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Berry says —

"We want Russell students"

Russell Township students won't be banished from Osgoode High School at Metcalfe despite the fact it's bursting at the seams.

That's the promise from Stan Berry, director of the Carleton Board of Education. He made it to the Castor Review during a recent interview.

The Carleton board has a responsibility to provide instruction to the 150 Russell students now attending Osgoode High even though they're technically under the jurisdiction of the Prescott-Russell board, Mr. Berry said.

The Russell group has been transferred to Metcalfe through an agreement between the two boards; Prescott-Russell can't offer English high school accommodation in the immediate area.

"When I hear overcrowding at Osgoode High is the Russell kids' fault I say the devil it is," Mr.

Berry stated. "There are simply too many children in the school; it doesn't matter where they come from."

The Carleton board has been pressing the Ministry of Education to approve a \$2.5 million extension to Osgoode High which now accommodates 766 students - including the Russell group - in a cramped central building and eight portable classrooms.

So far, the ministry has not committed itself to the project and Mr. Berry expects final word - one way or the other - by the end of February.

In a recent pressure tactic, board chairman George Drew threatened to request from the Ministry of Housing a freeze on residential development in the area until enough space has been allotted to handle all Carleton students.

If the go-ahead isn't given on the expansion proposal, the board may have to introduce extended

days in September with students attending classes in shifts, the director said. Another possible although undesirable short-term solution is the addition of more portables.

While Osgoode High is the board's most pressing problem, it's not the only one; five other high schools are also jammed to the rafters.

Mr. Berry said reports late last year that some Osgoode Township parents were bitter because of the Russell group's presence in the congested high school were "never that serious."

He suggested the Russell students are actually more beneficial than detrimental.

Osgoode and Russell students mix well because of the close affinity between the two communities and the additional enrolment allows the board to make more options available at the school, he explained.

\$2 million expansion planned

Metcalfe's Continental Mushrooms is planning a \$2 million expansion which could mean 75 new jobs and a payroll increase to \$1 million, a year.

Included in the plans are a main building almost a quarter of a mile long, increased sales into other areas, and total sales of seven million pounds of mushrooms annually.

Continental owner Nick Pora also envisions a cannery within Ottawa-Carleton.

The purchase of a neighboring 40 acres of land, part of which will be used for growing hay and corn, is now being negotiated.

Established four years ago at a cost of \$1.3 million, Continental now employs more than 50 full-time staff with an annual payroll of more than half a million.

The farm grows 1.7 million pounds of mushrooms a year, has cornered 60 per cent of the local market, and hopes to double in size within the next five years.

Easily visible from Regional Road 6, Continental is smack in the middle of Eastern Ontario where competition is virtually non-existent, most mushrooms previously sold in the region were shipped from outside.

The large main building containing 16 growing houses sits squarely at the front of the 32-acre farm. Behind it sits the compost barn.

The whole rests on a rise hand picked by Mr. Pora for its proximity to top soil, peat, hay, and corn supplies which provide the rich nutrition needed by the mushrooms.

For a look at Nick Pora, the man behind Continental, see Neighbors, page 8, the Castor Review's new feature which begins this issue.



(Mary Rowsell photo)

Continental employee Stephan Gudz picks mushrooms by the light of his helmet lamp

Sidewalk Talk



Mutt, Jeff and Hugh

By Mark Van Dusen

Hugh Latimer, of Russell, tramped in the other day cradling a paper bag as if it contained nitroglycerine.

The contents didn't turn out to be explosive in that sense. They did, however, blow North America wide open when they burst on the scene at the turn of the century.

Comic strips - that's what Hugh guarded with such paternal care, relics of the dawning of a period in journalism that has kept millions guffawing for more than 80 years.

Hugh got the strips from his octogenarian dad who had collected them as a boy when they were still a novelty just beginning to sweep Canada and the U.S.

To Hugh, who obviously inherited his father's appreciation for straight-from-the-hip humor, the strips are a heirloom. He handled each one as if it was gold leaf as he paraded them across the kitchen table.

Mutt and Jeff, the Katzenjammer Kids, Bringing Up Father, all yellowed but intact, were unfolded.

The year was 1918 and there was Mutt treating his small friend as unscrupulously as ever (Jeff sometimes come out on top), the Captain administering his latest spanking to Hans and Fritz and Jiggs tiptoeing out to another poker game.

Hugh had by far more Mutt and Jeff strips than any of the others probably for good reason.

The Penguin Book of Comics describes Mutt and Jeff as "one of the great gag strips of all time" and when Hugh's dad began clipping, it was reaching the peak among its peers.

Bud Fisher, a famous sports cartoonist, gave the stumble-bum twosome life in the San Francisco Examiner in 1908, a decade earlier. Appropriately, the pair first met in an insane asylum.

It was the first daily comic strip and was still going strong in 1971 thanks to the pen of Al Smith who had worked with Fisher since 1932.

The Katzenjammer Kids, although not the first daily strip, made their appearance much earlier, in 1897 in the New York Journal (like the Examiner, the Journal was also owned by William Randolph Hearst).

The marble-mouthed Kids were an Americanized version of a German strip. When their creator, Rudolph Dirks, took a job with the New York World, the Journal sued for ownership of the strip. As the result of a compromise, the Journal gained the rights to the title while Dirks continued to draw it for the World as The Captain and the Kids. Ever since 1912, there have been two versions.

Hearst again picked a winner with George McManus, one of the most prolific of early strip cartoonists, whom he lured, probably with great delight, from the World. McManus who died in 1954 started Bringing Up Father in 1913. He portrayed Jiggs as a nouveau-riche Irish immigrant terrorized by his wife, Maggie. Jiggs is still in the spats and wing-collar of 60 years age when he first yearned to escape from the chandeliered mansion to corned beef and cabbage at Dinty Moore's.

Over the years, many comic strips have come and gone. According to Hugh, those that survived the dizzying decades, did so for one simple reason: they make people laugh.

They never wavered from their original purpose of providing an oasis from the oppressiveness of the latest war news or economic slump.

And, as the likes of Peanuts, the Wizard of Id and Doonesbury carry on the tradition, the Captain clearly echoes, "Dot is der dum-goozlest, ding-bustedest dog vot I efer seen! !



Gab with Gaston

Beginning in March, Russell Reeve Gaston Patenaude will make himself more available to township ratepayers.

Mr. Patenaude will spend two afternoons a week at the town-

ship office where he'll do his best to respond to inquiries and complaints.

The days are Wednesday and Thursday, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.