

CASTOR REVIEW

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\$168 Hike For Russell Taxpayers

Russell Village residents will be flooded this year by knee-buckling tax increases working out to \$168 for the average homeowner.

The increases will bring the combined municipal-county-educational tax bill to \$1,152 for the homeowner with a \$4,500 assessment compared to \$984 last year.

Russell Township clerk-treasurer Jean-Guy Bourdeau said it's the stiffest tax hike he has seen during 14 years of preparing municipal budgets.

Mr. Bourdeau stressed that forecasted municipal expenses for the year will only account for \$27 of the \$168. The remainder is being levied by regional school boards and the United Counties of Prescott-Russell.

"The township acts as a collecting agent for the boards and the counties," he explained. "We can't control their budgets."

The average homeowner in Russell Village is a public school supporter and will pay 60.31 mills to that educational system compared to 53.35 last year. He'll also pay 49.50 mills to the secondary school system compared to 41.31 last year.

Because he's a separate school supporter, the average Embrun homeowner will fare better, paying 46.30 mills to that educational system compared to 41.98. He'll pay the same secondary school mill rate.

Largely because of the better educational rate, the average Embrun homeowner is facing a \$125 increase in his combined tax bill. The owner with a \$4,500 assessment will pay \$1,032 in taxes this year compared to \$907 in 1979.

Depending on assessment and location of properties, homeowners in rural parts of the township will also receive tax bills showing sizeable increases. All residents will pay 28.32 mills for county purposes compared to last year's 24.69.

Pointing out that there was no municipal tax hike last year, Mr. Bourdeau said council is asking for an extra \$345,410 from taxpayers to meet this year's budgetary demands. Total forecasted spending for the year is just over \$1.8 million. To get the needed funds, council has boosted the mill rate to 54.97 compared to last year's 48.94.

The largest portion of the budget — \$1.1 million — is earmarked for road maintenance and development. The amount includes \$60,000 for Russell sidewalk reconstruction, \$100,000 for the Boundary Road-417 link, and funds for a township garage extension, salt shed, a salt and calcium spreader, and mechanical sweeper.

Also biting off a large chunk is municipal administration — \$242,100. The hiring of Michel Dignard as zoning administrator and updating planning and zoning documents have also helped jack up expenditures.

Basically, the township is in sound financial shape, Mr. Bourdeau maintained. The total township assessment, which now stands at \$6.2 million, has been increasing by about \$300,000 a year since 1975.

"That's a pretty healthy sign," he said.

Castor residents call no

Ten prominent Castor residents don't want to say goodbye to Quebec.

They feel the "no" forces will carry the day May 20 but all admit the vote will be almost too close for comfort. One thinks the "yes" side will take it.

None of them want to see force applied to get Quebecers to stay should the referendum produce a "yes" result, giving Rene Levesque the clout he needs to break out of Confederation.

In an attempt to get a feeling of how ordinary Canadians outside Quebec are watching the referendum campaign unfold, the Castor Review sought the views of 10 local residents, French and English, male and female, in different walks of life.

Big payday

A record tax increase hasn't stopped Russell Township councillors from giving themselves impressive salary hikes for 1980.

Reeve Gaston Patenaude's basic salary will go up by 16 per cent to \$5,800. In addition the reeve gets \$2,400 for "public relation and office work."

Deputy Reeve Albert Bourdeau gets an extra \$600, bringing his pay for this year to \$4,500.

Councillors Baird McNeill, Leo Provost and Leo Marion will take home \$4,050 for their council duties this year compared to the previous \$3,500.

We were impressed at the thoughtfulness shown. While most of those interviewed preceded their comments by declaring ignorance of the subject, all went on to give well-considered ideas about the current debate and the future of Canada.

What residents had to say is on p. 8



(Michael Van Dusen Photo)

TREE-PLANTING FUN

The first Russell tree plant held May 10 from the Dr. Frank Kinnaird Community Centre was a smash success. Organizer Paul Boardman said that 20,000 red pine seedlings were distributed and planted during the day-long event as start toward replenishing stocks depleted over the years by cutting and disease. Vashek Krabicka, above, and children John and Jeanette were among the many families who participated in the plant under perfect weather conditions. They are shown here planting some seedlings on their Russell property. Mr. Boardman said the plant will be an annual event.



Sidewalk Talk By Mark Van Dusen

Moving down to the Castor

The Castor Review is moving up in the world!

Actually, we're moving down the street to the big red-brick building in which Bruno and Diane Santilli run the Feedstore Pizzeria and Maria and Bianca's gift shop. It's the old bank building on Mill Street and we'll be dispensing the news of the Castor from two spacious rooms in the rear starting June 1.

That's right, we've got an office; a real, full-fledged office, our first. The entrance is by way of a cement walk and porch on the east side. There will even be a sign to show us off.

Since the paper became a private enterprise three-and-a-half years ago, it has been produced from my house on Concession Street. My kitchen was the layout

room, the old summer kitchen was the newsroom. Not a great situation for either the staff or for people trying to figure out where to drop off their articles and ads. How many times have I heard, "Is this the Castor Review?" There shouldn't be any doubt from now on.

Yes, it's been a long time coming and it seems fitting that our first official home should be in the well-preserved building which was the home of the village's first and only bank for most of this century and in which the late Morgan Warner, a Russell businessman for 65 years, operated a feed store. The Review has always held a strong attachment to heritage and history. It also seems fitting that the new office should have a clear view of the Castor River,

from which the paper derived its name.

The move recalls a solid newspaper tradition in the village, starting with the Russell Leader. Long after the leader died, Margot "The Adventures of Meg" McCallum and other women of the village published local happenings for a period, then Norm and Karen Bowley, Suzanne Schroeter, Mary Rowsell, Theresa Griffiths, Joyce O'Reilly and other volunteers in the community started the Russell Review, forerunner to the Castor Review.

So, the demand by local residents to be kept informed of what's happening in the community has been a strong one and has been satisfied in one form or another over the years. The

Castor Review, in trying to supply the demand for news from all communities along the Castor, has tripled in circulation and doubled in the number of pages since its birth.

If the Review is doing an able job, and I think it is considering not one person derives a salary from it, then it is because a lot of people in those communities don't mind giving up their time to produce a newspaper they feel is interesting to their neighbors.

The rewards, which are often obscured in the chaos of trying to put the latest issue "to bed", are personal satisfaction, pride in product. When, as I have, you hear someone on the street say, "Gee, that's a dandy little newspaper", it makes it worthwhile.

Castor communities are growing and the Castor Review is growing with them. I hope the Review, from its new office, will even more ably represent the energy and spirit that is growing with those communities. Drop in and see us.