

The South Marysburgh Mirror is published to present current, interesting, fun and frivolous information to the residents of South Marysburgh, and those who wish they were. It is intended to entertain, and if in the process, it edifies, the editor apologizes.

Editor: Bev Walker. To complain, explain, disclaim, inform or advise; to contribute items for the paper; or for additional copies; please contact the above at tel. (613)476-6771, or write to RR # 3, Picton, Ontario, K0K 2T0. This paper is published regularly (perhaps 8 issues per year) when there is something of interest to put into it. If nothing of interest is happening, you will know by its not being written about.

Opinions expressed are those of the editor, unless otherwise stated.

Is this History or What?

According to the Funk & Wagnells Canadian College Dictionary, the word contract means to arrange to settle by agreement; enter upon with reciprocal obligations. I mention this because the word has been used to describe a piece of Provincial Legislation the Social Contract Act, and the process leading up to it.

It would bore you to death at this point if, in this editorial, I were to tell you that a Social Contract has various definitions. That it can be the unwritten agreement between the members of a society to behave with reciprocal responsibility in their relationships under the governance of the 'State' which, in *social contract theory* is presumed by the existence of that society. This idea being of ancient origin, having been found in the various teachings of Plato and Lucretious, etc., and was chiefly used as a tool for criticizing established, traditional authority, when a state was seeking both autonomy and just internal constitutions. I could then tell you about *Thomas Hobbes*, and English philosopher who caused much comment in the 1600s, when he argued that the *social contract* created mutual obligations which did not exist before the constitutional state.

I could tell you then about *John Locke*, another English philosopher who died in 1704 and to whom we in this country and the folk of the United States owe much. It was his writings on government that were influential in the writing of the United States Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, and is so far as these were something of a blueprint for later constitutions, the Constitution of Canada as well. As I have mentioned this gentleman, I might as well mention some of his beliefs concerning government, such as the notion that governmental authority is something delegated by the subjects for the creation of a state through a compact (contract) that carries in itself the principle of obligation, or that individuals have rights to life, liberty, and property. He also had things to say in favour of the right of revolution because of the usurpation of authority, but that view might be seen as seditious. Suffice to say, that Locke argued that moral principles and obligations existed before the creation of the State, so that men could change the State if it failed to uphold these principles.

But you don't want an editorial that is as dry reading as it would be if I told you all that. And in any case, that was



all in the dim distant, and this *Social Contract* is now.

If I were really trying to criticize the present assemblage on their passing of an act euphemistically referred to as a *Social Contract*, I would bring to your attention the Labour Government of Great Britain's attempt, in its term in power to secure voluntary Trade Union agreement to restrain demands for pay increases, in exchange for an increase in the social wage (ie. increase in welfare provision and social security and restraint on price increases), in 1974-79. The direct result of these policies by the British Government was referred to as

the "Winter of Discontent", in which Great Britain was hit by numerous strikes, particularly among Public Sector workers. Anti-union and anti-government sentiments which had been simmering for some time were brought almost to the flash point and resulted in the election of a radical Conservative government in 1979.

Now were I to point all these things out to you, and provide this little lesson on political history, you might think that I am suggesting that there is a parallel between all that is past and what might be to come. Or maybe what I am suggesting is that persons in political office, should do some cramming on the basics of political philosophy. Or maybe -- oh never mind. Draw your own lesson if any, from the past and remember that a vote for vengeance tends to come back on us with a vengeance.

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