



James Bailey

## Lip-service democracy

Mississauga MP Tony Abbott didn't make himself many friends in this constituency with his vote in favor of the abolition of capital punishment—and rightly so.

By ignoring the obvious wishes of a large majority of the people responsible for his present employment, Abbott has earned the censure which he will undoubtedly receive the next time he makes one of his rare public appearances here. In fairness, it must be conceded that Abbott did exactly what he said he'd do. Before the last election, and in several columns published in this newspaper, he stated quite clearly how he intended to vote on the issue.

Abbott maintains that he came to his decision after researching the question independently and making up his own mind.

Amazingly, after all this independent research and personal reflection, Abbott has adopted exactly the same position as the party to which he belongs—just as he has in the past

on every other controversial issue. Free thinkers are, after all, entirely out of place in the Trudeau cabinet—just ask Herb Gray.

A very important issue was decided last week by our parliamentarians, an issue far more important than that of capital punishment. The public was shown clearly and unequivocally, that its most fundamental concept of democracy is wrong.

Most of us lived under the naive misapprehension that democratic government meant government reflecting the will of the people.

We learned differently. Certainly our MPs pay lip service to that idea by sending out questionnaires, opening constituency offices, and the like, but when the crunch comes, we were shown those efforts are meaningless gestures. A politician votes according to his "conscience"—whatever that is—and not according to the will of the people he has been elected to represent.

It's a bitter lesson and one that may have far more consequences than are immediately apparent. Our society is plagued with apathy and cynicism, despite the exhortations of most governmental agencies to "get involved." But on an issue where the public did get involved, where it demonstrated strongly a deeply-held conviction about an issue upon which its members were as qualified to pass judgment as the politicians they've elected, that opinion was cast aside.

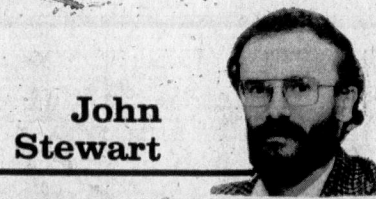
Trotting out murder-rate statistics and psychological opinions about the deterrent effect of capital punishment is only side-stepping the issue. It doesn't really matter if the death penalty deters murderers. Most people, despite the current emphasis in our law on rehabilitation, believe in a system of retributive justice. While legal theorists shudder at the use of the word "vengeance," that is exactly how the public wants its legal system to work.

And it's not an entirely unhealthy desire.

By invoking the death penalty for murder, the system actually reinforces the overwhelming supremacy of the value of human life. To fail to make an appropriately forceful response to this most abhorrent of crimes is to say, in effect, that the life of the criminal is more precious than that of his victim.

Those who argue that the state has no moral right to take a human life should perhaps realize that they are preaching anarchy. Building highways, writing traffic legislation, arming policemen, licensing motor vehicles—all these routine governmental activities inevitably lead to some deaths. Long before Metropolitan Toronto instituted a pedestrian crosswalk system, for example, municipal statisticians had prepared tables indicating how many people would be killed using them each year.

I can't help thinking that Tony Abbott and his confrères, given the opportunity, would probably have voted for crosswalks anyway.



John Stewart

## Hard to take seriously

You really have to wonder about the integrity of the fill, construction and alteration to waterways regulations of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority when you see decisions such as the one this week on an Orangeville application. (See story on Page A10)

A long-time town resident who owns a car dealership that is in the floodplain wanted the authority to let him fill in part of his land to make it more attractive to buyers. A rezoning application by Orangeville from open space to commercial hinged on the authority's decision. CVCA staffers have already recommended quite properly against filling the floodplain.

The applicant for the owner was not the owner's lawyer nor the owner himself, but Harold Darraugh, a long-time Orangeville representative on the authority who is a member of the executive. He scoffed at the idea that the land of his friend would ever flood because of changes since the original floodplain mapping was done. (CVCA chairman Grant Clarkson later joked that it was a "toss-up" as to who would be paid for making the application, the lawyer or Darraugh.)

But instead of deferring the application until authority staff could review the situation and see if indeed circumstances had changed, the majority of members insisted on voting.

That impatience destroyed their credibility and brings the whole issue of the value of the regulations into question. How can the executive expect the public to take the rules seriously if they don't take them seriously themselves?

This is not the first time that the executive has approved an application which has been highly touted by one of its own members even though staff has recommended against it. The authority's general manager, Harry Watson, keeps reminding the executive that they could be held legally responsible for damage to structures they approve in the floodplain, but the advice has not sunk in yet.

Councillor Ken Williams of Brampton even had the nerve to use the argument that other buildings in the area, including a beer store, were already in the floodplain.

In other words, one mistake was made so we better allow another in the name of fairness. That's an argument the committee often hears and rejects from applicants.

Ironically, the authority recently bought a film on the regulations called Nobody Told Me to educate the public not to think they can dump fill indiscriminately in watercourses just because someone else has done it. The executive of the authority (excluding Clarkson and Robert Harrison) ought to see the film again.

They were told but apparently they still don't know any better.



Sid Rodaway

## The view from inside

Can a man really get involved in politics and keep his hands clean?

Yes, if he keeps his hands in his pockets and his mind off the fact that he will probably never get anywhere. So goes a cynic's reply.

The topic may seem like a cliché, a good subject for a movie like *The Candidate* with Robert Redford or *The Best Man* with Henry Fonda and Cliff Robertson. But the qualities that make it good, dramatic conflict on film make it equally good for a real life drama.

It has often been said that the real essence of democratic government does not lie in the inherent good or evil of its politicians, but rather in the checks and balances that the system applies to the wielders of power. Thank goodness for that.

Many of us instinctively dislike the naive baby who tries the political waters once, only to run back crying that it's not as warm as he had expected. Our western society more admires the hustler, the tough guy who gets things done, than the well-intentioned "nice guy" who often proves incapable of swimming with sharks.

Be that as it may, such expressions of "realism" should not temper our desire to at least try to keep the system clean.

Perhaps the greatest threat to democracy is cynicism. I found it particularly frightening to

hear many Americans question the ethics of chasing down the Watergate conspirators when "after all, every politician has done the same thing."

Maybe they have, but the abuse of power must always be a target for public concern. When that concern turns to cynicism, the door opens wide to tyranny.

It was refreshing, then, to listen to former Mississauga North provincial Liberal candidate Vince Zuccaro discuss his reasons for not seeking his party's nomination again.

There was no bitterness at his experience with the local Liberal party organization and there was no anger. Instead there seems a simple disappointment at what he saw from inside and what he had to do to be the good candidate that party politics demanded in last fall's provincial election.

In the six months leading up to his nomination last June, the 35-year-old optometrist grew more and more excited at the idea of becoming a politician.

Already involved in his community, Zuccaro looked forward to the chance to do something fulfilling. He was also a realist and admits that the idea of personal power and prestige played a major part.

But with his nomination this little morality play starts to turn sour.

"I started getting three or four of those party blurbs in the mail each day telling me how the party stood on each issue," he said on Monday. "But I found that more and more of the party policies were different from my own."

Zuccaro talked it over with Liberal officials in Toronto, but he was told that he had to stay with the party line.

"I literally choked on my own words when I spoke on certain topics at public meetings. That was at first. Later it became easier for me to change my principles so that I could say the right things without hesitation."

"Winning became the most important thing. There is no excuse in saying that I went into this thing in a naive way, but I found out that it wasn't the same ball game as it first appeared to be."

The pressure to perform according to the script was enormous and came from all sides within the provincial and local party structure. He found his individuality slowly drowning in his own desire to be elected.

"My family had always been the most important thing to me, but to follow through with politics, nothing could come before it."

Zuccaro lost the election by about 1,500 votes when he polled third place in the big Mississauga North riding behind the winner, Conservative Terry Jones, and NDP runner-up David Busby.

He still wants to make his contribution, but from now on it will be done in other ways. He now sits on the board of directors of the Mississauga Association For the Mentally Retarded, lectures on a part-time basis at the University of Waterloo and has recently been nominated for the new Peel District Health Council.

Zuccaro is frank in his assessment of his two opponents in the last election.

Although disagreeing with his socialistic politics, Zuccaro gives full marks to Busby's small "c" christian attitude and enthusiasm. "This man has found a way to work within a party structure without losing his individuality."

But for Jones, Zuccaro reserves a different judgment. "It has nothing to do with liking or disliking the man personally, but Jones is a tremendous salesman. He represents that entire patent-leather-shoes, pinstriped-suit-insurance-salesman-style that adapts itself so well to provincial politics."

In losing Zuccaro's possible candidacy in the next Ontario election, Mississauga has lost an honorable politician. But in his departure, he has left local party regulars with the same style slap in the face used to sell after-shave lotion — "Thanks, I needed that."



Stewart Page

## The double standard

When Senator Thomas Eagleton, who was tapped by George McGovern to be his running mate in the 1972 U.S. presidential election, was having trouble earlier in his career with "depression and nervous exhaustion," the mental health establishment told him: "You're mentally sick; get treatment on your own and don't be forced into it. When Eagleton voluntarily proceeded to obtain treatment—in the form of drugs and electroshock therapy—he found that later he was "punished" for doing so. Major newspapers were virtually unanimous in recommending Eagleton be dumped from the Democratic ticket. Visions ran wild of a "former mental patient" loose in the White House. Even a number of physicians and psychiatrists came out publicly in their non-support of Eagleton's candidacy. It was "punishment" from many of the very people who would have recommended treatment to Eagleton. As a result, McGovern dropped Eagleton.

Does the general public really accept the ex-

mental patient in a non-discriminatory fashion? Is it in fact a two-faced matter, as many professionals seem to believe, that is, a public acceptance coupled with a private rejection?

An interesting research study was done recently on this issue in the Metro area. The general question studied was whether persons in Toronto, who had advertised furnished rooms or flats for rent in a major newspaper, would discriminate against persons (thought to be psychiatric patients) by telling them that the rooms had "already been rented" when they had not been.

Phone calls were made by a female caller to landlords advertising furnished rooms for rent. Thirty of the calls were direct enquiries as to whether the room was still available. In the second group of calls, the caller said she was in a psychiatric hospital, but about to leave "in a day or two" and needed a room. In a third group of calls, she said she was enquiring on

behalf of her brother who was about to be released from the Don Jail and who needed accommodation.

In the first case, only five out of 30 respondents said there was no room available. In the next 150 calls, about 85 per cent of the answers were "no."

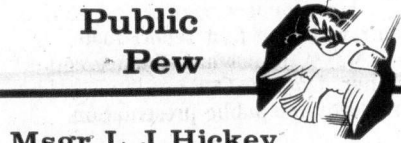
In addition, the stigma of being an ex-psychiatric patient is obviously no less than that of being a former prisoner in need of accommodation.

The whole matter becomes even more confusing when it is noted that many studies in psychiatry and psychology have now uncovered many instances in which the general public has in fact often behaved quite fairly and equitably toward former mental patients. Some psychiatric experts even believe, for example, that the stigma of one's having been resident in a psychiatric hospital has now disappeared completely.

The answer as to whether (or how) the general public places a social stigma upon the

ex-mental patient seems to depend almost entirely on what situation is being considered, and the rewards and costs which are present in that situation for the person facing or interacting with the ex-patient. There are no costs, but some psychological rewards, for example, in filling out a questionnaire in which one can demonstrate his conviction that mental illness is a "sickness just like any other sickness," and his compassionate, humanitarian nature and education. In still other situations, the person may complete a questionnaire in a way which is unflattering to the notion of "mental patient" but may, in an actual situation, encounter social pressures, such as the general rule of treating others fairly and democratically, which cause him to behave quite equitably toward the "target" person.

Unfortunately, there seem to be few psychological costs for landlords in saying a room is not for rent when it is. For one thing, there existed little chance of being "caught," so to speak.



Msgr. L. J. Hickey

## The pride and the dust

To give men a fundamental principle of happiness, Christ proclaimed this beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." He knew what He was talking about, because He belonged both to the rich and to the poor. As God's Son, He had all the treasures of earth at His command; yet He chose to be poor. St. Paul says, "Remember how generous the Lord Jesus was: He was rich, but He became poor for your sake."

The teaching of Jesus Christ with regard to wealth can be summarized in the following manner: "Money and material possessions are not evil of themselves. However, they very often become an obstacle to man's salvation. Preoccupation with the cares, the riches and pleasures of life can effectively choke spiritual growth, just as weeds can smother wheat in a field. The love of money can usurp the place in man's heart which should be reserved for God. No man can serve both God and mammon" (Matt. 6:19).

The eating of the forbidden fruit is the form in which the book of Genesis presents the original fall of man. Adam and Eve refused to accept the position set for them by God. They wanted to be their own masters, making their own decisions untrammelled by authority, and equal to God, "knowing good and evil."

In the same way, the temporal goods provided in such abundance in our affluent society can be a seductive lure for man's spirit. He is tempted to attribute them solely to his own ingenuity, and to grasp and use them for himself alone.

Such thinking and conduct are a complete denial of the Christian life. Instead of the glory and service of God, the glory and service of self become the end. To this new god, self, money and material possessions are made to minister in many different ways.

First of all, they are often used to foster pride and self-exaltation. A man's house, his car, his mode of dress become status symbols. They are chosen not for utility, but as signs of success and social position.

When we look at it rationally, modern man's frantic race for such status symbols appears rather foolish. It's really not much different from behavior of the native chief in New Guinea who proudly displays a refrigerator to those who visit his grass hut. He feels that he is rich and respected because he has this wonderful machine, even though he has no electricity with which to make it run.

If we cannot find a reasonable place in our budget for the purchase of a new car, more luxurious furniture or a color TV, Christ's first beatitude teaches us to be content with what we have. By keeping our desires within proper limits, we cultivate an attitude of mind conducive to happiness.

Even more corroding to the human spirit is that pride which uses money as a source of power and domination over one's fellow men.

Jesus did not condemn a moderate seeking after wealth and material possessions. These, He recognized, are necessary to provide decent support for oneself and family, to promote the glory of God and to help others in need. However, He emphasized the primacy of spiritual values. "Seek first the kingdom of God," is His message. He summed up His teaching in the words: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where rust and moth consume, and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:19).

Msgr. L. J. Hickey is pastor of St. Christopher's Catholic Church in Clarkson.



Larry Taylor

## How many have to die?

The issue of occupational health has been raised many times during the last few years. Provincial NDP Leader Stephen Lewis articulated a number of specific cases of workers dying of cancerous diseases directly related to industrial contamination. Many of these workers were never told of their diagnosed conditions until years later.

As you will recall, there has been great publicity given to the failure of the Ontario government to enforce industrial health legislation in the workplace in Scarborough, Timmins and Kirkland Lake. The specifics of these cases were raised during the past provincial election campaign. Even with the voter rejection of the majority Tory party, we once again find them indifferent as new disclosures are made from Matachewan and Grassy Narrows about mercury poisoning in lakes and rivers on Indian reserves there.

I guess it might become easy for many of us to rationalize to ourselves that we understand the problem of industrial health and then give the matter little more thought. If any of the 1,200 New Democrats felt that way they were in for an awakening with the lecture and slide presentation by Dr. Irvin Selikoff at the party convention in Kingston.

Selikoff of the New York Mount Sinai Hospital is an expert on industrial-related diseases. Selikoff's presentation not only dramatically reinforced the NDP commitment to the elimination of industrial-related diseases, but emotionally moved the audience with the introduction of "Bystander Disease."

The doctor pointed out that many workers are putting themselves in danger and are not even aware of it. He was referring to people

who work in jobs using products with asbestos fibers — for instance, people who reline brake drums, insulate pipes and do drywall work.

The single most startling and important information from Selikoff was about "Bystander Disease." The doctor pointed out that during his studies cases of rare-mesothelioma were showing up in people not directly involved in the mining or manufacture of asbestos — the wives and children of the miners or plant workers, and residents living in the vicinity of plants. The doctor gave examples of wives who only washed the soiled clothing of asbestos workers; a daughter who brought her father his lunch every day; and a worker who brought home samples of his company's asbestos products for the children to play with.

During the speech, it became obvious to all that the problem of industrial diseases was more critical than we dared imagine. We were

told of the extremely short time required to contract diseases associated with asbestos and silica. He said the hazards of lead and mercury and a host of other contaminants are very real and that we as a party cannot take them lightly.

The real question in this matter is when will the Ontario government finally step in and protect the health of Ontario workers? How long will profits be used to justify killing people? The sad thing about the entire industrial health crisis is that it is avoidable. If the Tory government at Queen's Park would set and enforce strict standards of operations, these diseases would largely disappear.

How many men, women and children will have to die before the government acts?

Mr. Taylor is president of the Mississauga East New Democratic Party Association.