

CASTOR REVIEW

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"OUR CANADA"

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Russell Says No

Russell township residents don't want to be absorbed by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton.

That was the message delivered to township council at two public meetings held last month.

The meetings, held on consecutive nights at Russell and Embrun, drew more than 300 concerned citizens many of whom voiced strong opposition to merging with Ottawa-Carleton as suggested in Henry Mayo's review of regionalization commissioned by the provincial government.

The greatest fear of most was that joining the regional municipality would lead to increased taxes without an appreciable improvement in services.

Speakers also worried that Russell's rural identity would be jeopardized through such a union.

One member of the audience attending the Russell meeting summed up the concerns nicely; newcomers are locating in the township to escape "big cities and big taxes."

While the Mayo report urges takeover of Russell by Ottawa-Carleton, a restructuring study of the United Counties of Prescott-Russell by planner Goldyn Sunderland maintains the township should be left where it is.

Sunderland even proposes expansion of the municipality through addition of part of neighboring Cambridge Township.

Russell Deputy-Reeve Albert

Bourdeau was persuasive at the meetings in outlining the financial advantages of remaining within Prescott-Russell in terms all those present could easily understand.

Bourdeau went to the trouble of comparing his yearly municipal taxes with those paid by friends in Osgoode and Cumberland townships.

While the deputy's last tax bill

was \$401, his Osgoode friend paid \$520 and the one in Cumberland, \$650. All properties are comparable in value.

With the concensus from the meetings, Bourdeau and Reeve Gaston Patenaude are now prepared to tell provincial Inter-governmental Affairs Minister Darcy McKeough Russell is satisfied with the existing state of affairs.

To our Readers

This is the first edition of the Castor Review, Russell's new newspaper.

The Castor Review takes over from the Russell Review, the assets of which the Russell Recreation Association agreed to transfer to private enterprise.

Russell will continue to have an active, community-minded newspaper based on the foundation laid by a handful of volunteers who worked with the association and residents with limited resources.

Resources are still limited but the prospect of an improved newspaper has increased with the recruitment of a larger staff.

However, as a private organization, the Castor Review will rely entirely on advertising and subscription revenues to survive.

In getting off the ground, the Review is offering 12 issues for \$3, or .25 cents an issue, not including the first edition which is free.

A subscription order form will be found in this issue.

Advertising rates will be increased to \$1.50 from \$1 per column-inch. This means an ad four columns wide by three inches deep will cost \$18 per issue, starting next issue. Classified ads will cost \$2.

An attempt will be made to increase circulation to include neighboring communities with the possibility of eventually going weekly.

The new name was chosen in honor of the river which drew the first settlers to the Russell area and which still links the communities they built.

Sidewalk Talk

Old Tome Stops Time

By Mark Van Dusen

A curious old bankers' guide gives a dusty glimpse of life along the Castor at the height of the Great Depression.

If the Mercantile Agency Reference Book of 1930 is to be believed, things weren't rosy but could have been worse.

The weighty creditors' bible made no pretensions about its purpose:

"... containing ratings of merchants, manufacturers and traders generally throughout the dominion of Canada, Newfoundland and St. Pierre et Miquelon with an appendix containing banking towns, banks, bankers, etc., collection laws of each province, etc., etc."

So credit ratings are nothing new. A person's "estimated pecuniary strength" and performance record in the reference book could mean the difference between getting a loan or folding up shop.

There was no escape. Every businessman in the country was listed alphabetically from the smallest corner grocery store in the remotest hamlet to million-dollar companies in the biggest city.

For what it's worth, 29,630 business ventures were launched in Canada in 1930 while an almost equal number went bankrupt.

Being the Depression, relatively few businessmen enjoyed a credit ratings and many were in the financial doghouse.

Generally, Russell's business was being well minded. Most merchants' heads were clearly above water, a few were going under for the third time, one or two were basking in the sun.

The village was nearing the end of a boom as a stopover on the Ottawa and New York Rail line. It boasted 28 businesses serving a population of 718.

Businesses ranged from a saddle and harness shop to a livery stable. A sampling:

— John W. Barrington, blacksmith and carriage representative.

— Joseph Valmore Bourbonnais, cheese and butter manufacturer.

— Glen Campbell, meat and canned goods.

— Harry Arthur Cordell, baker.

— George Sydney Duncan, printer and publisher.

— James Carleton Hamilton, Confectionery, restaurant and grocery.

— Fred Loucks, cigars and tobacco.

— Donald A. McArthur, automobiles.

— McArthur-Warner Ltd., general store.

— Thomas Christopher Switzer, restaurant and radios.

— Henry J. Tweed, coal and feed.

— H. and M. Walker, planing mill.

In the end, the Depression, the Second World War and the economic pressures of the accelerating society which followed dragged one business after the other to the bottom.

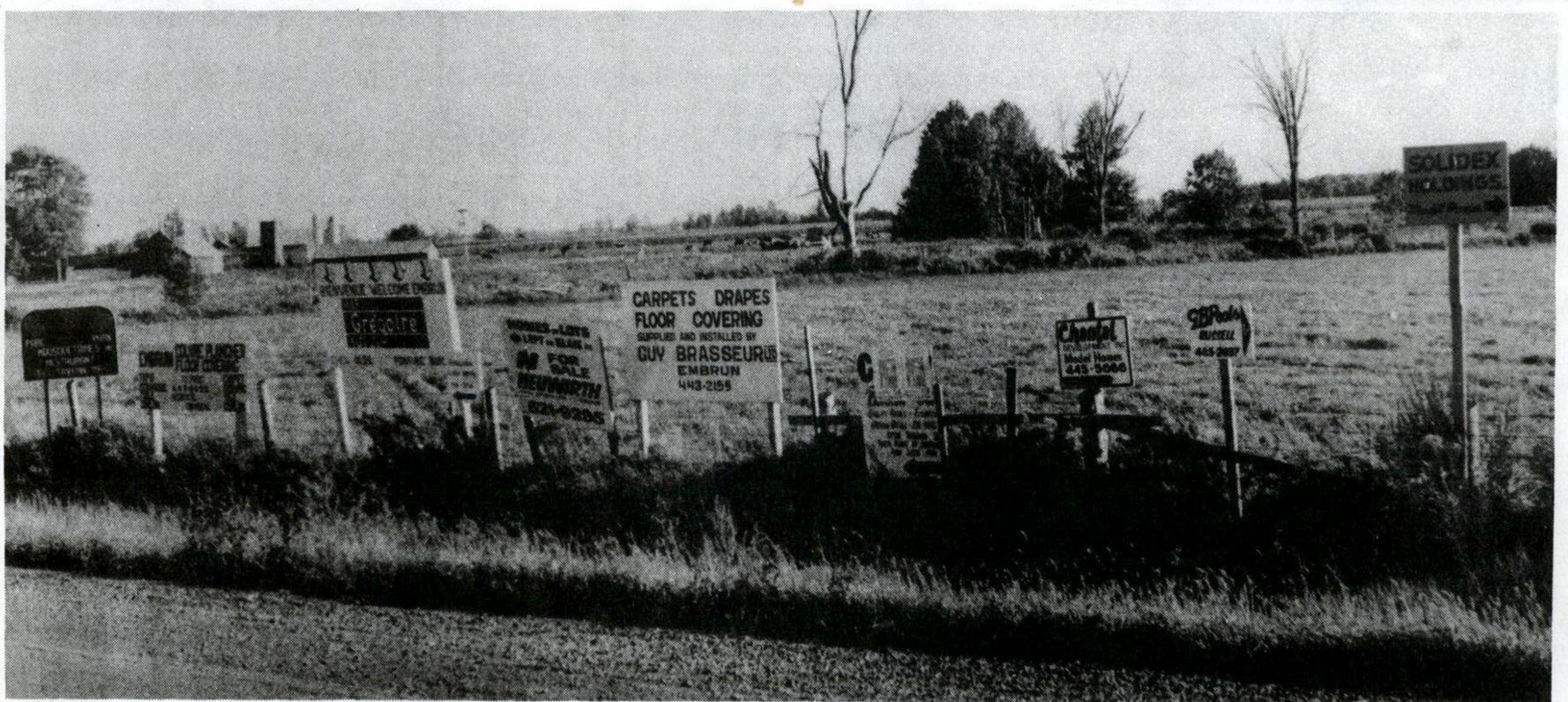
Russell was not alone, the other communities along the Castor suffered the same fate.

In Embrun, Aloysius Debonville's hotel and billiard parlor is long gone as is Sidney Humphries Bishop's tinsmith and stove trade in Metcalfe.

Few will remember A. J. Stewart and Co.'s saw and grist mill in Vars or Walter W. Steven's agricultural implements dealership in Morewood.

Isadore H. Champagne's cheese factory in Marionville and R. A. Bickerton's general store in Edwards are only vague memories to old-timers.

But, while times have changed, it's interesting to note harness is still being made in Russell.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Unightly Clutter — Several area residents are upset with the unsightly clutter of advertising signs sprouting at the junction of Road 33 and the Russell-Embrun road. — Staff Photo