

# Should the Provincial Government Run Our Education?

By C. H. Nolan

What do you think about the provincial government taking over the full cost of education? Pressure has been building up in this direction with Toronto City Council the latest body to have members urging such a move.

Closer to home, our York County Council listened to a similar demand during educational discussions near the end of the year. While government spokesmen deny any desire to foot the whole bill, moves in that direction are being made.

### School Boards

Under legislation passed in 1965, the government is encouraging, and in some cases requiring, the amalgamation of small school boards into larger, more effective units. This is the plan for York County. All the

local boards as we know them now, would disappear.

This trend is definitely towards assumption of all the educational costs by the province. The process has moved slowly and no doubt for political reasons, and in addition the total bill is estimated at nearly half a billion dollars a year.

### Still Want a Say

Many still want a say in the running of their own schools, but the number who would be just as happy to have the government take on the whole headache, is growing. It has always been so, that those who pay will have the say. Presently the government has a big say as it pays considerable, but under total governmentship, all say would be lost to the taxpayer.

### What Would be the Results?

No one really knows for sure. Despite all the investigations in the various departments, as far as we can ascertain, no one has been specifically instructed to examine what the results would be. In the face of this apparent inactivity the argument for the province to take over continues to gain strength. One evident reason is that the fact that the municipalities, almost totally dependent on property tax for revenue, just can't keep pace with the mounting costs. These have tripled in ten years.

True, the enrolment has been greater but the biggest factor driving up the cost has been higher teachers' salaries, and capital debt payments.

Provincial Share Rising  
Despite increases in local taxes,

the total share of school costs being paid by the municipality, has been declining. The province claims its share has gone up 33 to 44% in ten years.

Feeling certain that education will become even more expensive, and municipalities will still be depending on property taxes, it will not be too long before the province is paying in total more than 50%.

### Why Not Pay It All

This is an inevitable question, and it has a case. Those who pursue this line say it has three good points going for it. They say it would be cheaper, it would be more equitable and would provide better education. As to being cheaper, it requires an army of civil servants to figure out what schools get what grants, and

the competition between wealthy schools and poor schools inflates teachers' salaries. The equity comes in the matter of tax. Property is no longer a good measure for net worth, and is proving a poor system to handle and supply education revenues. The people at large, not the property, should pay. Education would be more equal as it would eliminate jockeying between high and low assessed areas. This wide variance sends educational standards up and down.

The biggest case against all this still remains the loss of local autonomy. Many still think this should be preserved. Yet school boards are so dependent and will become more so in the future, that they have no real power left even now.

We would appreciate the thoughts of our readers on this important subject.

## Tribune Editorials

### Rural Identity

Did you have the occasion to look for a farm residence with information that went something like this: John Jones, part lot 3, conc. 4 east, RR 2, Gormley? After a few miles of driving, a stranger may locate the right rural route and even the correct concession but the whereabouts of John Jones' home could still prove a mystery.

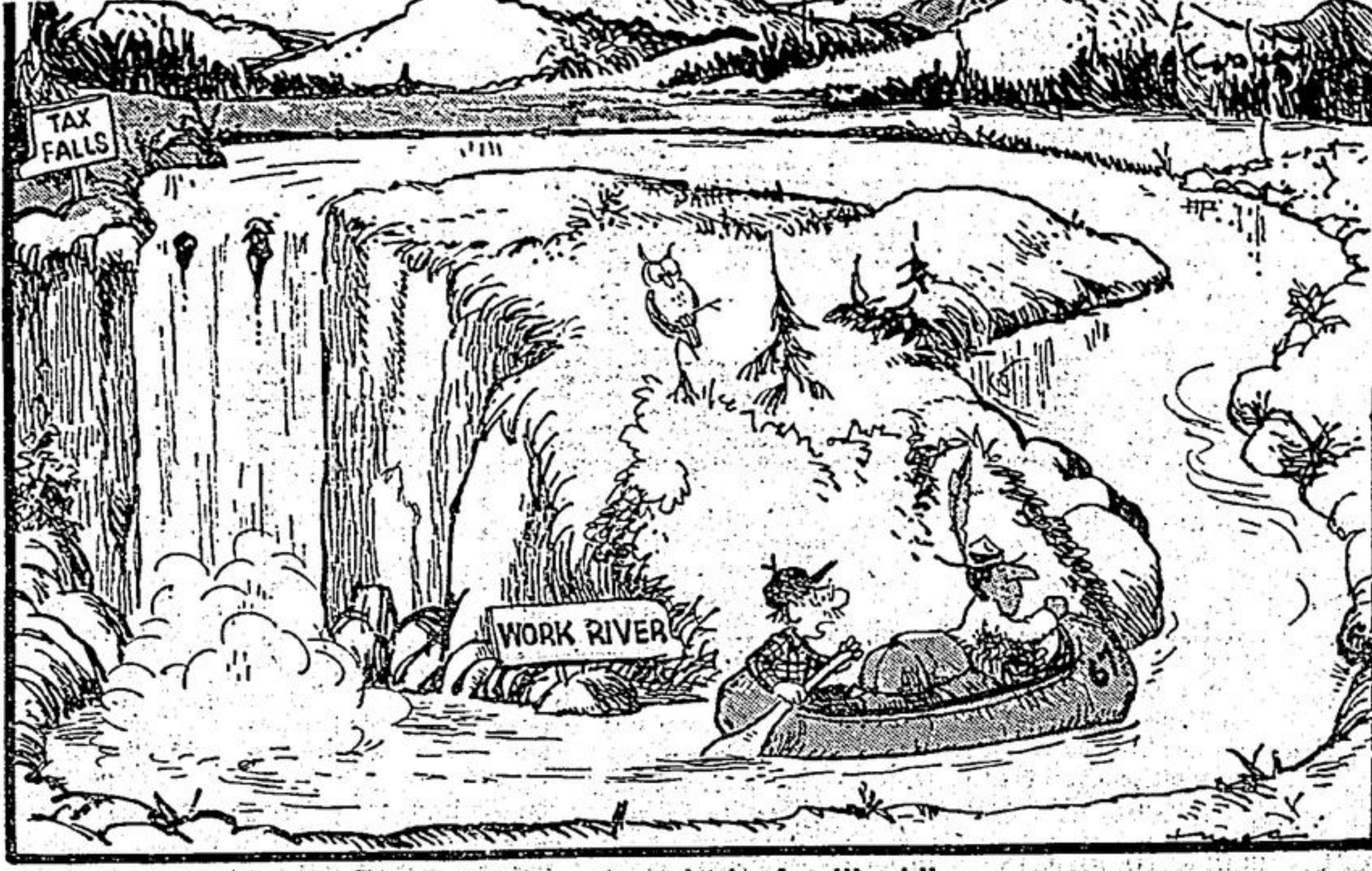
Hardly a day goes by that someone doesn't come into this newspaper office, enquiring about persons who live in the country. The town Postmaster is asked even more.

It is gratifying to learn that the York County Federation of Agriculture has adopted as its centennial project, a gateway identification program whereby every rural resident is asked to paint his mailbox and inscribe on it, his name, lot and concession number and

township. The Federation is promoting the project in the form of a contest and the winner, to be selected at Schomberg Fair, will receive an expense-paid trip to Expo '67 for two. Runners-up will also receive valuable prizes.

Mailbox snapshots, in black and white or in color should be mailed to Box 105, Markham, before May 24, 1967. Persons who do not require a mailbox service, may construct their own lane-way sign depicting the same information. It could be of time-saving value in instances of fire or police calls.

The chairman of the Agricultural Centennial Committee is Fred Wicksp, lot 13A, conc. 9, Markham Township, RR 1, Stouffville. His mailbox project is already completed.



"This scenery looks familiar!"

### SUGAR AND SPICE

### Those Wonderful Years

By BILL SMILEY



By the time this appears in print, I expect that I shall have severed an association of 17 years with the weekly newspaper business. And it is not without some sadness that I do so.

Sometimes it seems that our life is governed by accident, that we have very little control over it.

Had the war lasted a few months longer, had I taken a different course at university, or gone to a different college, I would not have met my wife. And had I not met that particular girl at that particular time, I would never have been in the newspaper business, nor would I be writing this column.

Accident again took a hand. We were in the city. I had enrolled in a post-graduate course in English. University teaching was the objective.

Came the tragic news that my brother-in-law (on my wife's side) had been drowned in a boating accident. He owned a weekly newspaper.

We hastened to the scene, to be of what comfort we could. And I pitched in, as ignorant as Mrs. Murphy's cow, to help keep the paper going for a week or two, until other arrangements were made. Eleven years later, I was still there.

From the beginning I was fascinated. This was better than the world of Chaucer and Spenser and the Romantic poets, the whole fleeced world of the scholar. This was life.

There was an exciting tempo to it that suited me. Monday was a day of desperation. No news, no editorials written, nobody wanted to buy an advertisement that early in the week. The linotype operator was getting only because you couldn't keep him busy and he knew what was coming.

Tuesday, the pace accelerated rapidly. The news began to pour in. You madly dashed off two sparkling editorials. You tried to make a sensible story of the donnybrook at last night's council meeting. You hit the street and sold ads, whether it was raining or snowing or blasting hot.

Wednesday was even more so. Complaints, callers, classified ads piling in, and the inevitable merchant waltzing in, after the deadline, with a big ad you simply hadn't room to print. Proof-reading away behind. People in looking for free publicity. People in just to chat about town affairs, or their grandchildren. And the linotype operator, dangerous to the point of being lethal, within a radius of 12 feet of his machine. Work often till midnight, putting the sheet to bed.

Thursday was decision day. Too many ads. Can we leave this one out? Too much country correspondence. Which reporter will be least infuriated if we leave her stuff till next week? Short a column of frontpage news. Where can we dig it up? The photos haven't arrived. Rush to the bus station; see if they're in.

But about 10.30 a.m., she was on the press, and the comforting thump and rumble of the old machine was reward enough for all the scrambling. There was solid satisfaction in folding, stamping and mailing the finished product. You felt as good as though you'd just

wrestled an alligator to a split decision. At any rate, I was hooked. Formed a partnership with one of the printers, and we bought the thing. We didn't have 40 cents apiece. But we went out like a couple of pirates, hit every friend and relative we knew, scratched up the down payment, outbid every competitor because we had nothing to lose, and took on what was probably the biggest mortgage on any weekly newspaper on the continent.

They were great fun, those first years. There wasn't much caviar or

champagne. Every spare nickel went into the debts. But we made it, and made a host of good friends among weekly editors on the way.

But I can tell you that running a weekly newspaper is one of the roughest games in town. Holidays are almost unknown. Long hours are the rule. Somebody is always sore at you. And you'll never be rich.

I'll miss it. Some of it. And I'll always have warm memories of it. But I hope to keep in touch through this column, which will continue as usual.



### THIS WEEK & NEXT

### Posties Need Help

By RAY ARGYLE

The noble creed that "the mail must go through" helped make Canada's postal service one of the world's best. But the country's mail carriers are restless, the government seems unable to cope with postal problems, and mail service is deteriorating.

Faced with a pre-Christmas strike by the country's 21,000 postal workers, a 10-month pact was patched together in November which assured the nation of continued mail service until next August.

But the ink was hardly dry on the agreement before the Canadian Union of Postal Workers charged the post office department with bad faith in not extending a 25 cent an hour wage increase to 3,500 semi-staff workers in rural post offices.

As the New Year began, spokesmen for the postal workers were talking up the threat of wildcat walk-outs in the big cities to win the 25 cent raise for the rural workers not included in the new wage schedule.

At that, the 9,000 members of the Letter Carriers' Union and their 11,000 brothers in CUW remain disgruntled at the raises granted them in November.

They had asked for \$1 an hour more — a raise of 40 per cent — but settled for one-quarter of that. This brought wages of clerks to 2.75 an hour and letter carriers to \$2.63 an hour.

There was an air of unreality about those November negotiations.

Although the workers come under the administration of Postmaster General Jean-Pierre Cote, the negotiations went to the desk of Revenue Minister Benson because he was responsible for picking up the wage bill.

When settlement was finally reached, Mr. Benson was reported to have declared "jubilantly" that "they asked for \$1 and got 25 cents!"

This kind of attitude could hardly be expected to win either the confidence or respect of postal workers.

The Post Office is still operating under a patch-work quilt of arrangements which leave the department vulnerable

to a variety of breakdowns.

An example was the December walk-out of mail truck drivers in Montreal. The drivers, employees of a private company, struck for higher wages and tied up mail delivery for three days just before Christmas.

Postmaster General Cote said later the strike would probably speed up his department's plans to establish its own trucking service. Then, at least, the postal service would not be vulnerable to strikes against private operators.

Now, because of continued dissatisfaction over poor pay and working conditions, postmen are talking of "working to rule," which would mean a further slowdown in delivery. Under "work to rule" procedures, mailmen would do what the rule book calls for them to do — and nothing more.

Canadian postal service can be expected to grow progressively worse until the government recognizes three basic facts:

First, postmen must be paid wages equal to those paid in private industry for comparably essential jobs.

Second, the Post Office department must be modernized and be made more self-sufficient.

Third, the government must end its blundering ways of negotiating wage disputes with postal workers.

As painful as the prospect appears, Canadians may be faced with paying higher mail rates. This should start with the "junk" mail that clutters up mailmen's bags and householders' garbage cans.

The post office department has always been a semi-political instrument of the government. This would be corrected if the department made a crown corporation, headed up by a career administrator instead of a political appointee as is now the case.

Meanwhile, according to the postal union, the Post Office continues to engage in "the worst kind of personnel policy imaginable," ranging from spying on workers to abuse of promotion systems.

## ADAMING AROUND

### The Maple Leaf For Never

A true-blue Canadian from up Udon way, has submitted a complaint concerning an alleged decision by the Principal and/or the Board of No. 4 Public School in Scott Township. The taxpayer, who wishes to remain anonymous, claims that the teacher has outrightly refused to fly the new Maple Leaf flag although she has such a brand new banner in her possession. The citizen wanted to know if there were any written rules or regulations to cover extra-curricular activities of this kind. Frankly, we weren't too sure but we took the time to check with Public School Inspector Maynard Hallman at Richmond Hill, to find out. Although present regulations are up for revision, Mr. Hallman said that as of 1963, every school was obliged to fly either the Union Jack or the Canadian Red Ensign on public holidays and on such occasions as the School Board might direct. Barring this, one or the other was to be displayed in the classroom from time to time. When Royal assent was given to the bill creating the new Maple Leaf flag, an order went out from Hon. William Davis of the Department of Education, displacing the Red Ensign with the new banner. This rule is still in force. Mr. Hallman said that the decision on how often the flag should fly rests with the Principal and the trustees. "It is customary to have the Canadian flag on display somewhere on the school property at all times," he said, "but not necessarily flying from the pole 365 days of the year." For the sake of both good Canadianism and public relations, may the teacher at No. 4 Scott see fit to unfurl the flag and silence a tempest in a teapot.

Since spectators at Stouffville Council meetings are few in number, the consistent presence of one resident taxpayer is enough to start the pre-election rumor mill running. A regular attendee has been George Ross, Tindale Road. He still has ten months to make up his mind but don't be surprised if his hat's in the ring come December, '67.

If you're the superstitious kind, just a gentle reminder that tomorrow is Friday, the 13th. It might be a good time to book off sick but then again it's pay day.

Some of the same men who continually complain about their wives' week end shopping sprees, are to be found waiting in line at the new Sherwood Plaza barbershop in Markham where haircuts come at \$1.50.

Denuty-Reeve Jean McPherson of Pickering Township has threatened to personally toss any man out of the council chambers that she catches smoking during magistrate's court sessions there. It seems that portions of the building's \$3,000 broodloom carpe have been ruined by people who drop their hot cigarette ashes on the floor. To be given the old heave-ho out of the court, even by a woman, might just be worth it to some dead-beats faced with a stiff fine.

How times can change. Not so many years ago, Pickering Township Council was involved in an action in its attempt to exclude gravel pit operation in certain areas of the municipality. Now, Pickering Township is the owner of a pit in Uxbridge Township and with the shoe on the other foot, the were the successful defendants in Municipal Board Hearing held at Goodwood.

Sidewalk superintendents show little interest in the moving of the former Daniels' residence from Stouffville to Claremont during the evening hour last week. Unlike the last house-moving episode that blocked Main Street for a entire day, there was really nothing to see unless the changing of a flat tire is worth watching.

During a street-corner conversation with a Stouffville High School teenage we asked her if she planned to make any New Year's resolutions. "One," she replied assuredly, "I'm going to be in bed every night by 12." On Sunday, we saw the same girl. "At a party last night," we asked, "Sure was," she replied quickly, "and guess what, I didn't get home till two."

### EDITOR'S MAIL

### Community Co-Operaiton

By OUR READERS

Dec. 29, 1966. Dear Sir: As director and producer of the Christmas pantomime Doreen Northover and I would like to offer our "Thank-You's" to the individuals and groups whose assistance made possible this addition to the seasonal festivities for the children of Stouffville.

Thank-you to the High School staff, students and Board who were all exceedingly co-operative, in particular Mr. Duxbury, Mr. McCullough who authorized auditions which enabled us to find our star, Donna Wright; to Jerry Waite, Lorne Boadway and John Meydam for their musical accompaniment and to Peter Harris for his lighting effects. To the Edgevale School of Ballet under the tutelage of Molly Mumford whose dancing enhanced the production.

To the Couples Club for the use of their musical library and costumes, to the Skating Club and in particular Henry Ogden who permitted us to use their coach. To Keith Sutherland who provided us with rehearsal space at the Orchard Park Public School.

To the Stouffville Tribune who willingly printed informative material, to the many local merchants who helped by promoting ticket sales and to the

many unnamed people who contributed in a variety of ways. Finally to the players themselves who cheerfully gave up their limited leisure time, our deepest thanks in combining to add something extra to the children's Christmas.

Dorren joins me in wishing each and every one of you a very Happy New Year and continued prosperity in 1967.

Sonia Frenchman, Stouffville, Ont.

Dec. 30, 1966.

Dear Sir: I would like to say Thank you to the very kind man and his wife who, having no one to entertain for Christmas dinner, decided to have six people who had nowhere to go for Christmas or a needy family. They contacted the Stouffville Police Department who, in turn, got in touch with such a family. The couple ended up with 12 extra guests and everyone enjoyed a very Merry Christmas.

If only we had more such wonderful people who would be willing to share their good fortune with those less fortunate. I feel that it was a most thoughtful gesture, expressing in real life, the true meaning of Christmas spirit.

A-Mother.

## The Tribune

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