

# THE MISSISSAUGA Times

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## Baby steps

It wasn't front-page stuff. A bunch of social workers, lawyers, judges, ministers and the like got together for two days and discussed, in their respective jargons, children.

They didn't talk about children directly. They talked about the courts and family services and psychology and marital breakdowns. But really they were discussing the future of our children.

The Friday and Saturday workshop and panel discussion at the Ramada Inn may only deserve a historical notation on the news pages. But the significance of those discussions may well be felt for generations to come.

Let's in this the week of the child in the Year of the Child, hope that all those professionals started a system this weekend that will benefit all the innocent victims of broken homes—and perhaps make it less painful for parents to separate.

One of the items the nation's leaders didn't get to this winter at a conference of first ministers, was family law reform. Perhaps in another (non-election) year they will discuss two important dichotomies existing in our judicial system that go further to making children hurt when a marriage breaks down.

One: Because divorce is a federal court matter and family law a provincial court responsibility, rarely have divorce and family problems been handled by the same judge who may take the over all family situation into account.

Second: No matter how sincere a face a troubled couple may assume in private counselling over their children's future, they pay big dollars for lawyers to fight each other. In divorce court, the children take a back seat to the lawyers' employment of the adversary system.

However, in Toronto and Hamilton pilot projects are underway whereby one judge can execute decisions wearing both hats. He can call on counsellors, ministers, probation officers, police, doctors, public health nurses — in short, anyone and everyone involved with the family at a time of crisis — and he can make a ruling on divorce in the over all context of the family.

And for the first time in Peel — for the first time — experts from all those different disciplines got together to discuss their mutual problems, their common and cross-purposes, and the system itself.

No one will benefit much in the short run except perhaps those professionals.

For our children, we hold out the long-range hope that such a (successful) pilot project could be incorporated in Peel.

One small step for the people who are called upon to arbitrate a broken home. One giant step for the innocent victims.

## Next: 1980

When we armchair politicians insist that elected officials conduct our municipal affairs in a business-like manner, we mean for sound management techniques to be used in the governing process: Politicians must make tough decisions, monitor their effect and take steps to correct any unjust or expensive deficiencies.

And get on with it.

That's just what the Peel Board of Education has done: they've faced the problems of fixed salaries for teachers, of diminishing provincial grants, of rising maintenance costs, of radically shifting enrolment patterns.

They've faced the problems and somehow managed to make what today looks like a good decision.

Nowhere in our society does a group of managers take so much flak for matters so little in their control. The Peel trustees are to be commended on a 1979 budget that requires Mississauga taxpayers to cough up only 10 per cent more in education taxes than last year.

We trust they will immediately get on with the business of monitoring the effects of that budget, of getting right into the school system and finding out how it works.

We hope they will know, within just a few months, where they've gone wrong and be well prepared to outline a more efficient budget for 1980.



## People

Forty years ago in The Times, E.D. Maguire, Reeve of Toronto Township, pleaded with readers for acclamation of township council to avoid another election. "I am only making this appeal to the people, feeling that I should try to save the taxpayer this unnecessary expense," he said... the editorial claimed that prosperity rested solely on the individual's shoulders and "your municipality is just as prosperous as you will allow it to be. And your financial condition is just as prosperous as the municipality. Thus a well-padded bank account is, in a large measure, dependent upon your interest in the municipality."... an article by "Sordian Gincclair" rambles at length in the first person about the Peel Music Festival which was breaking all records for number of entries... Chief Constable S.M. Belford arrested Fabyan Klasic after a

wild drinking party during which "every window in a building had been broken by scantlings and stones and most of the house furnishings had been destroyed..." and the Old Colonial Inn advertised room and board for \$9 a week.

The biggest headache of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority for years has been the problem of flooding in Glen Williams, caused by ice backing up because of the papermill dam in Georgetown. When CVCA chairman Grant Clarkson was in Vancouver recently he picked up a copy of The Globe and Mail to see a front-page picture of ice chunks in the main street of the Glen. Despite seemingly endless studies, there's still no solution in sight. Now that the authority has finally got a proposal to alter the dam, another problem has popped up. No one knows who owns the place. A title search has failed to indicate the dam owner. To complicate matters further, it appears that a private individual owns the river bed below the Credit. Clarkson moaned last week that the CVCA can't afford a lengthy expropriation procedure to get control of the dam to do the work. One possibility the authority is considering is to have all of the potential surrounding owners file "quit claims" on the dam. It only seems appropriate. Everyone within miles of the problem has been trying to disown it for years.



Caught in the act

Ward 9 councillor Ken Dear warned council during budget talks that the improvement of Winston Churchill Boulevard will mean that a 100-year-old home on Derry Road is severely affected. "The 27-foot road widening will go right through the bedroom," remarked Dear. Ward 4 councillor Larry Taylor was quick to see the underlying menace in the move. "Is this another example of government intruding into the bedrooms of the community?" he asked.

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