

James Bailey

In the edition before New Year's, it is standard practice for newspaper columnists to make predictions and-or resolutions for the forthcoming year. Unfortunately, I have no gift for making predictions. What's more, I look upon people who make resolutions and keep them with about as much affection as our city councillors look upon each other.

There is something of the automaton in anyone who can guarantee that his performance will remain constant day after day, unmoved by the ebbs and flows of emotion and circumstance. A clock should run on time. A key should always open its lock but human beings, if they are to remain human beings, must and should change endlessly. To dispose of the standard resolutions

I do not intend to smoke any less, drink any less, eat any less, exercise any more or work any harder in 1975 than I did in 1974. That's not saying that I won't, just that I don't intend to. Some room must be left for the unexpected or momentarily pleasurable to occur.

Where's the joy in making some soul-stultifying promise to yourself and sticking to it to the bitter end? Far better to leave your options open.

I might, for example, become so caught up in a passion for physical fitness that in a few brief months I will be greasing my thoroughly-exhausted pectorals and entering the Mr. Canada contest. Prancing about in bare feet and a bathing suit, I could be flexing my brains out in muscle contests all over the country. The operative word in this

Unreliability shall make thee free

fantasy is "could."

If I knew I was going to do all that exercise, knew that I was going to be doing all that prancing, the fun would be gone. Anticipation is always better than reality — as anyone who's opened a Christmas present or conquered an attractive woman will tell you.

Resolve can, in fact, be a dangerous thing. A certain Montreal law professor, for example, decided to become our prime minister, and is causing us no end of difficulty while he keeps that resolution.

With apparently limitless determination the most recent American president resolved to stay in office until the end of his term, and we all know where that got him. Likewise, his vice-president.

The man I admire is the man who doesn't promise anything. The guy who says he'll be over at 8 and doesn't arrive until 10, if he shows up at all, is infinitely preferable to the timid soul who promises to come and arrives on the dot. That sort of obsequiousness is not to be encouraged in a democracy. Besides, his host probably didn't really mean 8 in the first place.

The man who never promises anything can never cause disappointment; you can rely on his unreliability. Out of his personal sense of disorder comes order for others. His soul is free; it is the dependable who are neurotic burdened as they are with their irrational trustworthiness.

If tradition dictates that we must make resolutions at this time of year,

let's make some that are easily kept and won't cause us any unnecessary hardship. We could, for instance resolve not to ride to the North Pole on a motorcycle, but that one's already been broken by a man in Brampton.

We could promise not to watch the CBC but nobody does anyway. We could resolve to be kind to animals but we'd have to go and tear down the Metro Zoo.

We could resolve to name Tony Abbott, our MP, Mississauga's Man of the Year, but he lives in Oakville.

We could resolve to congratulate Mississauga Transit for its efficiency, but first we'd have to find some. The only solution, then, is to resolve to be without resolve in 1975, and hope for the best. Moved, seconded and carried.



Karl Schuessler

BAH HUMBBUG!

I felt my heels dragging. Step it up, I told myself. None of this lagging behind. I checked my watch again. 1:30. It started a half hour ago. The school Christmas program. By now the kindergarten class must be finished. The grade 1 class should be well into their part of the program.

I knew I had lots of time. My daughter's grade 4 was the last on the list. And by the way I planned it, I should arrive about the time the grade 3's were putting on their part. I'd be there in time — way, way enough time to see my daughter's turn.

She was real excited when she left home in the morning. If her luck was still running with her, she'd be in the skit her class was giving.

It wasn't easy for her when the teacher announced several weeks ago that she didn't get the part of mother in their little play. She came in second on the try-out. But that still meant she had to learn the lines anyway.

For she was named the stand-in. Number 2 back-up. And then last week during rehearsal, mother number one didn't come to school. Rumour had it she just might be coming down with the mumps. Maybe Sarah would have the mother's part after all.

So the thought of seeing Sarah in the play was making this annual Christmas pilgrimage a little more possible. A little more bearable.

I told myself over and over again that I would go willingly this year. Try real hard to make myself enjoy it. I'd strain extra hard to hear all those little high pitched voices trail off into nothing. I'd listen. Really listen. Try to understand what's going on.

From my inevitable seat in the back row, I'd explore that vast sea of faces on stage and try to pick out some familiar ones. Some neighbour children I knew. That would make the program more interesting. For I have the suspicion that's about the only thing that makes it interesting!

I lectured myself. Be sympathetic. Empathetic. Put yourself in the kids' place. See how hard they've worked. And the teachers. Hours and hours of planning and rehearsal.

Making all those costumes and stage sets. Learning lines. Singing songs. Dancing dances.

I even promised myself I wouldn't sigh when I saw one more scene of dancing toys. Or busy elves. Or ho-ho-ho Santa Clauses. Or red-nosed reindeers.

I wasn't going to let my mind wander and think about all the other many things I could — and should — be doing at that very moment.

No, I told myself. None of that. This was going to be the best Christmas program ever. This was going to be different. Because I was going to be different.

So I didn't like myself when I caught my heels dragging. I felt myself lapsing into my old Christmas program behaviour.

I did arrive on time. On time, I mean, for the grade 3 program. That was going to be my introduction for the main part, grade 4, of course.

And as I walked in, I passed by a stream of parents walking out. Oh, ho? They were leaving. I knew their kind. Coming to see only what they wanted to see.

I settled back in my folding chair. I waited. And waited. Waited to hear the first line of grade 4's mother who was going to walk on stage with a cookie pan in her hand and ask her young husband, "Oh, Jim, dear, have you see the nutcracker?"

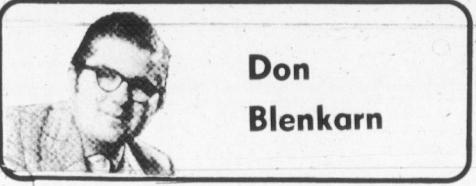
I knew the lines. For Sarah had repeated them to me often at home. There must have been all of ten sentences.

When I heard the word nutcracker, I sat up straight. Leaned forward. And strained to see my blonde Sarah. That's not Sarah! This mother is a brunette!

False rumour! Mumps! My eye! Mother number one looks very well. And she was doing very well too. Reciting off those familiar lines.

And somewhere curtained behind the wings stood Sarah. Tucked away and out of my sight. Sarah. Stand-in. Number 2. Prompter of lines.

I had come for nothing! Bah! Humbug! Need this old Scrooge tell you what one of his New Year's resolutions is?



Don Blenkarn

The ship needs a captain

At the prime minister's press conference following the adjournment of Parliament, those questioning him asked about leadership, and with good reason.

You may remember his answers. He talked about his style; compared Canada's economic performance to Great Britain, Italy, Japan; Canada's political stability with countries as remote as Ethiopia; and social unrest problems in Canada with the United States, among other countries.

The answers did not satisfy me and perhaps not you. To say that this nation on balance is better off than some others is not to say that we are receiving the leadership we should.

Take inflation, for instance. Finance minister John Turner forecasts 11 percent inflation for the next year, yet West Germany, without the industrial raw materials of Canada (it has to import all its oil) has an inflation rate of less than seven percent and an

unemployment rate of less than two percent. Three out of four persons from Mississauga replying to our MP's recent questionnaire think government leadership on inflation is lacking.

The lack of leadership was no more apparent than in approach to pay increases for Members of Parliament: offer 50 percent retreat to 33 1/2 percent and then abandon ship and go home with the matter unresolved.

Or take the matter of conflict of interest: Margaret Trudeau goes to Hong Kong to christen a ship, all expenses paid; the minister of health takes the Seagram's jet to Israel; and the minister of labor, who arbitrates issues involving the Seafarers' International Union, receives from the union campaign funds. Despite requests from the attorney-general for Ontario, no investigation of the union is permitted.

And in Parliament, Real Caouette screams that to get press coverage you must pay off the press gallery. The

speaker on a motion of privilege agrees that the matter should go to the privileges and elections committee for a hearing. All the Conservatives, the New Democratic Party members and some Liberals with gumption back the speaker; the cabinet and those looking for cabinet favors in the Liberal Party vote against the speaker and the government is defeated on a procedural matter.

One must wonder why the cabinet and liberal members, including Mississauga MP Tony Abbott, would resist an inquiry into bribery of the press.

And the energy issue must be getting to us all. New conventional oil supplies are not discovered, yet governments, federal and provincial, fight over royalties. In an energy-short world, inter-governmental fights for tax dollars ensures that energy, if we in fact have any, will stay buried. Leadership?

We are a favored and blessed nation;

we are doing better than most of our neighbors; but considering our advantages, we are not doing as well as we might.

Canadians approaching 1975 are confused. Auto plants lay off thousands; a drive through the developing areas of Mississauga reveals base-ments blocked in and construction of houses at a virtual standstill. Prices continue to rise; yet many have real fears that their jobs will not exist tomorrow or next week.

The Queen in her Christmas message remarked about the horrendous problem facing the world as we go into 1975, but she called upon all of us not to talk ourselves into economic disaster.

Today, more than perhaps at any time in recent years, we need leadership that calls Canadians to a sense of national purpose and national destiny. We need leadership to create in Canada the enthusiasm to build houses and factories, grow more and new

crops, find and process the resources of forests and mines. We need leadership that will breathe confidence into a dying stock market and encourage those with talents to invest time and effort to create in Canada.

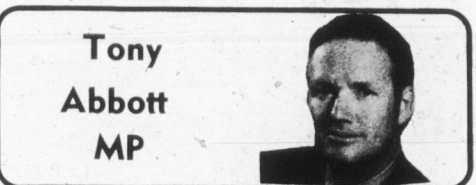
As a nation, we are adrift without purpose or goals, battered by depression, beset with a currency where gold, even at \$200 an ounce, is grabbed up to protect against an uncertain future.

The ship needs a captain who is not satisfied to say, "We're as well off as most others." As we enter the waters of 1975, the assurance of greater inflation and greater unemployment does nothing for Canada. Surely, rather than talking about MP's pay, we can take new measures to encourage the initiative of Canadians to lead this country to its real potential.

May we all work for a better Canada in 1975.

Don Blenkarn is a former Progressive Conservative MP

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Tony Abbott MP

Some thoughts on 1975

May I take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy New Year. All in all, residents of Mississauga, as with most Canadians, can look back on a prosperous 1974.

There is little doubt, however, that the forces of inflation have created hardship for many, especially those on fixed incomes who find almost everything they require far higher in price than a year earlier.

I suppose, like many of you, I am looking to the coming year with some trepidation as we see a steady economic decline taking place throughout the Western world, especially in the United States.

It would, of course, be wishful thinking for us to imagine that we in Canada can remain unscathed in such a recession. It is some comfort to take note of the recent report that indicated

that of 24 industrialized countries, Canada is enjoying the highest rate of growth.

Perhaps the most distressing feature of the current problem is what appears to be a condition call "stagflation," where the economy is enjoying little or no growth, yet is suffering a continuing high rate of inflation. It is to be hoped the lessons that economists have learned since the 1930s will assist governments to bring Western economies out of this decline and at the same time succeed in reducing the rate of inflation.

Internationally, other problems loom besides the economic ones. Considerable pessimism has been expressed that peace can be maintained in the Middle East. Undoubtedly, another war between Israel and the Arabs could be a complete disaster. Again, we can only

hope that sanity will prevail.

In Canada, it is almost certain that the Progressive Conservative and New Democratic parties will be selecting new leaders. Already, activists of both parties in the House of Commons are attempting to put their best feet forward to attract attention. We in the government are understandably more anxious to pass needed legislation than engage in the sort of debating techniques calculated to raise an MP higher in the view of his colleagues. It would be rash to speculate on who may be selected by the Tories, with no obvious person in sight. Some observers forecast that Premier Loughheed of Alberta would be the odds on favorite. In light of the failure of Provincial premiers to gain success in the federal field, this would have to be viewed sceptically.

As far as the NDP is concerned, there appears to be a fair degree of enthusiasm to confirm Ed Broadbent who is now the acting House leader for the party in parliament. The most recent debate over proposed pay increases for MPs did nothing to diminish him in the eyes of NDP supporters.

Now that I have engaged in a little mild prophecy, I would like to make two specific points concerning the year past:

1) Where many other countries suffered severely from the sudden increase in the price of oil, Canadians came out of the crisis with ample supplies and a price on a nation-wide basis considerably below that in the rest of the world.

2) The U.S. and Britain applied wage and price controls only to find they

resulted in a suppressed inflation and higher prices, while Canada maintained a flexibility which in the end produced the lowest rate of price increases.

Speaking personally, it has been a year of great excitement and change. As an MP I have found the workload heavy, but the satisfactions greater. I look forward to the months ahead with keen anticipation although I realize the problems we face will be severe.

Whatever 1975 brings and however difficult circumstances become, we all, as residents of this most prosperous community in a country which is perhaps the most fortunate in the world, can look to the future with confidence.

Mr. Abbott is Liberal MP for Mississauga



John Kernaghan

Healthy ventilation

It's that time of year for prognostication, a sort of soothsaying of what will happen in the new year. Everyone from economists to disc jockeys engages in the game, but that is really playing Russian roulette with one's reputation.

I could easily say, for instance, that our own Billy Davis (he does represent part of Mississauga) will fall on his political duff.

As a calculated guess, it is one of the best bets going, but then Bill's Tories or the PCs' Bill (whatever the true relationship is) could stage one of their noted comebacks.

Or one could foretell that 1975 would be Mississauga's true beginning as a city. However, such clairvoyance would probably be lost in 1980 when it all comes true in retrospect. Besides, I wouldn't want to confuse some local myopics with the facts.

Anyway, it is always more fun to look backward over the past year than to commit the folly of forewarning in the new year.

If you're jaded from drinking and New Year's Eve represents little more than forced gaiety, the only cause for celebration is when your 1974 scorecard comes out on balance, or even more unlikely, showing a plus reading. My count for '74 shows a minus score due to a few minor tragedies, so I firmly to resolve to never again:

Eat a spicy submarine sandwich laden with cheese and coleslaw after imbibing copious pints of draft beer. (One staffer here termed that grounds for divorce).

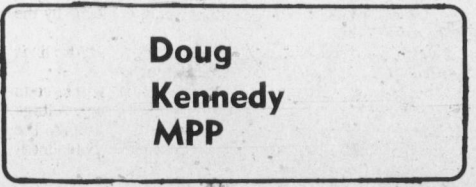
Consume such a repast while trying to manipulate a four speed gearshift. (You get coleslaw in lap versus egg on face).

Explain both of the above to a traffic officer; Move house in the middle of the night; See the Great Gatsby or the Trial of Billy Jack;

Be lured to a young lady's flat to study her etchings; Impersonate Joe Namath; And buy toesocks.

Now there are some who will say such an audit exposes a masochistic streak. I can hear them clucking "Imagine trooping out such things in public."

However, I see the exercise as healthy ventilation. And besides, this handy mental checklist guarantees against the same traumas surfacing again — at least until February.



Doug Kennedy MPP

Action to safeguard travellers

Students stranded as charter goes bankrupt.

In past years that type of headline would often be found on the front pages of newspapers across Canada. Only last spring a large number of students planning their first trip to Europe ended up staying home. They lost their downpayments and in some cases the total amount to cover their trip because the chartering company went bankrupt.

At that time I asked Ontario's consumer and commercial relations minister, John Clement, what anticipated action was planned by the ministry to prevent any future occurrence of this type. Clement indicated that the ministry was devising a comprehensive policy on the travel industry.

The new Travel Industry Act, which recently received first and second

reading in the legislature, is the product of considerable consultation between travel industry people and Frank Drea, parliamentary assistant to the minister and MPP for Scarborough Centre. In speaking to the bill, I commended the minister for bringing it forward. It is much-needed legislation. The basic thrust is designed to improve the traveller-travel agency relationship, particularly the business practices dimension of that relationship. It would mean, for example, that a compensation fund of about \$1 million would be industry-financed for the benefit of customers whose travel funds have been abused.

All travel agents, carriers and wholesalers would be required to post a \$5,000 bond to prevent potential violation of the new act. The size of the bond nor will other parts of the bill hurt the small travel agent.

As with the real estate industry, all travel agencies and their employees will become registered under the act. Registration includes ownership information, a regular place of business and tests to determine the travel agency's financial capacity.

Still to be worked out in some detail is a proposal to create a trust fund to protect the customer's downpayments. From the travel industry's viewpoint, the trust fund concept produces immense difficulties in that airlines and hotels require prompt payment to cover proposed trips. This particular facet will require greater study before it is implemented.

A lot of aspiring travellers are somewhat innocent when it comes to travel advertising. Sometimes travel advertising tends to exaggerate its claims with respect to hotel ac-

commodation and point of departure. In future, travel advertising must disclose class or level of service offered, location of accommodation and the name of the agent.

The content of this new act is in direct response to several problems in the travel industry. Competition among airlines for business is extremely fierce. Present federal and International Air Transport Association regulations do little to protect the consumer. At present tour operators have no qualifications to meet at all. Customer downpayments for one trip have often been used to finance an earlier trip, pay salaries, rent and other overhead of the business. While these problems will be redressed, the act will strengthen the professional development of the travel industry and help the many honest agents and tour operators.