

News

Township debts force government supervision

Russell Township has been placed under provincial government supervision by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing because the Township has run up debts forcing it to borrow \$225,000 at current interest rates. The loan may cause cut-backs in services and higher taxes.

The financial squeeze the Township finds itself in is the result of increased operating costs, the carrying of debts to finance capital projects, (mostly notably the Embrun sewage pro-

ject) and budget overruns.

The Council has already spent \$378,000 on the sewage system under an agreement with the Ministry of Environment. Provincial government funds to finance the project were delayed pending the results of Ontario Municipal Board hearings.

Large debts in the operating costs of the Township were incurred when the Council spent \$160,000 for four projects in Embrun: the bowling alley and hall, the Zamboni room addition at the Embrun arena (a Zamboni is the machine that cleans the ice surface), the rehabilitation of the New York Central Station and the renovation of the Heritage House near Gregoire's garage. Several years' operating deficits of the Russell arena added \$60,000 to the debt load.

The full effect borrowing the \$225,000 will have on tax rates will not be known until the Township's budget is prepared in January. Cutbacks in operating expenses and surplus funds in the budgets of the recreational associations may soften the tax hikes. Without a pruning of the budget for next year, tax rates could increase by 13 mills in 1982 and 11 mills in 1983.

A report prepared by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs said: "The Township does not have the capacity to borrow for current operating purposes and at the same time finance capital projects that do not have the approval of the Ontario Municipal Board. "The shortage of working funds," said report to the Council, "is the direct result of capital expenditures not permanently financed...The current working capital position is critical and requires remedial action as soon as possible."

The Ministry urged that "expenditure restraint be exercised by Council in all areas to minimize any possibility of a deficit on current (1981) operations that would have to be included in the 1982 estimates. Until a final year audit has been completed...the actual results of 1981 operations will not be known."

The bowling alley and hall in Embrun cost \$72,500 more than

what had been arranged in permanent financing from Wintario grants and other sources. The Embrun arena renovations and the building of the Zamboni room cost \$69,000 more than the permanent financing arranged.

The two Heritage projects have both run over-budget. The Berwick Station House renovation was budgeted at \$10,400. Estimated completion costs now run at \$16,800. The Carlsbad Home rehabilitation was originally budgeted at \$18,000. Estimates for the completion of the project are now \$37,000.

The result of the financial crisis may mean further delays in OMB and provincial funding arrangements for the sewage project in Embrun.

Kids' party

Santa will be at the Dr. Kinnaid Community Centre, Russell, on Saturday, December 20 from two to four in the afternoon.

There will be a Christmas tree to decorate and carols to sing. Parents are invited to bring their cameras.

Santa Claus on the street

Santa Claus will be travelling the streets of Russell on Christmas Eve between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Children and adults are invited to accompany Santa and sing carols.

The Santa entourage will meet at the arena at 6:45 p.m. Songsheets will be provided but carolers must bring along their own flashlights.

Deputy-Reeves ousted

Prescott-Russell municipal reeves have decided to remove deputy-reeves from County Council. Starting December 1st, 1982, the deputy-reeves will no longer be able to sit on council.

The idea for restricting council membership was suggested by L'Original Mayor André Landriault as a cost-saving measure.

By limiting council membership to Reeves, said Mayor Landriault, the current membership of 25 would be reduced by seven and this would mean a savings of about \$65,000 a year.

Presently, each council member receives a basic annual remuneration of \$4,800 plus about \$2,500 for attending conventions.

"As far as I'm concerned," said Hawkesbury Deputy-Reeve Gilles Theriault, "I have been stabbed in the back. If we want to cut costs, we should do it in the right place."

County Council usually meets about 10 times a year — which means about \$480 a meeting for each Reeve and Deputy-Reeve. Some of the Deputy-Reeves at the meeting accused the Reeves of not giving them adequate notice about the proposal. Others maintained the motion was passed because Deputy-Reeves had been acting as an opposition to some of the Council's activities.

English advisory committee

Six Prescott-Russell ratepayers have been elected to form an English-language advisory committee to the local Board of Education.

Earlier this year, the Board decided to set up the committee because English-speaking ratepayers are in a minority in the county. On the Board only five of the 17 trustees are English speaking.

The six committee members were elected at local ratepayer meetings. They are: Chris Edmundson (Russell); Mary Norman (Cambridge); Mel McCormick (Plantagenet); Joan Yeaton (Rockland); Isabelle Millward (Vankleek Hill) and Garry Hicks (Hawkesbury).

French schools?

The possibility of the Prescott-Russell Separate School Board becoming a French-language school board moved a step closer last month when Don Boudria, the riding's MLA, came out in support of the idea.

"I supported the idea when it was first suggested by rate-payers in Ottawa-Carleton," said Mr. Boudria. "But the need for it in my riding is even more obvious."

Mr. Boudria promised to raise the issue in the provincial legislature.

About 90 per cent of Prescott-Russell is French-speaking. If the Separate School Board were to win in its bid to become a "homogenous" school board it would mean the school board would have jurisdiction over all French-speaking schools in its area — public as well as separate. If the provincial government approved the concept the public school board would likely lose the students attending its French-language schools.

In endorsing the idea, the separate school trustees said their 26 elementary and six French-language high schools would form the nucleus of the new Board.

But they admitted that there might be a problem for the one English-language elementary school and their two bilingual high schools.

The separate school trustees hope that the local board of education will take over the jurisdiction of those three schools.

At present school boards in Ontario are divided along religious, not linguistic lines. New legislation would have to be passed by the Provincial Legislature allowing for French-language boards.

Separate School Board Chairman, Roger Cayer, said the creation of a French-language Board would not make Catholic education obligatory. The new Board would have two sections: one teaching religious training, one not.

In announcing his support for the concept Mr. Boudria said the timing of the request by the Prescott-Russell Separate School Board was better than the previous Ottawa-Carleton attempt.

"This time Premier Davis can't use the excuse of an anti-French back-lash, because he is not going into an election" he said.

The current drive to establish a French-language school board is a result of last summer's meeting of Ontario French-speaking trustees in Mont Gabriel, Quebec. At that meeting the trustees decided to make the creation of French-language boards a priority.



All that's left of the Mr. Gas filling station at the Corner of the Regional Road through Metcalfe and Highway 31 is a burnt out building and locked gas pumps. But it'll be back in operation soon. The Township of Osgoode Council decided to let the company use a trailer on the site. Mr. Gas has promised to submit plans for a new building within six months.

Although the idea was supported by the Prescott-Russell separate school trustees, it wasn't accepted unanimously by the trustees in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Former S.D.G. Claude Courville resigned over the issue.

her opening remarks she said we are all disabled in one way or another. Panel members were: Mr. Bert Stel, Administrator of the District Memorial Hospital at Winchester; Mr. Jacques Seguin, Special Education Co-ordinator for the Prescott-Russell Board of Education; and Dr. Gerry Heymans from Russell.

Help the disabled

The Excelsior Unit of the Russell United Church women arranged a panel discussion on "The Church and the Disabled".

Mrs. George Hay led a very meaningful worship pointing out how Jesus helped the disabled.

Mrs. Shirley Rombough, introduced the panel members. In

The disabled have the same needs as anyone — education, food, and housing — but most of all they need "love". We must remember to treat them first as persons. There are many little things we in the church can do for the disabled: a cheery note, a smile, a visit. It all goes back to the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

The guests were thanked by Mrs. Campbell Booth.

MR. GAS

Season's Greetings to all our patrons.

After our recent fire, we are now open again — seven days a week.

WEEKDAYS: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

WEEKENDS: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

We will be open Christmas Day and New Year's Day to serve you.

MICHAEL MILLER

TYRONE FRANNEY

821-1218

Best Wishes of the Season

to
All the People of Osgoode
and the Castor Area
on behalf of
The Bouwers Family

Gertie
John Jr.
Rose
Joann

Albert Bouwers
Osgoode Township Reeve

