

CASTOR COMMENT



Skating on the Castor

Snavely J. Philpott — on buying a suit

Buying a suit is not the simple proposition it appears. I once worked in a clothing store in downtown Ottawa and I know what I'm talking about. The store was on Rideau street, below the Chateau Laurier and we had a good clientele of Ottawa Valley farmers who bought two suits during their lives, one to get married in, the second to get buried. When we saw one of these elderly farmers come into the store, we knew he meant business. He was after a burial suit. Expense was no object. Some were prepared to go as high as \$75, no mean amount in those days.

Things are not always so simple, although I know a friend who prided himself on being able to buy a suit in less than fifteen minutes. He always went to the same store, on Bank street and was waited on by the same salesman, who called out as soon as he saw my friend, "Here's your suit, Mr. Feathers." It was invariably a brown suit with a pin stripe. My friend's wife was always furious, because he always came home with exactly the same suit. He did save a lot of shopping around.

I bought my last two suits in a large department store in downtown Ottawa. I had a few bucks in my pocket and decided to splurge. The salesman's name was Tony. I had never seen him before. He came up to me as I

was standing in front of a rack of \$150 suits with a meditative expression on my face.

Tony took me by the arm and steered me toward a rack where the suits were marked at \$200. I swung away with a strangled cry to another rack. Here the air was not so rarefied and the price tags ranged around \$80.

"You don't want those suits," Tony said.

"Why don't I want those suits?"

"Not your type."

"Here's one for \$75 that's exactly my type."

"Not for you."

"I want to try the suit."

As Tony watched with a disgruntled expression, I took the suit and went into the trying-on room. Coming out and looking in the long, three-way glass, I was confronted by a curious grey-clad figure from the Great Gatsby, or perhaps a 1941 newsreel of the Polish Government in exile.

"I like it."

"Not for you," Tony said stubbornly. "Wrap it up." I was becoming fed up.

"Let's try one of these."

"You no want that."

"Are you selling suits or keeping them for yourself?"

"Not good for you."

Furious, I took the second number from the rack and locked myself in the tryout room.

This time the suit was a pale beige seersucker number. The coat was a perfect fit. The pants

were a convulsion. They had wide cuffs which dangled a mere four inches below my knees.

"Who was this made for, a midget?"

Tony contemplated the ludicrous figure I made with an expression of total disinterest.

"He order suit. No come back."

"No wonder. He'd have to have toes on his knees to wear it. What happened to him?"

I had visions of a dark figure turning over and over in the rolling currents of the Ottawa River.

"He no come back."

"You said that. What will you let me have the suit for?"

Tony pondered. "I give you for sixty dollars."

"O.K. There's lots of cloth rolled up inside the cuffs. You bring it down to fit me and I'll buy it. For a good suit I don't mind going all the way."

For the first time a tiny shadow of a smile appeared on Tony's face. "O.K. I fix suit for you."

He did and it is the finest summer suit I own. As I said in the beginning, there's more to buying a suit than meets the eye.

The little things

It's the little things that count.

It may not seem like much to some people that a French-speaking area resident couldn't get service in his mother tongue when he visited Embrun's new Brewers Retail outlet recently.

But its the build up of those little affronts that form the crux of the malaise currently gripping this country.

The fact that French-speaking Quebecers didn't feel welcome in the boardrooms of major institutions in their home province is a major reason for the bitterness that gave birth to the separation movement.

And not being able to deal with a clerk fluent in French in a majority Francophone community like Embrun is going to make France-Ontarians feel even more like second class citizens.

We don't want that, do we. At a time when the country faces the possibility of being ripped asunder and the English backlash is building against the Parti Quebecois' we want the Francophone minority outside Quebec to feel it'll always play an important role in the Canadian destiny.

As Russell Township Reeve Albert Bourdeau has stressed, asking a provincial government agency to ensure bilingual service in a bilingual community is far from unreasonable.

Regional Quandry

Some rural members of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton are simply not pleased with the existing arrangement and the province will have to face up to the fact.

In a response to Henry Mayo's review of regionalization, Osgoode Township hasn't minced words in making this point: "The benefits to our township of nine years of regional government have yet to be made clear to us," council says in a brief to Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Darcy McKeough.

The township puts forward for consideration a proposal that certainly deserves careful study: That Ottawa-Carleton be divided into two units, one urban and one rural. The rural unit would include all or parts of townships now in the Region with the possible addition of Russell Township.

One thing seems clear after reading the Osgoode brief: The province would be foolish indeed to insist that Russell break from the United Counties of Prescott-Russell as proposed by Dr. Mayo and merge with Ottawa-Carleton when there is now persistent discontent among rural municipalities already in the regional structure.

Mask of silence

The annual Halloween wrecking spree in Russell should not be casually swept under the carpet again until next year.

Marauding youths setting fires, destroying public and private property resulting in hundreds of dollars in damages is not good clean fun. It is vandalism pure and simple and it is illegal. It is flaunted in the faces of police officers who are hamstrung by a disturbing lack of public support.

Why we chose this occasion to be apathetic is bewildering. Surely we demand retribution in other cases of law breaking. We demand it from those same police officers and we get upset if they don't react.

Neighboring communities have co-operated with youth and police to reinstate Halloween to the tradition of a happy time for trick-or-treating children. Yet Russell's reputation as Halloween host to a drunken riot persists.

Township and OPP officials have offered to meet with Russell residents, youths included, to solve the problem. It is a challenge we cannot afford to reject. We owe it to the police, we owe it to our youth, we owe it to ourselves.

Will some citizens come forward?

Correspondence

Editor, Castor Review

You must be pleased with your paper, I particularly enjoy the clear type on such white stock while getting caught up on the news.

Mary Rowsell's "Fall Castor" is well taken and reminds me of a familiar scene near our former farm. Congratulations Mary!

May the Castor Review enjoy many years of wide circulation.

Yours truly,
Thyra Warner Hudson

Editor, Castor Review

As a native of Russell and a graduate of the old Public and High Schools, you will understand the old time pictures and news of that vintage are much enjoyed.

Of course, I am interested in Russell's progress and it's new personalities and sincerely wish you, every success.

Yours truly,
Dorothea Kyle Latimer

Editor, Castor Review

I enjoy the paper very much. I do hope it keeps on coming and I hope you have a successful year "1978".

Yours truly,
Phyllis Young

Editor, Castor Review

Since leaving Russell ten months ago we have been pleased to keep in touch through the Russell Review.

We support wholeheartedly the concept of private individuals operating the paper and we look forward to it providing a reflection of not only Russell, but also other communities along the Castor.

Good luck to the Castor Review.

Yours truly,
Lois and Don Coates
Calgary, Alberta

Editor, Castor Review

I received the latest issue and

was pleased to see letters from Esther Stevenson and others published. Brother Gordon promised to come down in his letter so I phoned him to learn that he has delayed his visit until July, 1978.

As you know, I lived in North Russell for many years and have lived in Ottawa, Barrie and Kingston before moving to Hamilton in 1951. However, my fondest memories are still in Russell. My wife, Mabel (nee Switzer) shares this feeling. One of the best times of our lives was the reunion held prior to the demolition of our old school. Could we possibly have a repeat? I would be pleased to help in this area since Toronto and St. Catharines have a lot of Russell and area people living there. You could use the paper to spread the good news.

Keep up the good work and lets hope for many many subscriptions.

Sincerely,
Maxwell A. Morrow
Hamilton, Ont.

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