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COUNCIL SALARIES

Let the voters be the judge

In the past two years, board of control has been transformed almost beyond recognition into an effective executive committee for the city. The three new controllers in particular have brought intelligence, innovation and hard work to the job, gradually reshaping the city's way of doing business and reaching out for new ways of making it effective.

In the process, they have made the job virtually a fulltime occupation, and perhaps established for all time the principle that the business of an urban community can no longer be handled properly any other way. They are right to feel impatient about the \$9,500 salary paid for the job.

All the same, the motion they propose to put before council sets too dangerous a precedent to be saleable. Though two controllers express qualms, and rightly so, they propose to ask council to vote itself retroactive salary increases covering two-thirds of its present term.

As Pierre Benoit and Lorry Greenberg seem to recognize, it is abusing their powers to change the rules of the game midstream. They sought voter support for a \$9,500 job. If the rewards of office are to change, then let them earn the right to a higher salary at the polls, against other interested candidates.

A chance for action

President Nixon's announcement of a major step forward in breaking the stalemate on nuclear arms talks with the Soviet Union has failed to impress critics like Senator Fulbright.

On surface, their skepticism is justified. For the U.S. and Soviet Union have only agreed to concentrate this year on trying to reach agreement on the development of the anti-ballistic system and to seek agreement also on limiting offensive weapons.

What is so new in this? The U.S. and the Soviet Union have been engaged for the last 25 years in disarmament talks of various kinds and at different levels. Specifically, they have been talking since 1969 on limiting strategic weapons.

Progress there certainly has been, in the form of some treaties limiting the spread or testing of nuclear weapons. But the development of costlier and deadlier weaponry has dwarfed that progress.

The U.S. and Soviet intention to concentrate first on the limitation of ABMs makes sense. They are extremely costly and deadly and would have brought about a new escalation in the arms race.

Beyond that, both the Kremlin and the White House are under pressure. In Russia, dissidents are making their views known as never before. In the U.S., hawkishism is getting out of tune with public opinion.

Let the facts come out

Premier Davis has behaved responsibly in announcing a judicial inquiry into government land deals on the Niagara escarpment.

The circumstances of Caledon Mountain Estates purchase of land on the escarpment and subsequent sale to the government at a 100 per cent profit are highly disconcerting. The government can do no better than have all the facts put before the public without delay.

Apart from this inquiry, one issue remains outstanding—the question of the government's will to protect the precious land and recreation resources from further plunder by industry. Mr. Davis owes the Legislature and public a full statement on his government's intentions and priorities in the region.

Citizen Forum

Learning French is an effort, mais ça paie des dividendes

By Courtney C. J. Bond

This is a reply to R. D. Cooper, that vociferous exponent of unabashed unilingualism (Citizen Forum, May 18).

I am a public servant, 61 years of age, having put in 39 years' service with the government of Canada and Canada's armed forces.

When E. L. M. Burns, then a major, sent his military surveyors to map the Beauce in 1836 I, a common soldier, took along my Ontario high school French grammar and was delighted to be able to communicate with the Beaucerons, very few of whom spoke English.

Penfield was wrong

In the mid-50s I completed high school evening courses in both German and Russian. I think Wilder Penfield grossly exaggerates human limitations in language learning. To use Penfield as an excuse for not learning French may well be self-deception. Taking myself as example again; this

giving us glimpses into the social life of the "others" and teaching us their songs.

The then bold idea of enrolling at night for a degree in history at Carleton back in the '50s required a choice of minor subject. Well, French then. The Carleton establishment said "impossible", but they eventually yielded. New vistas opened in French literature (so that the timely quotation that often pops into the mind to encapsulate a situation is not necessarily in English).

F. D. Cooper asks if he has a future. I would incline to say, looking at his story, that if he has, it may well be elsewhere than in the public service of Canada. For I doubt that Mr. Cooper is intellectually agile enough to become really aware of himself and his motives, and to be able to assess his real capabilities.

First of all he must see that he could hardly fail to have succumbed with his mother's milk the full Anglo-Saxon arrogance with the hidden conviction, the bone-marrow conviction (possibly with roots in religious intolerances also) that the English-speaking people are superior to the

French-speaking, and that English is superior to French.

When he realizes that he has this conviction, the next step is harder: He must learn to convince himself that the French-speaking (and all men, for that) are equals and that French is not only an equivalent means of communication when compared with English but also a very interesting alternative, and, in a corollary way, the differences themselves are interesting. If he really can reach that state of self-awareness and mind-blowing then he is mentally agile enough to learn to communicate in another language.

A barrack-room barrister

But I would read Mr. Cooper as a man who, although endowed at birth like his fellows with 10 billion brain neurons, has never put more than a small fraction of them to work. True, he has been active enough like a sea-

lawyer or barrack-room barrister recently, bombarding the brass with impudent questions of a constitutional nature. But this is activity aimed at no more than achieving inertia.

Has he a good record of professional advancement? Has he been spurred to consistently broaden his mental horizons since entering the public service? Does he keep abreast of the new technology? I would incline to read no as answer to these questions. I would read Mr. Cooper as a self-satisfied (but not completely so) average Canadian who follows hockey and football for major diversions, watches trendy American films if he goes to the movies at all, a man who displays no great mental curiosity.

The unilingual Canadian public servant of this calibre has no more than minimal job rights whatever his ancestry (in my household three out of four can put U.E. after their names, but don't; they live on their own merits).

Courtney C. J. Bond is the head of the Canadian section, map division of the Public Archives. Citizen Forum welcomes outspoken views on any subject. Submissions should be typewritten and limited to 800 words. Send them to Citizen Forum, The Ottawa Citizen, Box 8855, Ottawa K1G 3J6.

READERS' VIEWS

City teachers' lobby bucking immersion plan

Editor, Citizen: On May 17 I attended the first of a series of meetings sponsored by the Ottawa board of education to discuss with parents the expanded program of French immersion kindergartens. What I witnessed was so interesting that I went along to the next two meetings to see if my first impressions could have been mistaken.

What was so interesting about these meetings? It was to discover a large, well-organized group of English-language elementary teachers in the audience raising on each occasion a whole series of questions, the intent of which appeared to be to discredit rather than clarify a program accepted as policy by their employers.

The questions attempted to discredit the formal qualifications, the personal qualities, the teaching experience, and even the citizenship of the prospective French-language teachers in the program, as well as questioning the availability of texts, library resources, and other facilities.

It is understandable that any group will organize and fight for its own economic interests. It is highly regrettable that in advising parents about French immersion education—a serious personal choice for every family involved—English-language teachers will be acting not as disinterested professionals but as parties with a direct economic interest in keeping the immersion program as small as possible.

K. D. McRAE
Ottawa.

Happy homes

Editor, Citizen: The Citizen (May 15) reported on the proposed housing development for LeBreton Flats referring to "high-rise apartments, private homes, row-housing . . ."

An invidious distinction between private homes and row-housing implies that row-houses cannot be classified as private homes.

Careless reporting of this kind helps perpetuate the notion of inferiority associated with certain house forms. Because of exorbitant costs of conventional housing, the news media should be concerned with the very opposite: the popularization of multiple urban house form as viable alternatives to expensive detached homes.

There may be similar misgivings about broadcasting. Both Ontario and Quebec are now claiming jurisdiction over broadcasting within their provinces and challenging the rights of the federal government in the field.

Equivilocal response

The response of Ottawa has been equivocal. State Secretary Gerard Pelletier at first said the federal government has clear authority over broadcasting, including cable television. But later he seemed to back away from this position and offer negotiations with the provinces, reserving only a few essential federal areas of jurisdiction such as operation of the CBC, ensuring that broadcast companies are Canadian-owned, and allocation of channels.

It is crucial to Confederation. If each province can set up its own trade barriers, Canada could be split economically into 10 competing mini-states.

Yet Ontario has just passed a law allowing its chicken inspectors to seize produce imported into the province without a permit.

And Quebec has retaliated with a law permitting the seizure of bootleg eggs, and setting out fines of from \$500 to \$4,000 for violation of the provincial marketing law by "illegal" imports.

The years since Trudeau took over have not been years of federal advance. If anything, the provinces have gained some power at the expense of Ottawa.

A note to correspondents

The Citizen publishes only signed correspondence. No pseudonyms are permitted. Writers are requested to provide their address and telephone number to facilitate checking for authenticity and accuracy. These details will not be published. All letters are subject to editing for length, general interest and good taste. They should be limited to a maximum of 200 words.



A WESTERN VIEW

Federal power weakening

By Don McGillivray

Associate editor, The Edmonton Journal

How is Prime Minister Trudeau doing in his chosen role as Canada's counterweight?

Mr. Trudeau entered politics in 1965 with the specific aim of strengthening Ottawa in bargaining with the provinces. And he restated his purpose in 1967 a few months before becoming prime minister.

"My political action or my theory," he wrote, "can be expressed very simply: create counterweights. As I have explained, it was because of the federal government's weakness that I allowed myself to be catapulted into it."

Now, after three years as prime minister, Trudeau faces a test of his progress at the federal-provincial conference in Victoria June 12 to 14.

Agreement on a formula for the amendment of Canada's constitution, the British North America Act, is the very minimum Trudeau needs to keep alive his hopes as a constitutional reformer. Failure to agree on a formula by which the BNA Act can be taken off the hands of the British Parliament and returned to Canada would mean that we are still in the stalemate which existed before Trudeau threw his weight on the federal side.

A further shift

Moreover, failure to find an amending formula would mean, in Trudeau's own terms, that the balance of power would continue to shift to the provinces. In his book, *Federalism and the French-Canadians*, where the above quotation appears, Trudeau also wrote that natural forces—urbanization, the growth of education spending, and rising expectations—were strengthening the provinces and "if we wish this situation to continue, there is no need for a new amendment formula."

Agreement in Victoria would probably be hailed as a breakthrough of historic proportions, although jubilation might well be tempered by the memo-

ry of the similar conference in Prince Edward Island in 1964 when there was all-round agreement on the now-defunct Fulton-Favreau formula.

Only a beginning

But finding a way of amending the constitution in Canada would only be the start of the process of rewriting the BNA Act in detail and it would be during this process that Trudeau's counterweight role would really be tested.

If the presently proposed formula is approved, the federal government would have a veto on changes in the constitution affecting its powers. But so would Quebec and so would Ontario. Or a constitutional change could be blocked by two Western or two Atlantic provinces.

This leaves the field wide open to negotiations and some of the recent actions of the Trudeau government leave doubts that the prime minister would in fact turn out to be a powerful defender of the national interest as opposed to provincial interests.

There is, for example, the "chicken-and-egg war" which involves the principle of free trade between Canadian provinces. This principle is set out in section 121 of the BNA Act: "All articles of growth, purchase or manufacture of any one of the provinces shall be admitted free into each of the other provinces."

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W. E. SCHREIER
Ottawa.

No gyms

Editor, Citizen: The health and welfare department says Canadians are not fit and recommends that school gymnasium facilities be open to the public after school hours.

In March I and several people from my office tried to rent a school gym to play basketball. The Ottawa board of education said all high school gyms were used every week night (this I later discovered to be untrue.) However, the board said we might contact the principal of a local elementary school.

After being refused by two principals a third agreed to rent his gymnasium. A full-size gym would be \$16 for 1½ hours of use—and this was for what was called a half-sized gymnasium. A full-size gym would have cost us more.

We arranged for our baby-sitters, collected our money and brought it to the school, one day ahead. It was only then that we were told our group had to hold insurance equal to the value of the entire school, in case of damage or fire.

The principals we talked to seemed to consider our plan to rent a gymnasium quite unusual, and now we can see why. The obstacles to taxpayers using school facilities are impossible to overcome.

DAVID LEE
Ottawa.

Police pay

Editor, Citizen: To M. McMillan (Citizen, May 12) and those of like mind who are alarmed at the increase in salary city policemen and firemen are demanding I ask: Are you prepared to walk the streets in all types of weather, to protect the life and property of your fellow man while he sits comfortably in his living room watching TV? Or handle wet hoses and other tools, in subzero temperatures, sheathed in ice? All this at the salaries you suggest for them?

J. R. CAYA
Ottawa.