

The Times

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Trim Parsons' presumptions

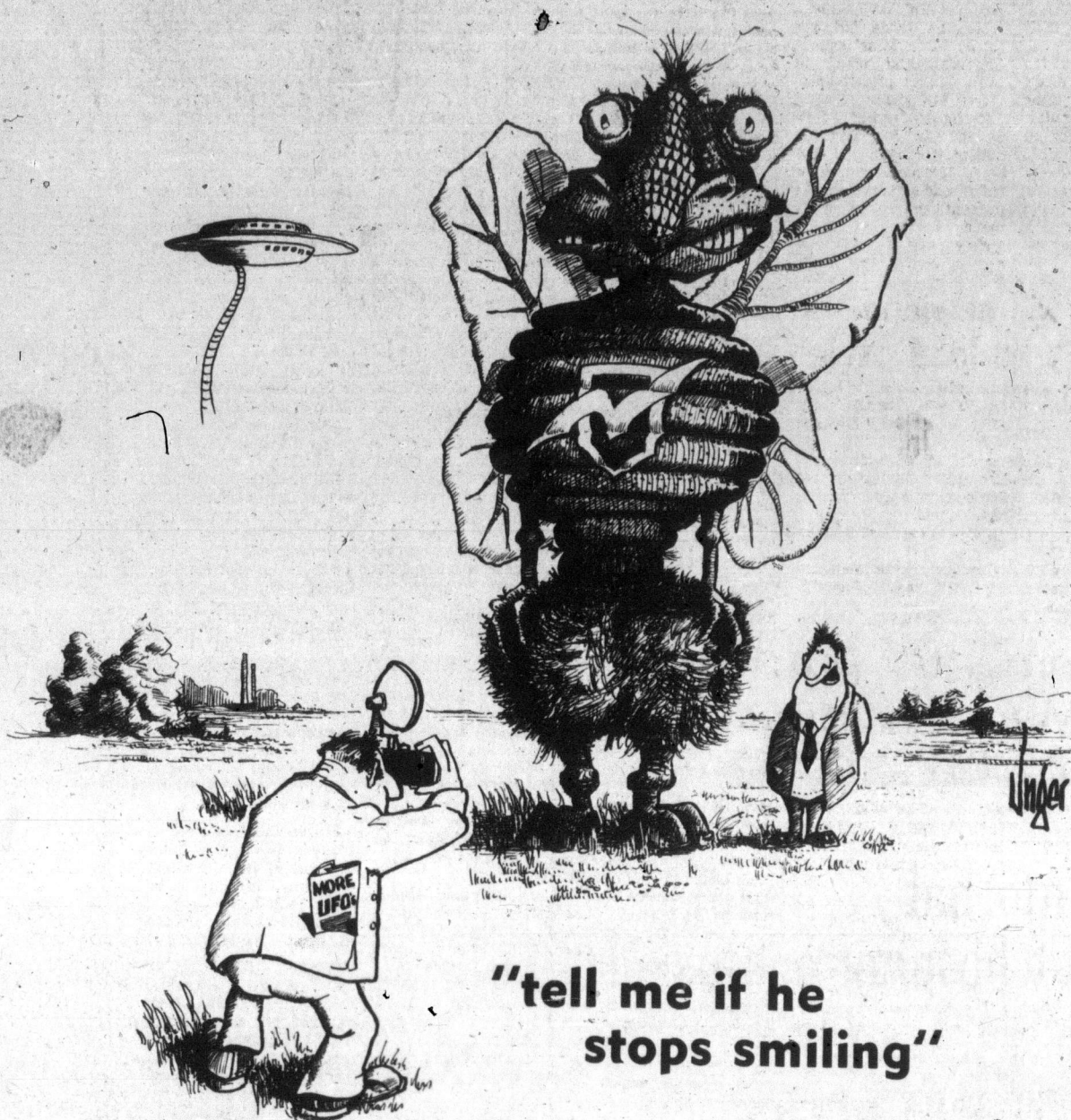
Regional councillors-elect ought to take quick action to trim the presumptions to power of Chairman Lou Parsons. Parsons already has made one unilateral decision which badly hampers the new regional government's staffing efforts. He irresponsibly avoided advertising nationally for candidates to fill the new region's administrative positions and has deprived the new government of a needed broad choice of applicants for its top jobs. Now, with regional government two months away, it is too late to advertise for applicants. Parsons said he didn't advertise because it would demoralize

existing county and municipal staff members who would be in line for top jobs and because local talent is excellent and sufficient. The existing county and municipal staffers certainly do not deserve an inside track on a brand new and expanded county-wide government. And if local talent is as excellent as Parsons claims, there is no need to fear national competition for vital Peel Region administrative posts. Regional councillors-elect should eliminate those areas where the regional chairman's discretion can commit council to wrong moves or limit council's alternatives.

Kangaroo court decision

Justice received a kick in the pants last week. In two short sessions the Peel County Board of Education has reduced its public image to that of a kangaroo court with the results of the trial written in the script long before the accused even knew of his trial. Bob Livesey, a popular and now former English teacher at T.L. Kennedy Secondary School, was fired last week following an earlier appeal for reconsideration of his case. He had been demoted to a permanent supply teaching capacity after the board failed in its first attempt to fire him. Although the firing recommendation itself seems to The Times to be a gross miscalculation on the part of the board staff, what stands as even more important now is the means

by which it was carried out. During the last two performances, board chairman David Currey came off more as a dictator than a chairman. His rulings consistently denied Livesey an opportunity to defend himself against the charges of "deceit" carried in the staff report. During the first meeting Livesey was allowed to speak but his lawyer was not. During the second (and most crucial) meeting last week neither were permitted to react to a report characterized by near libelous and sometimes inaccurate descriptions of Livesey's crimes. A man's career has possibly been destroyed after he was tried and sentenced in the best traditions of the Inquisition.



'Scouting: stepping stone for glory seekers'

During my personal association with scouting, I have come to the opinion that the Mississauga Scouting organization is rapidly declining from Lord Baden Powell's original concept to a stepping stone for adult glory seekers; people who make the most noise and do the least work. Scouting is for the boys. As an integrated part of home and school education, its purpose is to help boys to learn to work and play with others, to develop responsibility, to increase skills in hobbies and handicrafts, and to develop an understanding of the world and its peoples. The few who unselfishly donate of their time, their energy and their ideas to assisting in the creation of future good

citizens are over-worked, taken for granted, frustrated, and, one by one, are resigning from scouting. When an adult, through serious involvement in scouting and concern for our youth reaches the final decision of resignation, it is a last in-depth plea for help for the organization as a whole. In the Mississauga scouting organization were given a thoroughly good shaking up; if the emphasis was removed from glorifying adults and took a complete turn-about to helping a child live and learn and enjoy this world of ours — then I feel those dedicated former members of scouting would return with renewed interest and vigor. How many leaders, assistant leaders, group committee members, ladies auxiliary and executive members has scouting lost in the past year or so? And each of us in our hearts resigned for the same reasons: Take scouting out of the hands of unconcerned adults; give it back to the boys and their parents who care. Carolyn S. Balzer Mississauga



Reader feels Scouts are often guided by leaders more interested in self-glory than betterment of boys.

letters

Letters to the editor The space on this page is reserved for the readers of The Mississauga Times. We invite comment on any issue and are particularly interested in any letter which takes a point of view in conflict with our own as expressed in the editorials. All letters must be signed although, if circumstances require, we will allow a pseudonym to be used. The Editor

Write On!

By Frank Touby

'Region staff pre-selected?'

The new regional council under the leadership of Mr. Parsons (an appointed and not an elected politician) has apparently rejected the motion that senior staff positions within the regional government should be nationally advertised. Instead council is to announce that it is in the process of considering applications for the jobs.



LOU PARSONS.

Parsons is quoted in the Globe & Mail of October 25 as saying 'before going outside our boundaries we should determine whether our needs can be satisfied with the applicants who have already applied.' Which applicants? Why would anyone think of applying until the jobs are advertised? Certainly one recognizes that existing municipal employees within Peel, knowing of the staff requirements, might have applied in order to provide themselves with better positions than the jobs they are presently guaranteed for the next twelve months. But are they the only people expected to apply for the new jobs? Is it possible that Parsons himself might have encouraged some individuals to apply for select positions? What about the many men and women throughout Canada who are qualified to fill some of these senior jobs (presumably with salaries in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars)? How are they to know that the jobs are available? It is possible that people suitably qualified for these jobs do presently reside within Peel County, but government has the responsibility of obtaining

the best possible people to fill these positions. It is therefore imperative that these jobs be advertised in the national press. I fail to comprehend why Parsons, whose appointment as regional chairman was announced at least two months ago, did not arrange to have the positions advertised. He could now have a list of applicants from across the country (should there be that amount of interest) awaiting the attention of the newly-appointed interviewing committee, instead of having to warn Council that there are now only 67 days left in which to fill the positions, clearly intended as a stick to encourage selection from the existing applicants. The mayor-elect of Mississauga has warned that it is important not only for government to act fairly, but to appear to act fairly. By beginning in this way Parsons has created the impression, true or otherwise, that some people have been pre-selected for the jobs. Christopher Mackie Port Credit



Much as we'd like to think otherwise, politics is a game played with power. And there is every element of soap-opera bathos available at the local and regional levels to tantalize anyone's relish of the theatrical. Yet in the process, the players must still come up with a government. It's a game of Monopoly and Simon Says cloaked in parliamentary procedure and garnished with the multifaceted ambitions of perhaps 100 players and participating spectators. The most visible player at the moment is Peel Region Chairman Lou Parsons who is trying to put hotels on Boardwalk and Park Place. Appointed by the Bill Davis government to head and help establish the new regional government, Parsons is attempting to write himself into an exclusive niche where he has more political power than any single elected member of the region council. It's the type of game where Lou excels. He is an individual player who enjoys the role of team coach. His tools in that pursuit are a quick intelligence coaching a Thesaurus vocabulary, a business-like air of integrity and an intimacy with the sources of political power. Parsons has had a head start at preparing his power base on the new regional council and the question now is whether his plans will produce that power for him. In his briefs outlining his proposed form of regional government, Parsons threw in ample areas to be decided at the chairman's discretion. The boldest effort came in a footnote to an organizational chart that would have been easily skipped over by councillors-elect. Mary Helen Spence caught it. It said: "N.B.—Chairman is a member of all standing and special committees. He is entitled to one vote at all committee meetings." From the phrasing, one would think Parsons was merely describing what the law requires, not making a proposal that would make him the most powerful single member of the whole regional government.

Parsons nonetheless has support from some members of the northern municipalities and from the three dissidents on Mississauga council. The dissenting trio is composed of Councillors-elect Ron Searle, Bud Gregory and Harold Kennedy. Searle spoke in favour of granting Parsons the committee memberships and votes, saying that since Lou would be giving advice to council, he should be required to commit himself through a vote. Hazel McCallion even agreed for the same faulty reason. Under the committee system, council breaks itself into small committees to handle business in various spheres. There would be a planning and development committee, a public works committee, a social services committee and a finance committee. When things are in full swing, councils generally find themselves rubber-stamping committee recommendations. And those would be recommendations upon which Parsons has laid his mark in every instance. No council member would be on more than one committee. The solution to the problem was proposed by Bud Gregory when the city council-elect met Thursday night and discussed abandoning the town's general committee system. Gregory, arguing in favour of retention of general committee, said it has the advantage of giving each and every council member the expert information and the background which the individual committees would have. Councillors would not have to depend upon committee recommendations and explanations, but would be privy to everything about an issue. That's why it's called "general committee". Since councillors are now full-time in the new government, general committee is not too much to expect. It's the best way to insure our representatives are getting first-hand knowledge about each issue they vote on. After Gregory's explanation about how well general committee works at the town level—and it does work well—Hazel asked Bud an excellent question: "Why didn't you bring that up at the regional meeting?" she asked.

'Trustees show no compassion'

I sincerely hope that not one of the members of the Peel County Board of Education who voted to dismiss Robert Livesey — has ever told a lie — or booked off sick when such was not the case. For it is on public record that these dastardly sins were the sole cause of terminating the employment, and career, of the former T. L. Kennedy teacher. Mr. Livesey's eleven productive years of successfully teaching our young people apparently counted for very little — in the face of those distressing 3-6 days he spent in court — suffering through a false charge. Where was the belief in rehabilitation, awareness of a fellow human being, compassion in the majority of our elected representatives?

On a far lesser scale of importance — where was their sense of communication, public relations and courtesy toward those of us who attended this meeting? We were obviously concerned. Packed on the available chairs, propped up around the walls, spilling out of the doors — awaiting the board's decision on Mr.

Livesey's case. Was it really necessary to allow more than three hours to elapse before turning to this decision? Or is it possible that the real issue never surfaced in last night's discussion? Recent press reports have stated that Mr. Livesey has written articles, critical of our educational system. In which case I feel that perhaps our Board representatives were themselves less than honest in the manner of their conclusions. Criticism from within the system they represent should be given honest and serious consideration in this reform-minded age. It is regrettable the outcome of their deliberations and decision fell woefully short of our expectations. Dorothy Harrison Port Credit

'Hydro due to settle'

Is it not far past time that in the absence of interest in settling the hydro dispute, by the Hydro Commission, that the Mississauga town council took an objective look at the situation, and disregarding entirely the outside influences of Ontario Hydro, and the political combatants, bring pressures to bear to end this dispute, which, if common sense had prevailed should never have occurred in the first place? This dispute, in my opinion, is being continued and extended far beyond the realm of reasonableness (considering recent settlements in the utility industry and rising cost of living) by virtue of the vindictiveness of Mayor Murray, who is presently holding the townspeople and the hydro workers for ransom. Ken Woods Guelph