

Two plans discussed

Island residents ask for permanent leases

By ROSEMARY McCracken

Twenty years ago the city council gave the Toronto Islands over to metro Toronto in order to demolish the houses on Ward's and Algonquin Islands and redevelop the land for parks.

The houses on the islands were all supposed to be gone by 1968. That year the remaining residents asked for a "stay of execution."

Now island residents, who hold the 259 leases for the land only, are asking for permanent leases. According to islander David Amer, editor of the Toronto Island community newspaper The Goose and Duck, residents now think the time is ripe for an appeal because they feel Toronto has a sympathetic council.

Two plans presenting opposite points of view — The Toronto Islands Park Report, by the city planning staff, and the report of the parks and

recreation committee — are presently being discussed. The final decision will be made sometime in December.

The planning department outlines a defense on behalf of the residents. The decision of the report reads: "the 1955 decision should be changed given the changes in attitudes and values over the last 18 years..... Communities provide an animated colourful backdrop to the extensive 'pure park' areas. Such variety is important to the city quality. These areas add 'life' to this part of the city."

The report of the planning department states that "houses are not a grave hindrance to present park use, since even areas 'developed' as parkland are seldom crowded and often deserted." Further on, however, the report concedes, "visitors are reluctant to use park areas because they seem 'private.' This would be overcome if these areas were made more accessible and well main-

tained."

Ron Haggart, in The Sun, pointed out that private occupation encourages public use of the islands. But others, for example, would rather go snowshoeing in a park area or woodland than within sight of human lawns and houses.

The report of the parks and recreation committee summarizes its position: "In Metropolitan Toronto... it is now apparent that the open space requirement for our future population cannot be met by 'normal' methods of valley land acquisition and waterfront development by creation of land, or dedications of subdivisions."

The parks committee argues the point brought up by the planning department, that the islands appear to have reached a plateau of use. The parks committee returns: "note the

ever-increasing competition with respect to recreational facilities. Ontario Place, with its sophisticated advertising campaign, in 1973 attracted 2,400,000 visitors and yet island attendance stayed constant."

The parks committee report maintains that "there is a resident population which at the present time has to be serviced by the staff of the department, and such servicing works to the disadvantage of the island visitor."

The plan proposed by the parks committee for the development of Toronto Islands would total \$3,250,000, over a four year period.

The plan, themed "simple grass and trees with provision for group picnic facilities" would include demolition of the residence structures, a swimming pool, speed skating track and dock

shelter, and a campsite for underprivileged children.

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WASHINGTON (CPS) Watergate investigator, Senator Sam Ervin will release an album just before Christmas. Ervin (and the Ervinettes?) has recorded a non-Watergate collection of stories, family recollections, court cases, poetry and talks on the Bible. The Senator also recites the words to Paul Simon's "Bridge over Troubled" Water and Pete Seeger's "If I had a Hammer."

The record was cut in the library of Ervin's North Carolina home and includes the interruptions of doorbells ringing, friends and neighbours talking and cars passing.

Morgentaler not guilty

MONTREAL (CUP) Last week Dr. Henry Morgentaler was found not guilty of performing illegal abortions. The jury of eleven men and one woman deliberated for 10 hours before reaching their verdict.

Morgentaler admitted he had performed an abortion on a prosecution witness, a 26 year old, unmarried graduate student. He maintained, however, that he was entitled to immunity under section 45 of the criminal code, which states that no one can be prosecuted for performing an operation that is medically necessary to the patient if reasonable care is taken.

The witness said she wanted an abortion because, as a student, she could not afford to raise a child.

The jury's ruling sets a precedent which allows any doctor accused of performing an illegal abortion to use this section of the criminal code as a defense. The jury upheld a more extensive definition of "health and medical necessity" which takes into account both social and economic factors.

Marg Manwaring, of Dr. Morgentaler's defense committee, said, "This is a great victory because even three years ago you would never have gotten twelve people to agree on this. It is an indication of the impact of the public

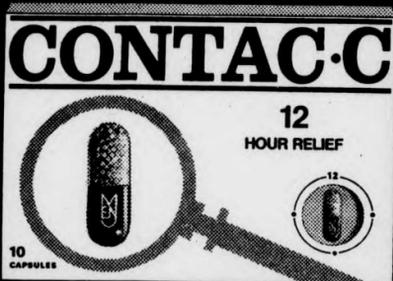
of the struggle for humane laws."

Prosecuting attorney Louis Robichaud has announced that he will appeal the decision "as soon as possible" to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Morgentaler said he has performed between 5,000 and 6,000 abortions in his clinic. Furthermore, from the time he was released on bail in the summer until the start of the trial in October, he had been performing abortions.

Morgentaler has been charged with twelve additional counts of performing illegal abortions, but trial on these has been postponed until March at the earliest, pending the appeal.

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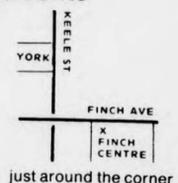
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