

Man acquitted of charges that sent seven to jail

BY JOHN STEWART

A 21-year-old accountant from India, Jagdish Bhatka, was acquitted in county court Thursday of possession of counterfeit money following his second trial on the offence.

Bhatka was one of nine young Indians charged at the Toronto International Airport over a period of weeks last September. He was one of two to elect trial by judge and jury. The seven tried in Mississauga provincial court were each sentenced to a year in jail. The other man who chose a county trial was acquitted.

Bhatka's first trial ended in a hung jury. The defence for the Indian, conducted by J.D. Waterman, was the same one used by

each of the men arrested on the counterfeiting counts. The lawyers all argued that the accused didn't have knowledge of the bogus American \$100 bills.

Under the law, if ignorance of the counterfeiting is established, the defendant is not guilty.

The eight men and four women on the jury, who deliberated for an hour and a half, believed the story Bhatka relayed from the witness stand.

He told the court that he had obtained \$400 in American money from a friend and neighbour of his father's in his home village, \$200 from a travel agent and \$100 from a Bombay bank.

Never having travelled outside India

before and never having seen American money, Bhatka didn't realize he was carrying the phony money, his lawyer argued. He said the accused had no time during his trip to take out the money he had and compare it. The counterfeiting was not good and any comparison with a real bill would show the discrepancy.

"I suggest my client's statements are a reasonable account of how a person with counterfeit money could come to arrive in Canada," Waterman said. "My client's conduct while being interviewed by a United States secret service agent, the RCMP and the Mississauga police was the conduct of a man with nothing to hide."

The defence lawyer suggested that

evidence given by law enforcement officers about conflicting stories Bhatka told were caused by his client's problem with the English language.

He said statements taken from the accused the day of the offence, September 5, were made after a day of travel during which Bhatka had nothing to eat and was questioned extensively for two or three hours in an uncomfortable language. "If he didn't make some mistake it would have been remarkable," Waterman claimed.

Referring to evidence by U.S. special agent Tim Burns, Waterman recalled that the man admitted saying he had "laid it into him" (the accused) after he found

discrepancies in his account.

"You saw Mr. Burns and he is a stocky, reasonably formidable man," Waterman said. "After he said he didn't believe my client and thought he was lying, my client no longer asked for an interpreter. I submit it wasn't consent on my client's part."

"He was frightened he might further annoy or arouse the ire of Mr. Burns," he concluded.

Crown attorney John Greenwood, like the defence attorney, said the case rested completely on whether the jury believed Bhatka had no knowledge of the counterfeiting.

He said the money was hidden in a sock

according to a police statement, which wasn't introduced in evidence. "This man is obviously well-educated, a university student trained in commerce who was fully aware of what counterfeiting is. He had no reason to take the \$400, segregate it and put it in the sock unless he knew it was counterfeit," Greenwood stated.

The defence contention was that the money was not hidden in the sock and that Bhatka had never made a statement to that effect.

Bhatka's testimony and cross-examination of him was made through an interpreter provided by the court.

Upon his acquittal, the accused was (Continued on Page 3)

Board 'whammied' into average \$50 tax hike

BY SID RODAWAY

Education taxes will rise by \$50 on the average \$40,000 home in Mississauga this year, the result of the school board's 1.29 mill rate hike set on Monday.

The 15.23 per cent tax increase was attributed by educators to a major cut in provincial grants for education in Peel County. The result will be a record \$70 million operating budget that will allow barely \$100,000 for new programs.

"I'm going to be blunt," board chairman David Currey told the trustees Monday night, "we've just passed a budget that provides barely \$100,000 above the basic maintenance costs of the system."

Just to maintain the 70,000 student educational operation required a 1.259 mill increase in Mississauga educational taxes but the board approved an additional .03 mills to provide

at least some manoeuvring room.

The county wide educational tax hike will reach 14.56 per cent but goes as high as 17.29 per cent in Chinguacousy Township.

Last year the owner of a Mississauga home assessed at \$40,000 paid \$381 in educational taxes. The same home will be charged more than \$431 in 1973.

In Port Credit education taxes will go up by more than \$52 on a home assessed at \$40,000. In Streetsville they will rise about \$40 on a similar home.

Business Superintendent Jack Brown told The Times that provincial grants to the Peel County Board fell from 53.22 per cent to 51.14 per cent on elementary school costs and from 54.08 per cent to 52.65 per cent for high school operating costs.

"Our support from the province is down this year because of an increased per capita assessment figure which is used to calculate how much Peel should receive," Brown said.

In other words a higher assessment leads to a lower grant. Peel's total assessment grew by a whopping 10.55 per cent over the last year and educationally the county must now pay the price.

But the province laid on a double whammy for Peel, according to Brown. "They fooled us in calculating the per capita assessment by using the 1972 enrollment figures and the 1973 assessment figures."

The result is a figure that indicates far more per capita assessment than there really is, he explained.

He attributed the calculating mistake to what was really a provincial effort to be kind to the majority of school boards where enrollment is dropping. By allowing them to claim last year's enrollment they qualified for more cash.

But the kindness backfired in at least Peel and Halton Counties where school enrollment continues to climb.

Brown revealed that provincial officials met all day Monday considering their goof. If they change the system for Peel it could mean an additional \$200,000 will be available for new programs.

But even with the added funds the list of important priorities for educational improvement in 1973 will have to be stalled until next year. Any major new programs would have to be funded through cutting off funds to existing ones.

Trustee Dr. Ted Humphreys successfully moved that the critical Primary Trust basic skills upgrading program for the early elementary years and the accompanying special testing program be retained as the first priority.

Study talks 'horse trading'

Lakeshore ratepayers have sent a letter to planning board critical of the way the talks on the Lakeshore Community Study were conducted and calling for a public hearing on the town's new proposals.

The letter from the Council of South Mississauga Community Associations (CSMCA) follows the announcement last week that negotiations between the CSMCA, town planners and developers had broken off.

Talks co-ordinator Henry Stewart told planning board the two parties were 4,600 people apart in desired population densities. At the suggestion of Mayor Chic Murray, the board authorized planning staff to draw up a plan showing a population of 21,000 people for the area.

Mayor Murray said he was concerned about developer applications now before the Ontario Municipal Board and claimed that since the original 32,000 population Lakeshore study was the only town plan before the OMB, the ratepayers and the town might end up with a population much higher than either wanted.

The CSMCA wants a public hearing of planning board. In its letters, the ratepayers say the meetings with town staff (conducted behind closed doors) deteriorated into "horse-trading" of densities.

A complete text of the ratepayer's letter is on page 5.

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Mary Anne Poirier, 4, clowns with her adopted family. The Poiriers want to legally adopt Mary Anne who was left at their home when she was only five days old. (Times photo by Ron Pozzer)

'Gypsy baby ours': family

BY JOHN STEWART

If Marilyn and Alex Poirier have their way they will be sending one daughter and one "gift from God" to school in September.

The Queen Frederica couple hope that by then, they will legally be able to call both girls their daughters.

Since 1968, the Poiriers have taken care of a girl who at five days of age was abandoned in their care. They named her, fed her treated her as their own and tried in vain to adopt her.

The girl, Mary-Anne, now 4 was brought to the Poiriers under bizarre circumstances that remind one of a fairy tale.

In July of 1968, Marilyn Poirier was providing day care service in her Lakeview home. One night, a strange trio of women appeared.

Mrs. Poirier was looking after one of the women's children. The woman was accompanied by her mother and a beautiful pregnant girl. Although she thought it odd when the women examined the house and fussed over the attention the Poirier children had, Mrs. Poirier accepted an offer to look after the girl's child after it was born. She was to be paid \$25 per week.

On July 26th, the women brought the infant to the Poirier home. She was wrapped in a South Peel Hospital gown and diaper. The women carried an empty brown shopping bag. They told Mrs. Poirier she could name the baby what she wanted and disappeared.

Concerned after three weeks without word from the women, Mrs. Poirier called in the family doctor, the children's aid, a public health nurse and finally the police.

From the doctor she discovered the baby was two months premature; from the children's aid she learned she was responsible for the child and the mother could not be charged with desertion because she had left the baby in protective care; from the public health nurse she learned the baby girl's family was a fortune-telling gypsy act in a carnival, living at Lakeshore and Cawthra; and from the police she learned a baby girl,

two months premature, had disappeared from the hospital the same day Mary-Anne came to the Poirier home.

The mother of the child was registered in the hospital as Elaine Mario, was known to the Poiriers as Dianne Jordan and performed under the name of Barbara Sims.

Within five months, the generous family had decided to adopt Mary-Anne. But an endless list of technicalities have stood in the way since then.

The mother's consent is the most essential component of adoption. The Poiriers have no idea where the mother is or even what her real name is. The gypsies were asked to move out of Mississauga by the police shortly before Mary-Anne was born.

Mary-Anne has no birth certificate, a fact which held up the payment of the baby bonus for a long time, caused innumerable difficulties in claiming her as a dependant on income tax and now threatens to keep the girl from starting school in September.

In order to register, a birth certificate is necessary. The Poiriers have written to the registrar general's office to try and obtain one. Since the mother burned the official papers issued by the hospital, problems are expected. The family thought they had settled the matter several years ago but are now advised that further information may be necessary to get the certificate.

The official proof of birth will not only get Mary-Anne into school but will allow the Poiriers to at least become her legal guardians, if they cannot adopt the girl.

The Poiriers are trying to get maximum coverage from news media to contact the mother if possible or to at least prove to authorities that they have done everything in their power to reach her. This is an essential consideration in allowing adoption without parental consent.

"We've done all in our power," Mrs. Poirier says, "we can't afford to hire a private detective." The cost of a lawyer to facilitate adoption is also an expense beyond the family budget.

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Committee won't hear changes for better high rise: developers

BY JOHN STEWART

Ed Fleming, chairman of Mississauga's committee of adjustment told a representative of the controversial Sanrose high-rise development on Dixie Road Thursday that the committee would not approve requested changes, "whether you come back in one day or six weeks."

Jerry Humeniuk had asked for adjournment for two weeks to get agreement with the homeowners in the area for the changes. Sanrose wanted to increase the coverage (maximum useable floor area) in the project by 38 per cent, enclose the surface parking with a parking building, and take out a driveway rendered useless when the town removed eight townhouses from the scheme.

Humeniuk said he made his request for adjournment with the agreement of residents with whom he met two nights earlier to present the plan.

"If you don't defer the item, I'll withdraw it," Humeniuk

began. "We don't wish to pursue it if there is anyone not in favour. We have no intentions of doing something the people do not want," he insisted.

"We're not going to approve this whether the people are satisfied or not," replied chairman Fleming. "I don't think it will be acceptable to this committee no matter when you introduce it."

Humeniuk reminded the chairman that the application was in three separate parts, all on different subjects. When he said again that he would withdraw the application in the face of any opposition, Fleming said the committee might not be willing to let Sanrose withdraw.

Councillor Ron Searle, who represents ward seven where the 15 storey and 21 storey luxury apartments will rise, asked the committee to make a judgment as to whether the application was in fact a minor variance.

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Rebuffed
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Seafood
Mississauga has come of age with a seafood palace of here-own. See Whaler's Warf page C1.

Dump

The unhappy Hallidays, who have lived surrounded by the town dump, have received a cash settlement for their misery. See page 5.



Shattered

Dreams of glory by Dixie Beehives and Port Credit Warriors were dashed when they dropped playoff encounters. See page B1.

Remember

Former students and teachers remember old school days as they prepare for Cooksville Public School's centennial year. Page D1.

\$425 in cash
The cash crossword still has readers stumped and the bounty has reached \$425 for the lucky winner. Page D2.

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To maintain peace and to slow down speeders homeowners on tranquil Minnewawa Road in Port Credit have formed a Residents Radar group to report violators to the police.

Resident's Radar to snuff out speeders

PORT CREDIT — A request for them to send out warning letters.

The major problem of speeders stems from the angle parking situation on Lakeshore Road. Cars parked on the south side are forced east on the Lakeshore.

To get into the westbound Lakeshore Road lanes drivers frequently divert south on Hiawatha Parkway, west on Minnewawa and north again to the Lakeshore on Cumberland Drive.

"At 4:30 in the afternoon there is no way an eastbound driver on Lakeshore Road can make a 'U-turn' in that traffic — he's forced to drive down into our residential area," Enright said.

"Last week I was standing on the street watching around 5 p.m. Some kids were playing road hockey

and I counted at least eight cars that circled the block, three of them speeding."

The speed limit on Port Credit's side streets is 30 miles an hour.

"People are either circling the block to look for a parking space on the south side of the Lakeshore or they intend to head west on the

highway," Enright said.

Residents Radar will also distribute small signs to volunteers that will indicate that the occupant of the house will take down the license number of any speeders.

Enright complained of police reluctance to occasionally place a standard

\$100,000 winner cool

"We are not the excited type," smiled a cool Mauritz Rosendahl, the Mississauga winner of a \$100,000 Manitoba lottery on Saturday. "We were happy of course but we stay calm."

The 43-year-old maintenance mechanic took the top prize in the Manitoba Golden Sweepstakes. He used the last \$5 in his pocket

to buy the \$2.50 ticket last year from his brother-in-law.

Rosendahl was flown to Edmonton last week to watch the Canadian Curling Championships after he was guaranteed at least \$5,000 when his ticket was drawn. When his Saskatchewan rink took the championship he won the \$100,000.

To date town councillor Ed Donner has pledged 100 per cent support for the Residents Radar group in their efforts to gain police co-operation in the letter campaign.

"If we get this off the ground they'll know that we are watching," Enright promised.