

Comment

The more things change...

Here's what you would have read, in exactly this space, 45 years ago. *The Russell Leader* was the newspaper then. And here was the opinion expressed:

Canada's task in 1938: Make Canada one nation, that is Canada's job of the year. It is a job to which every citizen must put his hand.

To leave it to selfish, narrow-minded provincial politicians of the type that have been particularly visible in recent months is to jeopardize our future as a nation.

The job will require a modernized constitution.

It will require the best wisdom and judgement the Rowell Commission can bring to bear on our complex financial and taxation puzzles.

It will require elimination of overlapping services and of the vexation, confusion and waste that have crept into our government system since 1867.

It will require encouragement of every unifying force such as our national publications.

Above all, it will require the active co-operation of all Canadians who believe Canada should go forward as one nation and who are prepared to make sacrifices, if necessary, to achieve this end.

This is Canada's job for 1938.

(Reprinted from *The Russell Leader*, Thursday, January 20, 1938. Originally published in the *Toronto Financial Post*.)

From my kitchen window...

First, the tiles go...

by Maria Darragh

Even before we were handed the deed to our house, my husband and I decided the fake-hospital-green tile climbing two-thirds of the way up the kitchen and hall walls had to go.

Somewhere along the way a condemned furnace and a roof with a chronic post nasal drip intervened. Plans for sprucing up the kitchen became vague dreams and were put on the back burner.

Still, all winter long the thought "Wouldn't it be nice if we got rid of that awful green tile," meandered into our conversation.

Finally, one February Monday my husband decided the day had come. The green had to go.

Little did we know that, with our borrowed crowbar, we were opening Pandora's box — and soon to be singing the home renovation blues. A calamity we had smugly sworn to avoid ever so long ago.

The little hall off the kitchen came along beautifully. We ripped the tile off the walls easily. The gypsum board underneath was in good condition. A little dabble-do-ya of polyfilla and it looked as good as new.

Relieved and encouraged we began to tackle the kitchen — thinking it would be such a cinch.

To our consternation, the gypsum board around the chimney and outside wall had been water damaged. It crumbled under the crowbar as we tore out the sheets of tile.

Not to fret, said my husband. "We'll just buy a sheet of gypsum and replace the damaged sections. Not such a big job really."

Gingerly we removed the damaged gypsum board. And then stared with dismay at the outdated materials which passed for insulation 30 years ago.

Faced with the question of whether to gut the wall and improve the insulation or not, our little project was suddenly not so little any more.

When the general contractor we had called in to install the sump pump saw where our efforts at

renovating had led us, he laughed.

Clarence Prescott had warned us the Fall before, when he'd done our roof: No job stays small. It has a way of growing on you, he said. How right he was; we had just learned for ourselves.

Much like the man being pulled along by his horse of a dog while out for the daily stroll, we found we couldn't keep pace with the extra jobs which followed in the wake of our once modest improvements.

By the by we asked Prescott to take over. In less than an hour we had a grand view of the concrete blocks of the outside wall of the kitchen. When my husband came home from work that evening, he commented that since we'd come this far, why not put in a bigger window in place of the existing smaller one.

And on and on it goes.

The view from my kitchen window is better. The green tile is gone. The plaster dust is almost gone. The paint smells still lingers.

Bruno Beefs

By Bruno Santilli

Never would I have believed that the provincial government was capable of such insensitivity toward the citizens of Ontario as the budget shows.

Lately, government slogans to justify our national debt have been stating that the public has lived outside its ability and the time has come to tighten belts.

I recall a few years ago when the federal government asked the public to vacation in Canada, the same people that voiced their opinion for the need of Canadians to keep the wealth in this country vacationed elsewhere. Either the governments conform to their beliefs or drop their sanctimonious charade.



After what seemed like a never-ending winter, the spring blossoms put on a breathtaking show. This plum-tree extravaganza frames the Castor River and the Russell United Church steeple in the background.

Dennis McGann photo

Essay

by Murray Lawrie

The little man with thinning fair hair and clear blue eyes, who greeted me, reminded me of a faithful dog happy to see his master. Little Eddie helped a hide merchant and although it wasn't really a job, the hide merchant understood Eddie and was prepared to let him ride in the truck and help when he could. The little man slept at the hide plant and would cycle on an old

bicycle to visit his sister in Ottawa about seventeen miles away.

Stories drifted around about Eddie's youth but he was so insignificant nobody paid any attention to him. As I think back, the look in Eddie's blue eyes was a hurt look. How I wish you were here now, Ed, things would be different.

My Scottish accent seemed to attract Eddie and he vaguely told me he had been in Scotland. I remember I was surprised that he knew so many places familiar to me. How I wish you were here, Eddie. You and I could sit down and talk about your visits to Scotland and how much you enjoyed the beer.

We met on many occasions, me in my work as a meat inspector and Eddie dragging out hides. Always the butt of jokes and jeers and nobody laughing harder than little Eddie. How I wish you were here, Ed. Joking is okay, but you should have been laughing as an

equal.

When you got a few dollars together, you mingled with the city crowds, no one aware of your presence and on recognizing me in the crowd, those blue eyes would shine and with that little smile I would hear you say, "Hey Scotty, got a buck?" I remember leaving left and right to see if anyone saw me talking to you. I'm sorry Eddie. I should have put a hand out and said, "Hi Friend!"

I want everyone to know you were a sergeant in the D Day landing and did Canada proud. When I am in the company of the inevitable phonies, I often think of the different use of alcohol. You, Eddie, were perfectly open about booze and how you enjoyed it. They used booze to guffaw with phoney laughter and try for some measure of self-imposed happiness. You wouldn't have counted with these middle-class snobs. But you were a better man.

The heavy winter coat and gloves I discarded could have been given to you but they weren't. "Good Intentions" is what I have called this article, Eddie, but we all know what the road to hell is paved with.

One year later I heard you had frozen to death, Eddie, in some unknown location. I'll always feel guilty about my "Good Intentions" and I'm looking for another Eddie to have "Good Intentions" about. Good-bye old friend!

The Castor Review

The Castor Review is a newsfeature tabloid published ten times each year by the Castor Publishing Company, Russell, Ontario. Mailing address is: Box 359, Russell, Ont. K0A 3B0. Telephone: 445-3345. Second class mail registration No. 4218 ISSN 0707-4956.

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No room for phone numbers this time...here's who dunit: Marc, Belanger (news), Jack McLaren (sports), Donna Nordenstrom, Barbara Overell, Lola Wood, Greg Rokosh (recreation), Eileen Hamelin (calendar), Gillian Rokosh (circulation), Ian Darragh (photos), Bruno Santilli, Kathy Kelsey, Connie Shearf, Lynn Ransome, Mary Ann Lazon, Colleen Petry, Maria Darragh, Dorothy Marquette (visiting) ... and all other little munchkins who toil for you...

Next meeting/deadline: June 23 • Next issue: July 3