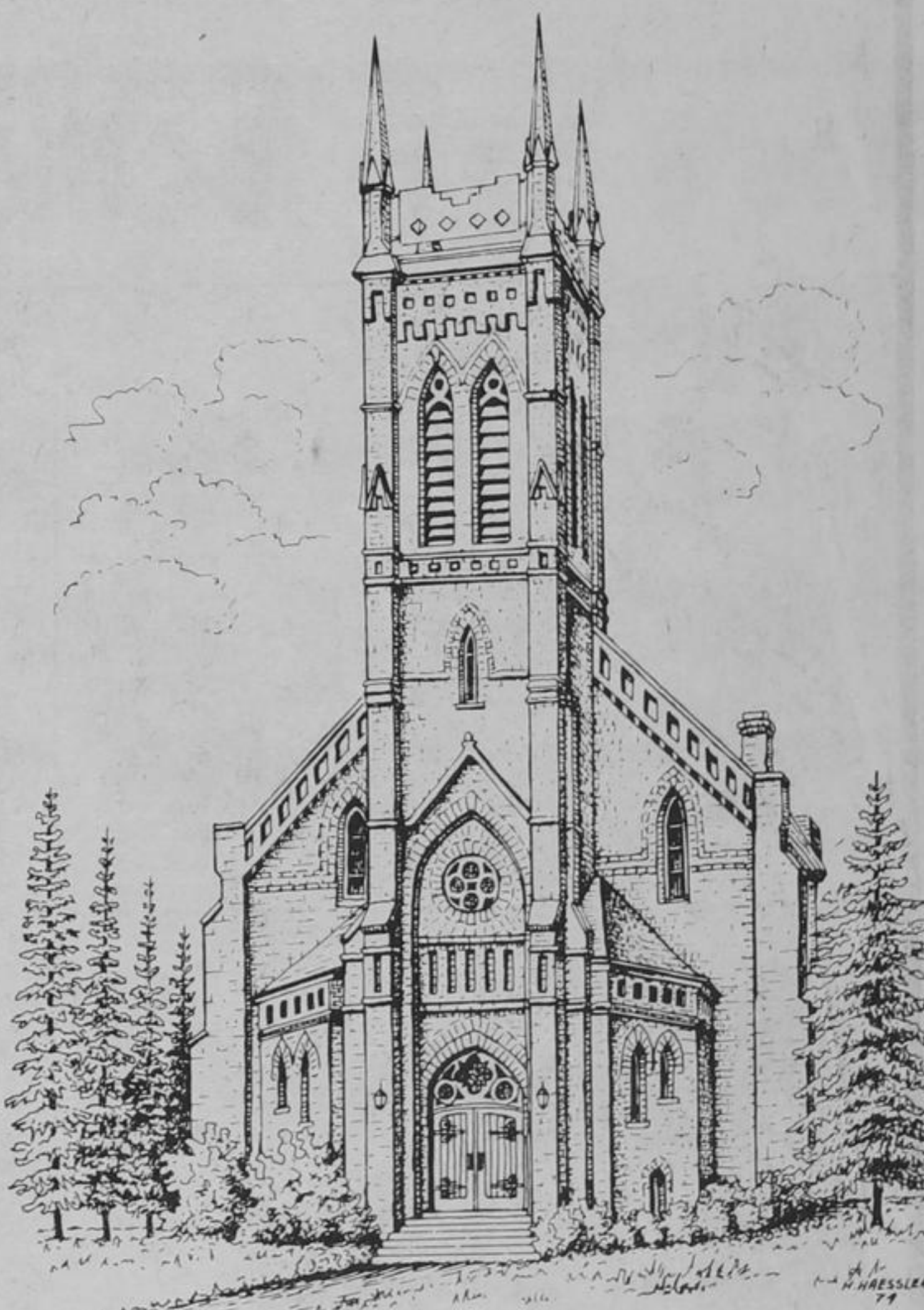
Members are optimistic Markham council will adopt the residents' position and make a submission to the Ontario government.

Perhaps, then, the province will answer with information instead of platitudes.

## Historic drawing series

Below is another in a series of historic drawings being published in this newspaper. The Liberal has exclusive rights to Richmond Hill artist Helmut Haessler's drawings in two gift sets of six prints each, size 8 1/2" x 11", suitable for framing. They are on sale at The Liberal office, 10101 Yonge Street, for \$2.50

per set. In set one are Anglican, Presbyterian and United churches, Old High School, Palmer House and Crosby Hall. In set two are Burr House, Newbury House, Stockdale House, St. John's Anglican, modern Yonge St. and Yonge St. at St. Mary's Catholic at the turn of the century.



Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church

## Built in 1880

The present Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church was built in 1880 at a cost of \$6,366.

The George Francis Memorial Hall was added in 1957 at the southwest corner.

The congregation, however, can claim to be the oldest in the municipality.

It originated in a Sunday school formed by Squire Abner Miles in 1811 and becoming an organized congregation in 1817 on the arrival of Rev. William

Jenkins. His field of labors stretched from Oshawa to Burlington and from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe.

Services were held for four years in a log settlement house, replaced in 1821 by a two-storey frame building, which served until the construction of the present brick structure.

This congregation is the mother church of all Presbyterian churches in the area.

## Viewpoint from the regional desk



### Trustee red-herring stage?

BY JIM IRVING

Mrs. Joy Horton, former founding member and chief gadfly of the late and non-lamented group known as WEB — Watchers of Educational Bureaucracy — and now East Gwillimbury representative on York County Board of Education as well as Chairman of its finance committee, has donned her old mantle once more.

And with feet wide set, arms folded and cape flowing from her shoulders, has lit into the staff, namely Superintendent of Business George Ford, for alleged withholding of information vital to the drawing up of the 1976 budget.

Mrs. Horton, speaking as if the news had just been revealed to her through the combined efforts of Hercule Poirot and Columbo, announced to a Toronto paper that the board's reserve fund, because of a rescinded motion affecting the 1974 surplus of \$800,000, could be as high as \$2.7 million (actual total, \$2,647,779).

She said she earlier asked Ford if the reserve fund was still \$1.9 million and was not given a definite answer.

As for the latter, which had been scheduled by the board to be returned to the taxpayer, it had been put in reserve instead, in a motion from the program committee that was "shoved through practically on routine."

Meanwhile, a little down the line, another one of her former fellow board watchers, Trustee Chris McMonagle of Markham, took on her old nemesis, Education Director, Sam Chapman, declaring she was being refused access to a ministry of education report on vocational programs which had been done at the board's request.

She said Director Chapman would not give her a copy, but would only give her an oral report.

By doing so, he was misusing his position to withhold information from the program committee, Mrs. McMonagle said.

Both men subsequently issued statements denying any wrong doing on their parts.

In his statement, Ford said the trustees knew the reserve fund's total, because a year-end audit of the fund was passed by the board in June. (The financial statement was published in The Liberal, July 9.)

When told about Ford's statement, Mrs. Horton said she knew all that; it was the \$800,000 she was concerned about.

There was no indication in the audit report whether it was included.

It was only through a phone call from Ford afterwards that she learned the \$800,000 was included in the reserve fund, Mrs. Horton said.

It seems strange Mrs. Horton would take that tack.

Would she have been happier if Ford had been unable to come up with a satisfactory explanation?

Would it have helped her cause more if she had been able to report back to the board Monday night they were getting the short end of the "schtick"?

That way at least, it might help to dim the spotlight on all that business about keeping the budget within the 10 per cent quota set by the government.

If you can spread the blame around a bit, it's bound to ease the pressure in your own corner for the moment.

Is that what Mrs. Horton had in mind?

She professed not to know the \$2.7

million surplus had been listed in the board's audit the first time around.

It was only after Ford issued his statement that she declared it was old hat and it was the \$800,000 that was confusing her.

Yet Ford pointed out a motion was made in May to include the surplus in the reserve fund, and in a subsequent motion by Trustee John Raniowski of Schomberg on June 23, 1975, calling for the audit statement to be published, Mrs. Horton was the seconder.

That same Mrs. Horton, who some six months later, seemed never to have heard of either.

On the other hand, Mrs. McMonagle who appears to have a love-hate relationship with the director and who now, one gathers, would like to see him out setting up kindergartens in the Antarctic or some such place, has been quiet since Chapman refuted her charge.

Would it be because the report he wouldn't let her see, was not done by the ministry of education as she claimed, but was done by a staff committee of principals and teachers, with a representative from the ministry serving on it?

Also, the study contained an adverse report on two York County teachers, which by law must be shown to them first, and hadn't at that point.

What's on the mind of these two ladies, anyway?

Have they reached the red-herring stage, where they feel they have to drag down everyone else with them as they seek some sort of budget limitations without offending the teachers, or even their fellow trustees, who will no doubt be seeking to add to their "honorariums" before too long?