

Up 100 per cent Drug charges soar in York Region

YORK REGION — Drug arrests in York Region so far this year have increased 200 per cent over 1972 and almost 100 per cent over last year.

Reporting to the Police Commission, Police Chief Bruce Crawford termed this increase, "a tragedy."

There were 110 drug arrests from January to June compared to 68 for the same period in 1973.

The rate for all types of crimes has increased 12.3 per cent. Murders, attempted murders and minor sexual offences decreased while rapes, wounding, assaults and break and enters, according to the report, "increased substantially."

Mainly the drug arrests were for possession of marijuana or hashish but the chief was concerned as the 110 arrests so far this year have already surpassed the 86 arrests made in 1973.

The newly formed youth bureau which will be operating within the next month will attempt to cut drug crimes through education and work with youthful offenders.

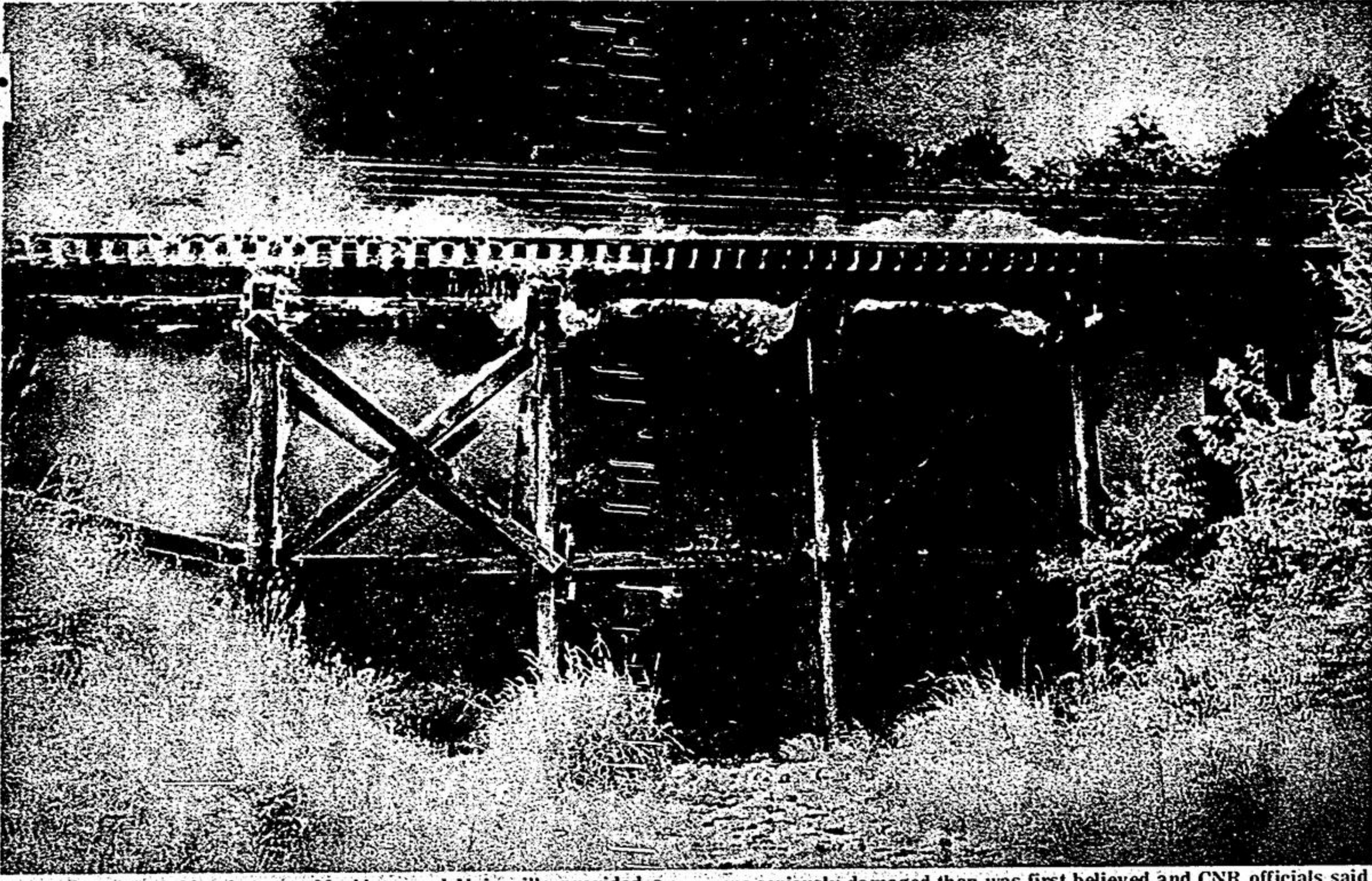
The chief said the effects would not be felt this year, "It's the long term we're looking at."

He felt sex related crimes were a paradox. Rapes increased a phenomenal 500 per cent, (from one in 1973 to five this year), while other sexual offences such as indecent assault dropped considerably (from 58 to 17).

Since last year murders dropped from two to one and there was only one attempted murder this year compared with five last year.

The increase in crime was, "consistent," across the five regional municipalities said Chief Crawford.

"You couldn't point to any one specific area and say crime was increasing there faster or it has more crime than the other districts," he concluded.



The railway bridge between Markham and Unionville provided a spectacular site for residents in the area, but managed to prevent the commuter train from coming all the way up to Stouffville. Passengers were bused from Unionville to Markham and Stouffville. The bridge was more seriously damaged than was first believed and CNR officials said this week that it would not be ready for use before Friday. — Bill Laurin.

Licensing Commission

Chief resists regional body

NEWMARKET — Police chief Bruce Crawford feels the Region should not become involved in Regional Licensing Commission, and in a report which he submitted to the Police Commission last week, the Chief said he would oppose any such move. His report will be sent to the Regional Council for study.

Chief Crawford told the Board that there are many ramifications when the setting up of a Licensing Commission is involved. He pointed to the amount of work which would have to be done before any such project could come into being.

The Board was told bylaws would have to be drafted, extra work would put a substantial burden on the Commission and costs would be hard to justify.

Chief Crawford pointed out that the three southernmost municipalities are the ones experiencing most of the problems and added that a solution to the situation might well be a uniform tax bylaw which would regulate taxis within the Region of York.

Chief Crawford said that a Licensing Commission for the Region could involve office and staff expenses and other financial burdens which would be substantial, in referring to a uniform tax bylaw, the Chief noted that of the 305 licensed taxis now operating in the Region, 248 are in the southern municipalities (about 80 per cent.) He told the Board that the municipalities involved are presently looking into the problem.

Regional Commissioner Ray Twinney of Newmarket told the Board his municipality is against a Licensing Commission. He said most other municipalities are in opposition.

Solve murder, arson cases York Region officers commended

NEWMARKET — Two York Regional Police officers received commendations as a result of excellent police investigations.

The York Regional Board of Police Commissioners approved the commendations last week on the recommendation of Police Chief Bruce Crawford.

Detective Robert McCausland was cited for "Outstanding police work" in connection with an investigation into the death of Debra, Jean Hofschneider a Markham resident, which resulted in the arrest of her

common law husband George Joseph Smierciak.

On Nov. 24, 1973, the body of a woman was found in a basement of an abandoned homestead near Burks Falls, Ontario. Wounds on the remains indicated to the investigating officers of the O.P.P. that the woman was a murder victim.

A description of the body was sent to all police forces in Ontario to try and establish identity.

Nov. 30, Detective Robert McCausland, together with assistance from the Identification

Branch, identified the remains as those of the Markham woman, who had been reported missing eight days earlier by her common law husband.

Following intensive investigation Mr. Smierciak was arrested and charged with the murder. Information revealed that Mr. Smierciak was born in the U.S.A. and had deserted a wife and six children in New York State.

The man came to Canada and lived common law with the victim

Debra Hofschneider at 16 Normack Drive in Markham. The murdered woman, also a citizen of the U.S.A. was pregnant and expecting twins early in December.

Investigation by police revealed that Mr. Smierciak had purchased a .22 calibre rifle at a Richmond Hill store and after a dispute with the victim, shot her dead while she lay in bed in their Markham home.

Mr. Smierciak

wrapped the body in bedclothes and a plastic sheet and transported it to an abandoned house in Burks Falls.

The woman's remains were left there in the basement ruins of the home.

On June 4 this year after standing trial before Judge Frank Donnelly in Supreme Court, Mr. Smierciak was found guilty of non-capital murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Crown Attorney

James Crossland, who prosecuted the case for the Crown, praised the work of detective McCausland, and said his investigation, preparation, and presentation of the case was of the highest calibre.

The second commendation went to P.C. Ivars Vitins whose investigations into arson at the Richmond Hill High School led to the arrest of two youths who were both found guilty in Juvenile Court.

Wheels of justice grind to a halt

NEWMARKET — The wheels of Justice grind slowly, so the saying goes, but in Newmarket Provincial court they sometimes grind to a halt.

It was one of those times last week Judge Clare Morrison was proceeding with a case when the familiar hoot of a train whistle was heard. The rumble and roar of a large diesel locomotive became nearer and louder.

Judge Morrison who could not be heard above the din, stopped his summation of a case in progress until the noise diminished and the train gradually left town, then quietly said: "Once again the administration of justice bows to the C.N.R."

Correction

In our circular starting Wed. August 14th, there is an error on Page 3. The 'Cotton/rayon Novelty Knit shirt' should have read '100% cotton novelty knit shirt'. We regret any inconvenience that this may have caused you, our customer.



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Mayor Gordon Ratcliff

Low cost housing 'a perfect site'

STOUFFVILLE — Mayor Gordon Ratcliff indicated he approves of the low cost housing proposal for the Musselman's Lake area which was introduced by Mrs. George Lankin at the last planning board meeting.

The 128 acre development, according to preliminary sketches

would include 120 low cost houses and 26 two acre estate lots.

"This is a very worthwhile venture," said the mayor, "from a land standpoint this is a perfect site."

The mayor said the feeling of council is that the houses should not cost over \$35,000, that there should be restrictions in the agreement with the purchasers. He felt the houses could revert to the town when sold.

"I would like to see some of the property landbanked and sold over a period of years."

Mr. Ratcliff felt the number of lots proposed in the site is too high but he was happy with the percentage of estate lots to low income.

He said he hopes lots will be made available for people who wish to build their own houses or have a local contractor do the work. He complained, "the big subdivisions are all cut and dried," and provide no work for local contractors.

"This is going to take

some time. We have to go to the planners and get direction and the impact on the present community has to be decided."

How do you feel about the 137 acre development on the Bethesda Road, proposed by Gino Testa and Clayton Cloutier?

"I have some doubts about allowing a development of this size so close to Stouffville." The mayor said he agreed with Planning Board Chairman Merlyn Baker that the project would "create another hamlet."

Will the senior citizens' apartments being built adjacent to the Parkview Home receive the same municipal tax exemption as the present structure now does?

"It will be tax exempt as it is a non-profit organization. This is a gesture in support of this type of housing, on the part of the town. They make a grant to the town in lieu of taxes. Many municipalities don't get this type of grant."

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