

CASTOR COMMENT

A warm welcome

The Castor area is about to experience a minor influx of Indonesian refugees. The Wybenga farm near Russell has already become home to a brother and sister from Saigon and a sponsoring committee of local churchmen expects the arrival of a refugee family early in the New Year.

In the spirit of the season, the point should be made that we of the Castor, as citizens of the global community, have a responsibility to make the homeless newcomers feel welcome.

The evidence is mounting that many Canadians oppose the federal government throwing open our doors to displaced Indonesians. Racial discrimination, of course, is never cited as a factor; rather, opponents complain of added strain on the economy, the job market, and social assistance programs.

Such mundane complications can be overcome in a country as rich as Canada. The overriding issue is that fellow members of the human race can't be left to wander aimlessly in leaking freighters or to rot in refugee camps. A helping hand must be extended by everyone — including Castorians.

Breakaway Battle

When a group decides to breakaway from the mainstream, the majority sits up and takes notice — and sometimes gets upset. If it's good enough for everybody else, why isn't it good enough for them, the majority asks.

That's what happened at Metcalfe when the Community Christian School Association decided the mainstream educational system wasn't providing everything children needed. More specifically, the association felt a Christian direction was lacking.

The association's plans to build its own school on a three-acre site in the village have become the object of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing after several residents registered objections to a school in their neighborhood.

One of the chief arguments offered against the breakaway school is that, by removing their children from the traditional system, association members will weaken that system. The more students that remain in the public system, the more viable the system remains.

There are two issues here: The secondary issue is whether the proposed site is appropriate for a school and that will be worked out by the OMB. The primary issue is whether a group of citizens has the right to breakaway from the mainstream and head in another direction. In a democratic society, the answer has to be "yes" as long as that group doesn't interfere with the rights of the majority.

Spirit of Old Scrooge

While Christmas merry-makers are shouting messages of goodwill, old Scrooge Hydro is droning on in the true spirit of the season with warnings of thrift.

It wouldn't be the least bit surprising if Hydro sent out Christmas cards to customers with the blessings "wasting electricity turns people off."

With the millions of dollars frittered away on useless research, why can't Old Man Hydro see the obvious problem. Television addicts are the real culprits in the energy waste issue.

Although many doubt the existence of an energy shortage, the Canadian home is clear evidence of its reality. With virtually every home tuned into the boob tube for more than 25 hours a week, it would seem obvious that a horrendous amount of energy is going down the 'tube.'

The ironic twist is that less energy is expended watching T.V. and that in itself is a crisis. The only exercise a television buff gets is regular trips to the john or refrigerator during commercial breaks.

Pay television may be the answer. If people had to pay for television they would be more selective in their viewing habits. Energy would be conserved and people would be forced to dust off their long-buried imaginations. They may find more time to devote to sports or other interests.

Old Man Hydro has backed down from this proposal in the past. One can envision him quivering and backing into a corner, fearing angry reprisals from boob-tube buffs and politicoes.

If people feel this often-proposed suggestion is communistic or the scheme of some eccentric consider the alternatives. There aren't many solutions that don't require some sacrifice.

CASTOR REVIEW

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CONSERVATION

A children's story

by Nancy Freeman

Once upon a time there was a quiet place. Birds sang. Trees rustled in the breeze. Dust settled after rain. Leaves sparkled in the sun. The land was high and usually dry.

Because the land was high and dry, men came. They rode horses. They pulled wagons. They needed a place to stop to rest and feed their horses, and so a blacksmith built a home. He lived there and cared for their horses. Coaches delivered mail down the road.

Before long a few buildings were not enough. Several appeared — a store, a mill, houses, a church, a school.

Five miles away a river wound its way through the low land. Boats brought goods to a landing. Wagons met the boats and carried passengers as well as many items

to the village. The people had everything they needed.

Many years passed. Then, one day, workmen from the big towns laid railway tracks half way between the village and the river. People were excited. They were curious. They stopped to chat and watch the workmen. They could hardly wait for the day when the first train would come through.

After a bit the train came. Everyone was out to cheer it on its way. It stopped. People got off. People got on. Packages were taken off. Packages were put on. The train chugged away.

Days and weeks went by. The train came and went. People rode the train. People shipped their goods by train. Not so many people travelled on the high road. Not so many packages were shipped on the river. Businessmen used the train instead.

Some of them decided to move closer to the railway track. They left their houses in the village and they built new ones.

A hotel was built near the railway, too. People used the new hotel. Buildings on the highway began to close. Not enough business. Everything was happening in the new village on the rail line.

One by one families built new homes and left the old. The mill, the store, the school — all were left vacant. The blacksmith, who was still required to tend the needs of a few horses, and a handful of others were all that remained.

Gradually coaches and horses were replaced by horseless carriages. Early automobiles clattered along the dusty highway, past the ruins of neglected buildings. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the blacksmith waved to the drivers as they passed. Their old house, fresh with paint, was now a farmer's house. Their garden prospered. Their barn sheltered healthy cows in winter.

More cars passed along the highway. Trucks came, too. Men filled trucks with sand and gravel. They carted loads away and made huge holes in the ground along

CHRISTMAS

There's nothing left to write about

It's all been said before,
A Baby in a manger,
And Christmases of yore.

It all blends into melody,
That somehow sounds the same;
Yet Christmas makes a difference,
And it isn't just the name.

It busies up our schedule,
Old friends are brought to mind;
The larder's full of baking,
But of a special kind.

I hear Him gently saying,
As I come on bended knee
With the shepherds and the angels,
"Stop and rest, and think on me."

"I am with you at the manger,
I am with you all day long,
I am with you in your sorrow,
I am with you in your song."

There is something left to write about,

It has been said before,
A Baby in a manger,
God is with us evermore!

Flynn Warner Hudson
Dec. 179



Beaver Bob

FOGGY MUSINGS

We woke this morning to a fogged-in world, all nature clothed in a grey, clammy, impenetrable veil. From the kitchen window, the Castor was visible, but not the village on the opposite side. All boundaries were swept away and the meandering stream, swollen by falls rains, became as boundless as an ocean.

The grass was bright and crisp with frost, crackling underfoot with the brittle sound of canapes at a cocktail party.

When Lisa went up through the field to pat the horse across the fence, it became a dreamlike vista of melting shapes in the white sea. Somewhere the sun was trying to come through, diffused in a million tiny particles of light, like reflections in the undersea; but the fog hung on and hung on and the sun beat futilely against its pale indifference with wings of saffron light.

On the Castor, weather is as meaningful as on the Isle of Skye or the Sahara; while there are no seas to be wary of, or sandstorms, the long drive to the city, in varying road conditions, often in splendid isola-

tion, imposes a watchfulness equal to that of any old mariner.

A night drive in heavy, falling snow on a drifted road can be as demanding and uncertain as a mid-winter pilgrimage to Irkutsk; and if the temperature is low and a car breaks down far from help, from an adventure the journey can easily become a crisis of life and death.

It is good to keep a heavy jacket and pair of boots in the car, for the steel and glass fortress that is the modern automobile can become in a matter of minutes a frozen tomb.

So many demands accumulate that by the time one sets out for the city, one feels that a day's work has already been accomplished.

Up as the first fingers of light creep in under the blind; turn up the thermostat, let the dogs out, turn on the kettle, feed the ducks and dogs; then, set about shaving with an electric razor that has seen better days and put on the bacon. A litany of haste, hardly leaving time for a glance at the TV news or the morning

Correspondence

Editor,

Recently I was given a few back copies of the Castor Review by the McNaughton family, my life-long friends of Russell days.

I was born two and a half miles west of Russell in Osgoode Township. My parents Russell and Isabella Dempsey farmed there until 1936 and moved a few years later to Brockville. Dad was 90 and mother 94 when they passed away. My brother Rev. W.A. Dempsey and four sisters and myself all attended S.S. No. 13 public school, York's Corners, and then Russell High School as well. Each of us, in our family have fond memories of those good old days, of our upbringing along the famous Castor River.

May the days ahead be very successful as you edit the "news and views" each month. You indeed have a great deal to offer in this monthly endeavour, for it's not just the fact of enjoying your own work, but in giving it out to your readers, that really counts. Here is a thought — "New interest is added to life when you invest yourself in others."

Would you please start my subscription with the write-up of the late Mrs. James Dempsey, who passed away in October. Her husband was my dad's first cousin.

Yours Truly,
James R. Dempsey.

Parents

My mother was a poet
Though she didn't write a verse.
Her poetry was timeless,
Not "operation terse."

My father was a scientist,
A man of fine persuasion
We need all types — the best of all

To aid our Canadian Nation.

Nancy Freeman

one side of the road.

On the other side there was little sand or gravel. The road bordered gentle fields of soft soil that sloped down to acres of fertile bush and a hugh marsh. There the birds sang. The trees rustled in the breeze. Leaves sparkled in the sun — and they still do.

newspaper.

Then, one of a thousand drivers speeding along a throughway which, as the city swims up on the horizon and the tributary lanes pour in, becomes a congested maelstrom of lane-jumpers and fender rubbers. No wonder early man was not known to suffer from mental instability. All he had to worry about was keeping sabre-tooth tigers out of the cave.

So, by the time you wheel your car down into the underground parking lot, you feel you would like to turn around and start home; only, you aren't ready to face that highway turmoil right away; so, in a way, you are glad for the six or seven hours respite before you must once again sally forth, up from the bowels of underground, hurling yourself and your frail vessel into the evening crush.

But on Sunday, as the fog closes down with clammy, prying fingers, you don't worry about these things. Like a mariner becalmed on an island of rest, you simply enjoy being nature's shut-in for a day.