

Residents committee formed in ward one



Roger Dial "motherhood" is the issue?

by Ken MacDougall

On Tuesday, September 24th, residents of Ward I met at Gorsebrook Public School with the intention of forming a residents' asso-

ciation. The meeting was a success, in that it succeeded in its task. However, the process by which that task was accomplished left something to be desired. The concept of a resi-

dent's association was born at a meeting of citizens of the ward last June. On the 24th of that month, a steering committee of eight members had been set up to study how such an organization would operate, and to bring back options for a bureaucratic structure. The committee returned with three options, which those present at the meeting on Tuesday discussed at some length.

The first structure suggested a chairperson, elected by the membership or chosen from an executive, an executive of three or four people to carry out the tasks set upon it by the membership, and a membership, probably open to any resident of the ward, which would meet monthly to discuss the issues of the ward. The membership would probably work in permanent or temporary committees on topics of concern to the area.

Although this structure seemed by far the most democratic, the membership discarded it, partly because there seemed to be

no working models of the structure in existence in the city. Thus, its effectiveness could not be determined.

The second alternative suggested a rotating chairperson whose task would be to prepare agendas for meetings, and a membership which would do most of the work of the association through committees. Although such a structure existed in Ward III, this suggestion was also discarded, because of the potential for all of the work of the association to fall on the shoulders of one person.

The form of association that was finally adopted was one with a large executive, whose special powers would be to make decisions for the membership in line with the policy guidelines stated at previous meetings of the membership. It was pointed out by Johanna Oosterveld, a member of the steering committee who was presenting the structure alternatives, that such an arrangement existed in Ward X, and seemed to work quite well. However,

it was also pointed out that the Executive of the Ward X Residents Association, in taking a stand in favour of the Fairview container pier site, had done so on their own initiative, and had encountered stiff opposition from some elements in the ward. Despite this potential for a small body of residents to publically dictate a stand that the association could take, this was the structure that the Ward I residents adopted.

Having decided the bureaucratic framework the residents then proceeded to name their fledgling group the **Ward I Residents Association**.

At this point, some procedural hassles broke out amongst those present. It was suggested that the Graham Report, currently being studied by municipalities and the provincial government, was calling for the formation of larger bodies of municipal government. The smaller ward associations could become an anachronism before they

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Newest Ford Proves a Lemon

by Mary Pat MacKenzie

On Sept. 16, 1974 President Gerald Ford of the United States of America issued a proclamation announcing a program of united amnesty for Viet Nam draft evaders and deserters. This program will affect some 28,000 men, most of whom are presently residing in Sweden and Canada. The exact number of draft evaders and deserters residing in Canada is unknown as Ottawa's position has been that an immigrant's military status at home is meaningless here. The total is generally believed to range upwards from 7,000.

Amnesty is defined in the dictionary as a general pardon for offences against a government; a forgetting or overlooking of any offence. President Ford describes his amnesty plan this way: "In furtherance of our national commitment to Justice and mercy these young Americans should have a chance to contribute a share to the rebuilding of peace among ourselves and with all nations. They should be allowed the opportunity to earn return to their country, their community, and their families, upon their agreement to a period of alternate

service in the national interest together with an acknowledgement of their alliance to the country and its constitution."

Certainly in his pardon of ex-president Richard Nixon, Ford stuck to the literal definition of amnesty. In one short week he seems to have forgotten the meaning of the word.

The President goes on to say "Desertion in time of war is a major serious offense; failure to respond to the country's call for duty is also a serious offense. Reconciliation among our people does not require that these acts be condoned. Yet, reconciliation calls for an act of mercy to bind the nation's wounds and to heal the scars of divisiveness". It should be recalled that during the period covered by Ford's plan August 4, 1964 to March 28, 1973—the Congress of the United States never made an official declaration of war.

The proclamation defines the terms "draft evader" and "military resister" and goes on to describe the necessary steps for reconciliation. In order to receive amnesty a draft evader must: (1) present himself to a U.S. Attorney before January 31, 1975. (2) execute an agreement ac-

knowledging his allegiance to the United States and pledging to fulfill a period of alternate service under the auspices of the selective service director; (3) satisfactorily complete such service.

It is not possible for a military deserter to receive an honorable discharge but he can, upon fulfillment of certain conditions, receive a clemency discharge. To receive this the military deserter must: (1) take an oath of allegiance to the United States before January 31, 1975; (2) execute an agreement with the secretary of the appropriate military department pledging to fulfill an alternate service under the auspices of the director of selective service; (3) satisfactorily complete the period of alternate service prescribed by the military department. Naturally, he will never be eligible for any veteran's benefits.

The clemency board and its guidelines are set out in the last part of the proclamation. It will consist of nine (9) members appointed by the President and will report to the President on its recommendations for executive clemency. The clemency board will also be responsible

for reviewing the cases of those who have already been convicted of draft evasion or military desertion. Some of these men are now serving sentences in U.S. jails.

The reaction to the plan by draft evaders and resisters living in Canada has been less than enthusiastic to say the least. Most have been fully integrated into Canadian society and many expect to become Canadian citizens in the near future. It would be ridiculous to expect that these men would give up careers and homes in order to go to the U.S. to pay Gerald Ford's piper.

The requirements of the pledge of allegiance is nothing less than spitting in the faces

of these men. They were certainly not traitors to their country if anything their decisions not to contribute to an illegal war were high acts of courage and loyalty.

Though the President's plan is unfair and unjust at best in comparison with Richard Nixon's pardon, it is appalling. Neither Nixon nor the evaders and resisters have been legally convicted of anything. However, as the evidence mounts against the ex-president it diminished against the latter group. One wonders how President Ford can say with a straight face "reconciliation calls for an act of mercy to bind the nation's wounds and to heal the scars of divisiveness".

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