

# Editorial Page

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## 'Run for the border' is potential problem with definition of isolated Northern communities

The members of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Communities has done much travelling from west to east during their visits to many small towns and communities. But, that's 'Northern' Canada for you.

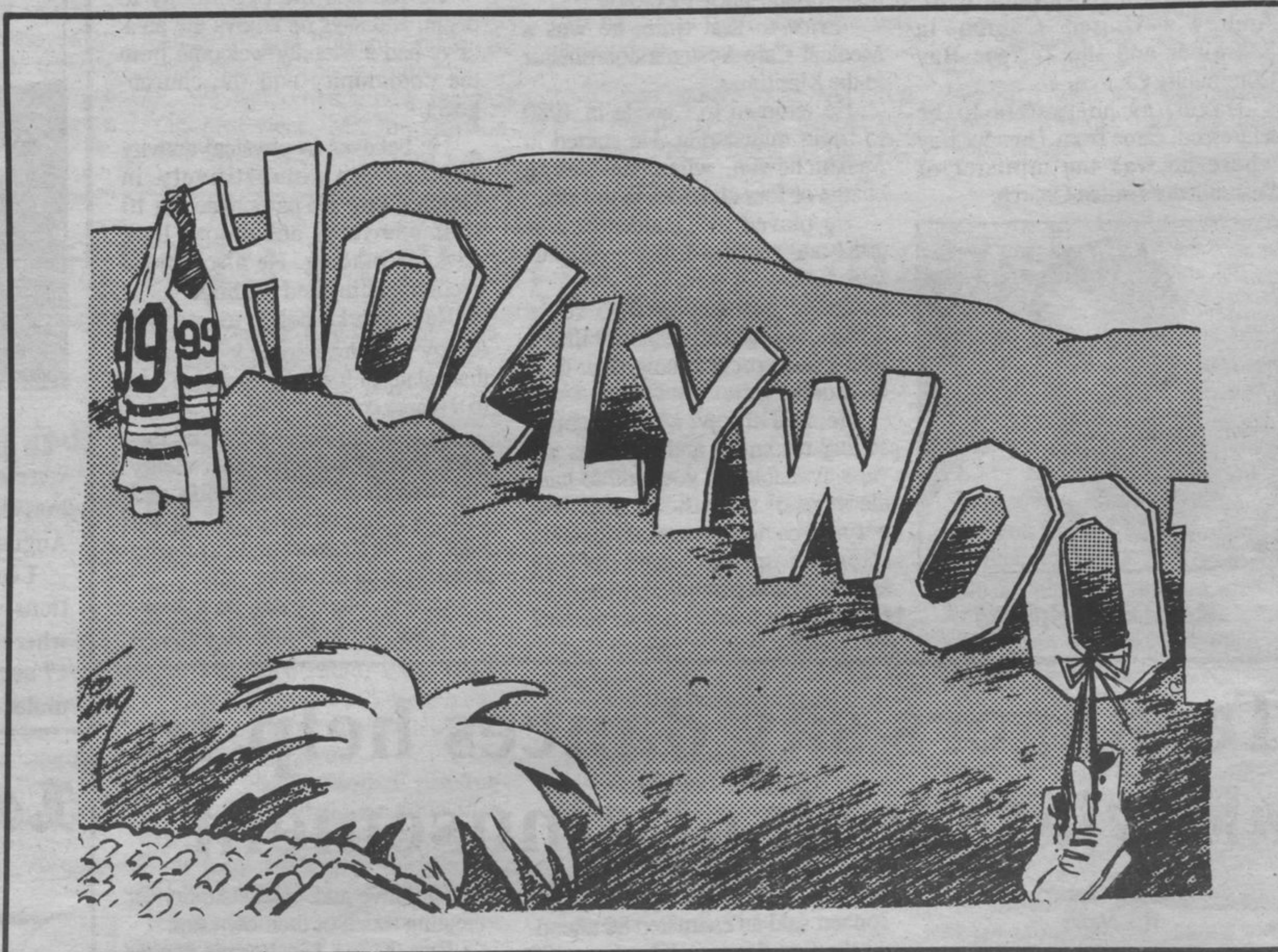
It is their job to listen to what the representatives of those communities have to say about that occasional vast distance. Or sometimes that 10 kilometers.

That's how close Marathon was from the 'border'. The border is the magic number of 320 kilometers from an urban centre of 50,000 people. That border is worth a lot of money — namely, \$5,400 per resident under a current tax deduction scheme.

As the story on page one explains, a community must meet certain criteria to benefit from this tax credit. Many are angry because the government has chosen to designate 320 kilometers as the break point. Any community further than that is eligible; any under that despite meeting the other criteria can take a hike down the long, deteriorating road.

Many are calling for a sliding or incremental scale of benefits. Simply, the further you are from Sudbury, Sault or Thunder Bay, the more you get. That way, all will get a piece of the financially nutritional pie. Otherwise, there is a very good chance the North will develop a loosely collected pocket of rich communities surrounded by disparaged and poor towns.

It is already happening in Northern Ontario. Marathon has experienced a boom in the past few years, and has been in the process of becoming a sub-regional centre. Government, public and private industries and services have relocated there. That is a concern to many in itself.



Manitouwadge, which is 'just down the road,' has about the same population, but with one big difference. It qualifies for the Tax Benefit of \$5,400 per resident. It doesn't take local or federal politicians to be concerned when they are seeing people re-locating to Manitouwadge to take advantage of the benefit. And so the border is moving east.

The federal government is concerned with another, irrelevant border. They say that if they give in and stretch the cutoff distance, the next town down the road will expect the same treatment.

The border they must be concerned with is the population trends of the North and how people will follow or try to settle in qualifying commu-

nities. That will have a devastating effect on those that are left in the cold.

If this arbitrary disparity continues, the North is going to be in trouble. Micheal Wilson must be urged to amend the policy so that all population centres can have a source of income that will allow them to — in the worst case — maintain a certain level of services.

It is expected, however, that if the funds were distributed on a sliding scale, all would benefit. The government must encourage development and diversification. They must expand the distance factor so that Terrace Bay, Rosspport and Schreiber are included and benefit.

All they are doing now is building walls at their self-defined borders to keep many out.

## Book Burning Bimbos Beware

Quick Martha, pass that can of Raid! We've got an infestation of book burners on our hands! It might be funny if it wasn't so blessed depressing, but the fact is we have a group of grown, sentient human beings—a committee of the Toronto Board of Education, no less— that wants to remove the book *Lord of the Flies* from the classroom.

*Lord of the Flies*, for anyone who's been chained to their TV set for the past quarter century, is about a group of adolescent boys stranded on a tropical island after a plane crash. It's a chilling and riveting account of social unraveling. We watch the kids descend from highly structured British schoolboy formality to primitive barbarism and ritual murder. I've never met anyone who's read the book and wasn't moved by it. I read it as an adolescent and would count it easily in the top ten of all the books I read growing up. As a matter of fact, I can think of only two books that made more of an impact on me as a young reader:

*Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

Both of which various school boards have also tried to ban.

The problem is racism—or perceived racism. *Huckleberry Finn* talks about 'the nigger Jim'— which is how he would have been referred to a century ago when the novel was written.

Despite the fact that Jim shows more class and character than anyone else in the book and despite the fact that Mark Twain exposed racists and bigots and the pain they cause in all its ugly detail, the censors' blinkered eye cannot climb over that word 'nigger'.

One wonders what they'd do at a Richard Pryor concert.

The case against *Lord of the Flies* is even more suspect. 'Nigger' appears 210 times in *Huckleberry Finn*. It appears once in *Lord of the Flies*.

Then of course there's that other racial agitator — William Shakespeare. You and I are very unlikely to see a performance of *Merchant of Venice* ever again because Shakespeare says some very repugnant things about

Jews. Well here's a news flash -- Shakespeare lived nearly 400 years ago. At a time when



Arthur Black

children were worked like slaves, women were chattel, you could get yourself hung for stealing a hot cross bun -- and

the English hated Jews just because they were Jews.

For some time now I've kept a copy of a letter to the editor written by a young Guelph, Ontario, student. She wrote in part "As a recent high school graduate who survived five Shakespearean plays, I plead with authorities to abandon any ideas of censoring Shakespeare or any other great authors studied in high school. William Shakespeare probably was a sexist anti-Semite, as were almost all men of his class and day. But if we do not end this absurd notion of censorship right now, where will it end?"

I don't know where it'll end, but I know what direction we're headed. Ten of the books most frequently banned by 'educators' in the USA are: *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Of Mice and Men*, 1984, *Brave New World*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Black Like Me*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Deliverance*.

Oh yes, and of course *Lord of the Flies* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

I can't think of a list of ten books I'd rather have my kids

read.

That's the direction we're headed. Maybe someday we get as far as the educator in Leeds, England who is rewriting our fairy tales to make them more suitable. The Three Bears have been changed to The Three Frogs, so as not to scare little tots. And Goldilocks has been changed to Jackie because it's inappropriate to "glorify a little white girl with blonde hair."

The Leeds educator is not alone. In the state schools of Maryland, Tom Sawyer is no longer allowed to say 'Honest Injun'. He just says 'Honest'. And in California an anti-junk-food lobby has seen to it that schoolbooks censor references to ice cream, cake or pie.

A famous man once wrote: "False views do little harm, for everyone takes a salutary pleasure in proving their falseness; and when this is done, one path towards error is closed and the road to truth is often opened."

The writer knew a thing or two about censorship. His name was Charles Darwin.