

CASTOR REVIEW

"One Canada"

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OPINION

It's Still Out There

Canadians, like Americans have been in recent years increasingly conscious of the America that we lost. By America we refer, of course to the North American cultural complex. The America of Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Joel Chandler Harris, John Greenleaf Whittier, Andrew Wyeth is culturally closely identified with the Canada of Stephen Leacock, Gilbert Parker, Archibald Lampman and Duncan Campbell Scott.

What happened to that America, that Canada?

What happened to Whitman's lilac that once in the dooryard bloomed? Harris, Uncle Remus and the America that enjoyed his fables? What happened to Leacock's Mariposa Belle? What happened to the America of Whittier's "Snow Bound", the Canada of Lampman's "Morning on the Lievre?"

Where did it all go, the simpler life epitomized by the gleaming, nickel-plated wood-stove spreading its warmth in the big, old-fashioned kitchen? The soft lustre of kerosene lamps; wash-basin and pitcher, icy cold on a fall morning; the gravel road winding down to the covered bridge, the measured tread of farm horses and the bright gleam of a tin roof in the sun?

The doctor who knew every member of the family and would pilot his old jalopy or his horse and buggy through winter drifts to bring his healing touch; the store keeper who called his customers by name and leanded his gartered arms on the oaken counter for a chat; the blacksmiths wedges that, driven into a stump with a sledge would split a log easy as you please.

Letter

Dear Sir,
 Concerning our road which is R.R. 2, last year it was called a ribbon of hell. This year it might just turn out that way again. Why, because last year there were no snow fences put up and so far it looks like a recreation of last year. As of today the road is in deplorable condition. So come on people if you really care about your safety and your car then call your councillor.
 Mr. Jack Ross

What have we gained in the replacement of these gentle amenities by the towering clinical incubators known as high rises, the acres of asphalt and miles of harsh, concrete pavement. Where is the America, the Canada that we lost?

Somewhere out beyond the city's frenetic hum; beyond the asphalt, the high rises, the destructive and abrasive conflicts of urban living, beyond the freeways, the overpasses, the shopping malls, we are glad to report the Canada that we loved - and lost - continues to exist. A field of mustard yellow in the sun, the harsh yet mellow smell of a horse-barn, the miracle of a flowering crab raising its twisted arms to the sun; the muddy little country creeks, transposed by the curious osmosis of time and the weather into familiar and loved adjuncts of living.

It's all out there still. The weathered barns and the great shade trees that people planted because shade was a valuable commodity, the "hello there" familiarity of village life. It hasn't gone away. The cities have

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The Devil and The Deep

Russell Township finds itself between the devil and the blue sea in being confronted with a choice between endorsing the Mayo Report, calling for absorption into the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Government and the Sunderland Report which operates on the basic assumption that the eventual regional unit would be formed around Prescott-Russell County.

In either case Russell Township emerges as a kind of No Man's Land, on the periphery of either assembly of municipal services, regardless of which way it chooses to go.

The two public meetings, one in Russell Village, the other in Embrun, called by township council for the enlightenment of the ratepayers, did reveal one salient fact; the high degree of confusion in the public mind as to the advantages or disadvantages incurred in either course.

All members of Council were present at the Russell Village meeting and Councillor Baird McNeill expounded on the relative merits or demerits of the Sunderland and Mayo plans. Reeve Gaston Patenaude quite frankly admitted that he was not in a position to answer detailed questions at this time.

George Nielsen, acting as a kind of public conscience or self-constituted ombudsman, wanted information about the credentials of Henry Mayo and Goldyn Sunderland and none was forthcoming. Another question from the floor reflected the concern of prominent farmer Peter Romme who wanted to know if joining the Regional Government meant that his ditches would get cleared any faster. Reeve Patenaude doubted that Dr. Mayo could be of any assistance in that regard.

Voice from the Crowd:

"Then he has no business in this part of the country."

Such points of view are not to be sneered at. They represent the approach of the practical man, the ratepayer, who finds himself affected by paper proposals put together by people with no connection, no commitment and no responsibility for the area which they are so gratuitously disposing of.

Anyone with even a nodding acquaintance of how consultants' reports are prepared, particularly when governments are the recipients, knows very well that before he begins work, the consultant has a pretty good idea of what recommendations

the government is looking for.

In the case of the Mayo Report, there is no question that Provincial Treasurer Darcy McKeough wanted a report that would recommend enlarging the tax base and area of responsibility of Regional Government. And there is no doubt that Dr. Mayo obliged.

The simple fact is that each and every municipality in Regional Government has complained long and vociferously about two vital shortcomings:

1. Lack of municipal control over expenditures.
2. Lack of adequate municipal representation.

Taxpayers have felt cut out of important money-consuming decisions. They have seen regional taxes go up and up, as regional officials, responsible to no one but themselves, embarked on unrestrained spending sprees while neglecting essential services to outlying areas.

One of the most outstanding grumblers has been Nepean Reeve Andy Hayden. But a year ago, he saw a ray of sunlight when he was quoted in the press as saying that plans to bring in outlying townships, such as Russell, would ease the burden on the taxpayers closer to the Regional core. One can understand the Nepean Reeve's desire to get his own taxpayers off the hook at the expense of taxpayers who have little to gain and everything to lose.

Russell Township council in its public appearances both in Russell and Embrun, has presented the issue as one requiring an either-or answer from Russell ratepayers. One wonders whether that approach is absolutely accurate.

What is to prevent the ratepayers of Russell Township from saying in the most emphatic way possible that they are content to go on under the present system, which gives them at least a modicum of control over their own destiny and some slight opportunity of preserving the rural areas from the grasping hands of large-scale developers who are turning hungry eyes on this area?

The way to do this, of course,

would be to reject the Mayo Report as a transparent attempt to perpetuate regional government's empire-building at the expense of rural Eastern Ontario; and at the same time to hold the Sunderland Report in abeyance until some time in the future when the full implications are a great deal clearer than they are at present.

To the Boundary Road

There may be a worse piece of road than the prolongation of Concession street to the Boundary Road, known as the North Road, a bone-shaking, car-rattling distance of nine miles. If there is, it isn't in Russell Township. A letter printed on this page is symbolic of the feeling of residents about this road.

Turning off 417 where a sign hospitable and mistakenly suggests coffee and eatables are obtainable within a foreseeable and negotiable distance, the hapless wayfarer would have tremendous difficulty in even finding the turn to Russell.

For one thing there is no sign marking the turn off Boundary Road. There is a sign indicating that a turn in the opposite direction leads to a Dead End as the road trickles out in a field.

In contrast to the beautifully paved road which leads off 417 to Embrun, the Russell turnoff is unpaved for more than four of its nine miles. Winding haphazardly through the autumn fields it presents a pretty chunk of countryside with attractive farms. They should be viewed under more pleasant conditions than slithering travel and clouds of dust.

HOME FROM ALBERTA

Florence and Dorothy Marquette of Russell have returned home after spending a fortnight visiting friends and relatives in Alberta.

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