

Toronto take note and learn

# New pollution and urban policies in Germany

By ROB ROWLAND

West Germany is taking major and radical steps in pollution control and urban planning, Stefan Schnell, editor-in-chief of the Frankfurt Daily "Fuldaer Zeitung," told a York history class Tuesday.

Germany, a small country, must regard pollution and urban problems as a major crisis, he said. Pollution is almost regarded as a criminal act in Germany, a violation of clauses in the Bill of Rights covering the inviability of the human person. Specific pollution clauses were not included in the post World War II constitution.

He gave the example of one case, following the wrecking of a boat

when large amounts of insecticide were dumped into the Rhine. The poison spread killing all life in the river. Those responsible were charged, convicted and punished.

Pollution has been a long time problem in Germany. It was impossible to swim in the Rhine at Cologne 30 years ago, Schnell said. Germany's once famous Lake Constance is now filled with pollutants.

The Rhine river situation has led to one of the first international organizations concerned with pollution.

The commission, with Switzerland, West Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands

participating, is responsible for policing the river. One of the greatest problems is run off from French mines entering the river.

West Germany is pressing for international agreement at the upcoming international conference on pollution. Co-ordination of pollution information and uniform regulations are specially needed across Europe, he said.

With a density of 640 people per square mile, Germany needs radical solutions to pollution problems. One recent suggestion was a special tax on environmentally damaging products. The tax would be used for clean up purposes and also to en-



Stefan Schnell

does not require council or Ontario municipal board approval unless there is a zoning change involved.

Another problem, that of abandoned farmland near cities, may be treated in a novel way. Unlike in Toronto, where it is allowed to lie and eventually fall into the hands of speculators or developers, there has been a proposal to allow German land to become natural fields for recreation use. Unemployed farmers could be given work as conservation officers.

Schnell said, "Little is known about the highly complicated cause and effect in geological forces. No one can go on with nuclear testing for simple political, economic or military gain. In the future, the measure of great power, will not be in missiles but in their role in preserving life on Earth."

"I also believe that now that we are aware of the problems of the environment, we must focus our thoughts on protecting the human being. If we do not, the cost of not doing this will be inestimable."

courage the manufacture of ecologically safe goods.

Land is scarce in Germany and special measures are being taken both to reserve what little forest remains and the quality of life in the cities.

No one may arbitrarily build on land in Germany, Schnell said. All planning is subject to federal as well as local law. In Toronto, planning

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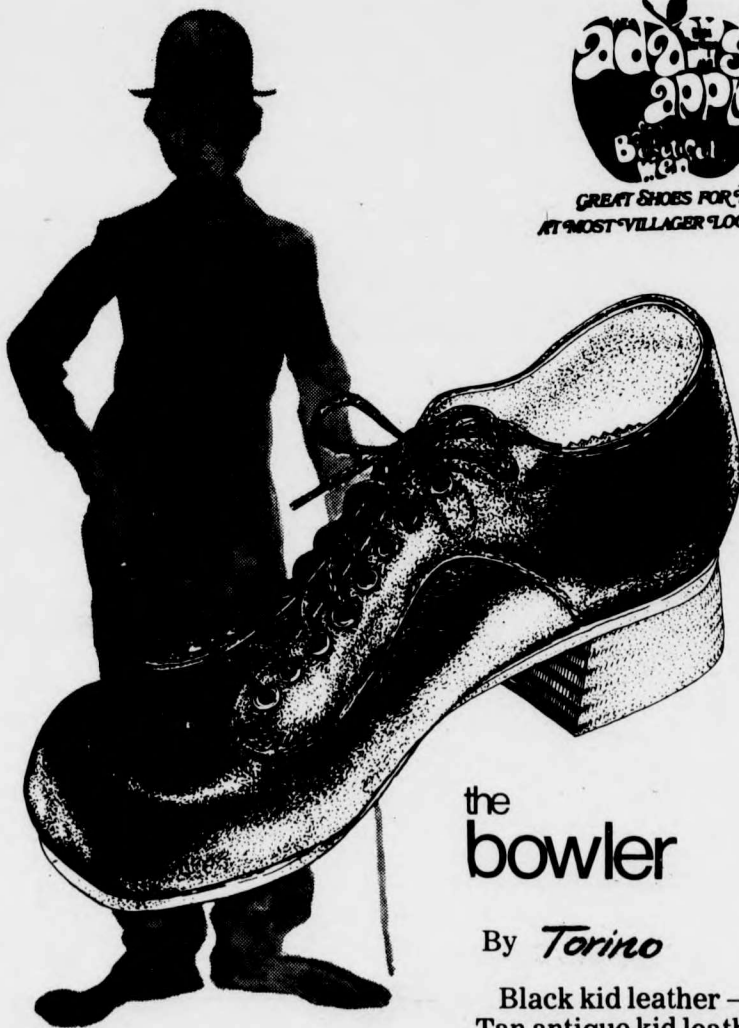
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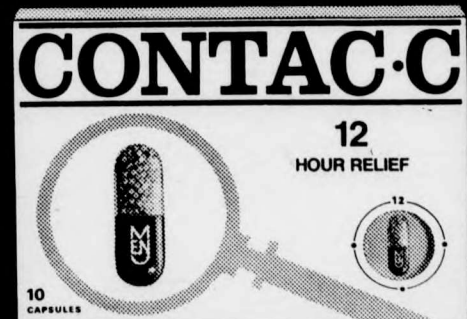
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