

CASTOR COMMENT

How much more?

The unchecked tide of municipal, educational, and county spending has to be dammed—somehow. And damned as well. A tax boost of \$168 for the average ratepayer is outrageous by anybody's standards.

In this day and age, ratepayers cannot go on funding the empire-building of municipal and county councils, and boards of education.

Our elected representatives can argue until they're blue in the face that they're providing the programs that we need and want. But these days, many of us are prepared to do without that new township truck, that extra art class, in order to keep a few more dollars in our depleted bank accounts.

At the municipal level, the tax hike is 6.03 mills for Russell township residents. The extra mills will bring in \$345,410, most of which will help pay for Russell sidewalk reconstruction, launching the Boundardy Road-417 link, a township garage extension, salt shed, salt and calcium spreader, and mechanical sweeper.

Why couldn't these projects and equipment purchases be funded over several years instead of in one shot. It would have made the financial load easier to bear.

But that's really only a drop in the bucket. Let's do something really drastic, like merging the province's two educational systems.

The public and separate boards were established several years ago to accommodate distinct religious differences. Religion is more personalized these days and people are more tolerant of the other guy's beliefs.

Twin systems are a luxury no longer needed or affordable. Think of the duplication that could be eliminated through merger. Partly-filled schools could be closed, high-priced administrators could be chopped, busing costs could be reduced, and the teaching complement could be reduced through attrition.

The only alternative is to go on paying: more and more and more....

Taxpayers blameless

It would be a gross injustice if the Ontario taxpayer and a group of helpless Russell Village residents were to wind up paying to correct an ugly situation they had no hand in causing.

The Heritage Road subdivision has a chronic bad water problem. Almost from day one, most residents have been able to draw nothing from their taps other than a murky fluid which has called illness in several cases.

Existing wells and septic systems are substandard. Wells are too shallow and improperly sealed; septic systems are malfunctioning. Certainly not the fault of residents who thought they were getting good wells and tile beds as part of the purchase price of their homes.

Is the builder, Chantal Development Corporation to blame? The company contracted for installation of the services. Or is Russell Township at fault for allowing residential development in a poor location? Or can we point an accusing finger at the control agencies, the Eastern Ontario Health Unit and the Ontario Ministry of Environment?

The only remedy is replacement of defective wells and septic systems at an estimated cost of \$400,000. Through a provincial program, the taxpayer is expected to foot 75 per cent of the bill and affected homeowners the remaining 25 per cent.

Neither group should have to pay a cent, unless the taxpayer is required to bail out one of the public bodies which may be entirely or partly to blame.

The mess can probably only be sorted out in court and that's where it should be taken.

The true face

Over and over, the world has seen the evil of Soviet communism. In Hungary, Berlin, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union has ruthlessly violated the rights of others with no shadow of right of its own. Now, in Afghanistan, Soviet armoured vehicles surrounded a high school and courageous Soviet soldiers opened fire, killing 13 young students, once again showing the world the true face of Soviet communism.

In showing the evil of communism, events in Afghanistan and in Castro's Cuba have provided an object lesson to the world of the way in which this most despicable of totalitarian philosophies moves to crush out human liberty. Those who live under the system, in Eastern Europe, Asia, Cuba, have shown time and again that anything, even death, is better than being deprived of human dignity and freedom as is the case with those who live under crushing Soviet despotism.

CASTOR REVIEW

"One Canada"

Box 359, Russell, Ontario

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

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

News: Suzanne Schroeter, 445-5709.

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

Layout: Paul Rodier

Subscriptions: Freddi Rodier, 445-2805.

Bookkeeper: Joan Van Dusen, 445-2080.

Submissions preferably typed, double-spaced are welcomed, publishable at the discretion of the editor.

Published by Castor Publishing, Russell, Ontario. President: Thomas W. Van Dusen.

Subscription rate: \$3.50 a year; \$4.50, out-of-country.

Printed by Performance Printing, Smiths Falls.

NEXT DEADLINE
June 2
NEXT ISSUE
June 13

Second Class Mail Registration No. 4218
ISSN 0707 — 4956

The Referendum — a nation losing its grip on reality

By Thomas Van Dusen

Is Quebec going to separate? And if so, what then? I ask myself these questions, gazing over the spring-swollen river in this Ontario town not far from the Quebec border. Watching television, there was little to enlighten. The Prime Minister, looking hard-driven and weary, warned that Quebec was heading for a dead end. Mr. Ryan, without much conviction, said that "no" really meant "yes", an exercise in inverted logic certain to appeal to the minds of a great many of his viewers.

It was Mr. Levesque who drew attention. That retreaded visage with its air of pseudo-conviction and sorely-tried sincerity, like a man peddling an ounce of hash at an airport terminal. Nothing to alarm the prospective client. Minimizing the possible dangers. Enhancing, with every lift of the pliable eyebrows, every jerk of the plastic forehead, the delights to come.

Above all, the air of tenuous unreality; being suspended between earth and heaven in a net of our own making. Consider this. When have you ever seen a people solemnly debating its own fate, calmly, even lethargically contemplating the dismemberment of a country commonly agreed to be among the earth's finest, while the sworn government dedicates itself to a furious participation in the instrument of dismemberment? Is it any wonder that friends and allies around the world are rubbing their eyes?

I keep telling myself that this is Canada, synonym for political dullness and straightness. Ready, eye ready to contribute blood and gold to the wars of empire, whether British or American; ready to reason, to mediate, to tolerate; ready to grow and prosper, to put away the melting pot for the mosaic; ready, it seems to do anything and everything but have a care for its own survival.

I admit frankly that we moved from Quebec when Levesque was elected, from a big, old white frame house in the pine woods near Aylmer, to a big, old white

frame house in the fields near Russell. There wasn't much choice. We had bought the Russell house in 1972. It was going up in value. The Aylmer house was plummeting in price. I suppose some of our friends and neighbours in Quebec felt that we were traitors, rats leaving the sinking ship. That in itself was an admission that the ship appeared to be sinking.

At first we were subjected to guilt qualms. I had spent most of my life in Quebec. I spoke French, as did our seven children, all educated in French schools, long before there was any requirement to do so. My wife, from Ottawa, believed firmly in bilingualism. One thought predominated over all. We were not about to be deprived of our Canadian citizenship by any manner of device or manipulation of popular feeling, something we had become rather familiar with.

These and many things are in our minds these days as we watch events moving, almost stumbling to a climax. We are perfectly convinced, from our own experience, that a majority of Quebecers would throw up their hands in horror if told they were on the verge of breaking up Canada; that Quebec was moving resistlessly in the direction of that ghetto she has always feared, alone, isolated, rejected by the rest of Canada. Yet, that is exactly what appears, as a result of Levesque's manipulations, to be happening.

They say he is clever. However much cleverness does it take to manipulate people who are prepared to be manipulated? There is a minority in Quebec ready to believe what Levesque is saying. From birth, almost, they have drunk in the myths of English supremacy, English domination, the reverse of Shakespeare's apothegm about the fault lying in ourselves, not our stars.

Beneath the oratory and the posturing and the television debates and the learned dialogues relative to the number of angels capable of assuming an erect position on the head of a pin, there lingers the brutal reality. That

Canada is in danger. A nation that people believed in, worked for, fought for, died for, may be in the process of being cast into the abyss. Why? Surely not because nobody cares. Because nobody is willing to bring about the necessary changes to satisfy Quebec? Or is it because the rest of Canada feels that the price for keeping Quebec is too high; and they can go and good luck to them?

Correspondence

Editor,
Castor Review

In the February 1980 issue of The Castor Review an article appeared on the break-ins at Osgoode Township High School. I would like to comment on the facts and the speculation contained in that article.

First, all the break-ins took place after the New Year, on January 27th, February 8th, 15th, 25th and March 2nd respectively. Second, the reported amounts of money and the value of the equipment taken were incorrect. Third, although there was damage to the school it certainly was not extensive nor did it appear to be malicious. The damage was simply that which occurred while someone worked to gain entry to various parts of the building. Finally, the reported speculation that the break-ins were the results of "an inside job" either related to students or staff has not been substantiated. In fact, the alleged culprit who is presently awaiting trial is not associated with the High School.

In light of the above I am requesting that you print my letter in order to correct facts and remove any speculation that either staff or students were associated with the recent break-ins.

Thank you,
T.J. Brennan,
Principal.

Editor's note: The story in question, was based on information received from investigating police officers. A newspaper has to accept such information as fact.



Beaver Bob

A Weekend in Brockville

Brockville is almost our favourite city on the Seaway. We don't want to be categorical, since we are also attracted to those other pearls, Gananoque and Kingston; but have not had the opportunity to explore them in detail. Prescott, too, is rather attractive and all along the Seaway, the old towns speak of long-gone days, of sails trading up and down the St. Lawrence, smugglers' tales by night, the roar and crash of seven-pounders in the episode of 1812.

Part of Brockville's attraction is the drive in reaching the place. Going through the back concession roads to Winchester, pausing for breakfast at the Sutton Coffee Shop, adds to the charm of the journey. The big old houses, stand high on the hills and the fields spread out solemnly in the morning light. In Morrisburg, you encounter the sparkling blue of the Seaway and, with a brief stop at that treasure trove of bibliophiles, and Old Author's Farm, you are on the way once again.

We are told that when the sum-

mer heat brings the water down, that the streets of Aultsville — one of the cities flooded in the early fifties — come up out of the water like some enchanted Atlantis, and that you can walk, with a ghostly feeling on the old asphalt released from the waters.

Brockville has a smattering of Seaway craft shops, artist's studios and antique shops, within view of the marina where a hundred or so boats were in drydock being readied for the season. Always the Seaway is there, with its blue water, gulls and stately carriers like moving islands.

Those who own shops along the water, where a great deal of renovation has been carried on are justifiably concerned about a promoter's plan to raise waterside streets in order to erect another ugly, standardized, North American shopping mall.

Patricia Tite is a local artist, originally from England, who operates an art supply shop and studio in a reconverted building on the waterfront. Across and up a way is the studio of Marjorie

Winslow, one of the finest sculptors in clay in the area, or for that matter, in all Eastern Ontario. Our pride and joy is a Marjorie Winslow piece featuring kingfishers. As soon as the exhibition opened in the Catholic Cultural Centre, buyers were there, chequebooks in hand, snapping up the Winslow pieces.

Marjorie Winslow was on her way up the street to the exhibition and she was happy to have someone to walk up with. Somehow, she attracts people wherever she is and by the time we reached the exhibition, a number of people had congregated on the sidewalk and she was telling them about my quest for traces of John Richardson, author of Wacousta, the Canadian Brothers and the History of the War of 1812, who had operated a weekly in Brockville in 1843. No one had any information to give, almost as though Brockville had decided to wipe from its past any mention of the great writer who once dwelt in its midst.