

CASTOR COMMENT

WHERE WE STAND

Another election, yes. Another in the dreary procession of name-calling, over-exaggeration, and downright false pretences that seem to be part of elections in a democracy. Also, our elections come with dreary frequency, distracting the population from the important business of living; and creating a wide and deep hiatus in our national life, often to no real purpose.

There have been few elections in the history of the country as unwanted and unnecessary as the present. There was a government in power, a minority, it is true. It was making a fist, perhaps a poor one, of running the country. It was at least coming to grips with real issues in a real way, something Canadians hadn't experienced for nearly a decade.

There can be no objections to the budget. It was a straightforward and honest attempt to bring home to Canadians the fact that the energy crisis is real and that we must do something about it. It also aimed at paying off something on the twelve billion dollar deficit which was pushing the country to the edge of bankruptcy.

That is a strange word to use in connection with a country as rich as Canada, but when the value of your dollar is dropping, when inflation is running unchecked, when exports are being shoved out of world markets, when unemployment is rising, when deficits rise to undreamed of heights (the last Liberal deficit was equal to the entire budget of the Diefenbaker government) then bankruptcy is no longer just a word.

The Liberals and the NDP toppled the government that was trying to do something, not on the grounds that they would have done differently, but on the grounds that what the government was doing was bound to hit hard and be unpopular. And the Gallup poll showed the Liberals far out ahead. They also had leadership problems and the act of forcing an election made it mandatory that they would continue with the same leader, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, whose graceful exit was fresh in people's minds, and who suddenly reappeared, like a man going round in a revolving door.

The Liberals say they will deal with the oil crisis the easy way, by paying off the importing companies, as they did before, thus contributing largely to the twelve million dollar deficit on which Canadians are now paying an enormous annual interest. How long can this go on?

Obviously, the Clark approach, pay as you go, however unpalatable, is more constructive and more honest. Canadians know where they stand.

ON TRACK

Russell Township is about to borrow a page from the Osgoode Township book on the value of historical preservation.

Osgoode combined sound economic sense and a feeling for Castor Valley history in restoring the landmark municipal hall at Metcalfe. The "piece de resistance" is a new cupola, duplicating the long-lost original, which has just been added.

Now Russell is reaching outside its municipal borders to snatch a bit of history to integrate into the local fabric. An old New York Central Railway station is to be moved from Berwick to Embrun and restored on the site once occupied by the original village station.

As far as we're concerned, not enough praise can be heaped on this kind of initiative. Sure, moving and restoring the old building is going to entail a hefty expenditure, but the final product will bring no end of pleasure to Embrun residents and other Castor citizens.

The inventory of local historical buildings is not expanding. The few that we have must be preserved.

SOVIET INTERVENTION

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is but one of a series of examples of the new Soviet imperialism in its ugliest forms. Others are Cuba, Viet Nam, Angola and of course, the aptly named slave nations of Eastern Europe.

In Afghanistan, perhaps because they felt the world was taken up with events in Iran, the Soviets did not bother to be subtle. They did not use satellite troops as they did when they moved the Cubans into Angola; they did not bother to declare an international emergency or crisis as they did in shipping arms to North Viet Nam. They simply moved in the troops.

The United States and a number of other Western nations, including Canada, have protested this latest move in expanding Soviet imperialism. If they had protested other Soviet incursions with equal vehemence, then the present protest might not be necessary.

CASTOR REVIEW

"One Canada"

Box 359, Russell, Ontario

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Editor: Mark Van Dusen, 445-2080. After 4:30 p.m.

Sports: Jack McLaren, Editor, 445-2131; Garey, Ris, Columnist 445-2069.

News: Suzanne Schroeter, 445-5709.

Photographs: Estelle Yaternick. Advertising: Michael Van Dusen, 445-5770.

Layout: Paul Rodier, Stuart Walker.

Subscriptions: Freddi Rodier, 445-2805.

Bookkeeper: Joan Van Dusen, 445-2080.

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Correspondence

Editor, Castor Review:

Sir, I am sending money for a subscription to the Review, as I wish to try to reach some of your readers in an effort to learn possible facts of my father's people descended from, or related, to the Joseph Watsons, whose old farm site I was directed to by Mr. Lawrence Brown several months ago.

Also, any information regarding William Watson, brother of my grandfather Joseph and their sister Athalia, later Mrs. Robert York and another sister Martha, later Mrs. Orson Lascelle or Lascelle, would be very much appreciated.

Apart from knowing that Grandmother, Mrs. Joseph Watson, nee Pillar, died in my parents' home near Brandon, in 1916, I have no other dates so would appreciate obtaining the address of the municipal officer so that I could contact him or her and learn what they have on their records.

I would also like to know what costs will be involved for any of these services so that I can start action to see what comes of it.

I would appreciate whatever information you send me and trust that you will reply in the near future. I remain,

Sincerely,
Harold E. Watson
Brandon, Manitoba.

Editor's note: Dear Mr. Watson, the following two officials might be able to help you:

Mr. Wendell Stanley
County Registrar
Box 10
Russell, Ont.
KOA 3B0

Mr. Jean-Guy Bourdeau
Clerk-treasurer
Township of Russell
Box 57
Embrun, Ont.
KOA 1W0

Can anyone else help Mr. Watson in his quest for family history?

Land and water

Fall sun-haze lake
offering vague distance
and unknown opportunity
beyond the stable shore
drawing and pulling
strong counter to horizonless
water.

Land and land
Water and water
Father and mother
Mistress and lover

Live on the shore
sail on the water
But come back
come back
to the land

The land
Home of controlled passion

Kenneth Clark
Ottawa

Wooden logic a stumper

Now just a minute here, Russell Township council.

If we understand it correctly, the dead wood which is being cleaned up along the new Russell-Embrun ski trail (former New York Central rail line) is taken to the dump and burned, right? This is to remove it as a drawing card into healthy tree stands by people who are so desperate for wood fuel they are willing to steal it, right? Lucien Millaire, the township roads superintendent, says it is policy to take all wood cut by the township to the dump.

Stop right there. Would it not make sense to stockpile this wood somewhere for public sale, say, at the township garage? If that en-

tails logistics headaches for the township then why not offer the wood to some organization like the fire department which could sell it at \$5 or \$10 a trunkload and pocket a bit of a profit?

Think about it, Council, before normally law-abiding citizens frantic for stick to burn realize what you're doing and vent their rage by flaunting recently-approved tree protection legislation in your face.

After all, they can't go to the dump in the hope of recovering any of the wood hauled there because you also recently prohibited the popular practice of scavenging at the disposal site.



Beaver Bob

Richardson — writer and fighter

Almost everyone has heard of Wacousta, an early classic of Canadian literature which turns up from time to time on school curricula, along with The Man From Glengarry and Glengarry School Days.

Wacousta, by Major John Richardson, has been compared to The Last of the Mohicans and other works by Fenimore Cooper. Richardson had the advantage of familiarity with his subject, having been born at Queenston on the Niagara frontier a little more than thirty years after the events dealt with in Wacousta, namely the attempt by Pontiac, the great chief of the Ottawas to capture Detroit by guile and treachery. Richardson's grandfather had in fact, brought supplies to the fort at Detroit while the uprising was in progress.

His own subsequent career was not without interest. He was fifteen when the War of 1812 began and became a volunteer in the British Army, captured by the Americans at Moraviantown in 1813 in the engagement which took the life of Tecumseh, the greatest Indian warrior and leader of his day.

Richardson was also the author of The Canadian Brothers, War of 1812, and other classics.

In 1835, Richardson fought in Spain. Subsequently, he returned to Canada and started a weekly newspaper in Brockville. He operated the New Era in 1841 and 1842. In his newspaper, he published

his History of the War of 1812 and from the type made up the bound volume.

His Brockville paper was not a success and a year later, Richardson was in Kingston, publishing The Canadian Loyalist which fared little better than the New Era, since by 1850, after five years as superintendent of police on the Welland Canal, Richardson was living in New York, where he published Eight Years in Canada and other works.

We went to Brockville last summer, looking for some trace of this worthy man and there was none. We questioned the local newspaper, the town historian, the town library and came regretfully to the conclusion that the residence of this famous soldier and literary figure in Brockville was unmarked, unknown and forgotten.

We could not find anyone in Brockville who seemed to know or care that in that thriving and intellectual community had once lived and worked the author of perhaps the only true Canadian literary classic, Wacousta, which seems to be better known and more highly regarded in both Britain and the United States than in its country of origin.

Of Wacousta, Desmond Pacey has said: "Major John Richardson was the first Canadian novelist to achieve an international reputation; his best novel, Wacousta, has appeared in some twelve editions and was in print for over a century."

Pacey also establishes that Richardson's maternal grand-

mother, from whom he learned about the siege of Detroit, was an Indian; and this in part at least, explains his admiration for Tecumseh, embodied in his long narrative poem of that name. Richardson was present when the great Indian leader was killed at Moraviantown and reports in his history of the war, that the Americans "flayed" the great chief's body. More likely, they removed parts of the skin as souvenirs, certainly not more excusable, but more in character.

In Brockville, Richardson, according to Pacey (in Canadian Literature Quarterly, Winter, 1960) lived in a large house with extensive grounds, called Rock Cottage. There is now no record of it. He found Brockville "a dull and dispiriting place." Here is what Richardson wrote:

"There is an unblushing depravity; a shameless immorality, among a certain class of beings in Brockville, such as we never knew to be equalled in any town in Europe."

Perhaps Brockville has continued to take Richardson's strictures to heart. Perhaps it is for this reason that if you go to Brockville today, to the newspaper office, the ample and well-appointed town library, the local registry office, there is no memory or trace of Major John Richardson, soldier, traveller, perhaps Canada's most celebrated author of the pioneer period, chronicler of the War of 1812. Brockville has forgotten Richardson, because, it appears, Brockville wants to forget Richardson. Pity.