

Harborfront is going wrong

Harborfront 74 so far looks like another one of those things that Ottawa gives us—with our own money—insisting that it's good for us and we've got to like it.

The first announcement of a waterfront park came as one of the Liberal goodies in the 1972 election campaign. Nothing much happened until it began to become clear that there would be another federal election this year. Then what a furious burst of planning and doing!

Dancing under the stars, entertainers, play areas and craft shops popped up on the waterfront between York and Spadina.

Never mind if you get it right or not, just get it done. And don't waste time consulting those people in Toronto—city and Metro politicians, the parks commission or any other specialists who might get in the way with factual knowledge of local conditions. That seems to have been the word from Ottawa.

So the very good idea of turning 26 acres of waterfront between Bathurst and York Sts. into a public recreational area overlooking the lake has been developing with hardly any Toronto voice in the planning.

This has had two bad results. The first is the souring of local leaders. Toronto Mayor David Crombie calls Harborfront one of his pet peeves. Metro Chairman Paul Godfrey has taken little active interest or initiative in its development. Both are suspicious that federal funding will dry up one of these years.

The second result is that up to now the project has not met the needs of enough people in Metro, not for the \$2.5 million in taxpayers' money it has cost this year.

Harborfront officials say attendance has averaged about 25,000 a week. But they admit that many visitors are en route to Toronto Island or other attractions.

On a recent tour, The Star found not a single child in the adventure playground and two children in the creative playground, one child using the swings and slides, no one in the Sun-Moonflower Centre or the Old Foundry Craft Market, and an audience of five at a dance show. The gallery was deserted and two people were in the Bohemian

Embassy, one playing God Save The Queen on the piano, the other listening.

True, it was a hot afternoon. True, there was a transit strike on. And true, Harborfront 74 wasn't designed to attract people in as large numbers as Ontario Place, let alone the Canadian National Exhibition.

But it would be more of an attraction if its activities and program were more closely associated with its location. There's no earthly reason to battle your way down to the waterfront so your children can play on swings. But there's every reason to if it offers you a waterfront experience.

Boat rides, for instance, swimming and wading pools, places to sit and watch the harbor traffic.

Ottawa has at least begun to involve local people with the establishment of a working group including city, Metro and provincial officials. The general public will also have a chance this fall to suggest future development.

That will give us a chance to see that Harborfront 75 develops as it should—a park area exploiting its location on the lakefront. Torontonians have been kept away from it for too long by expressways and no-trespassing signs.

Find the source of lead poison

Find out where the lead's coming from.

That's the task the Toronto Board of Health needs to undertake now that a scientific study has found children with virtually the same levels of lead in their blood whether they live near lead plants and expressways or a mile and three-quarters away.

It's also necessary for the scientists and doctors to make definitive determinations about what constitutes a dangerous level of lead in the blood of a child and an adult. Some of this research has begun.

We don't want any more children brought to hospital with touches, even mild ones, of lead poisoning. But to prevent that, we need to find the sources of the lead and eradicate them.

Keep profit out of non-profit housing

When public money finances low-cost, non-profit housing, people who buy it can't expect to make a profit when they re-sell.

That's the important principle at stake in the current impasse on mortgage arrangements between the non-profit Trefann Homes Corporation and the government's Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for the first phase of the Trefann Court Urban Renewal Scheme.

The 17 houses, now finished but empty until the impasse is resolved, are indeed a bargain. They'll sell for an average price of \$24,000 with a down payment of only 5 per cent though a real estate agent has offered the builder \$65,000 for one of the houses.

CMHC isn't asking purchasers to lose money on the deal. It will agree to a resale that allows for 8 per cent compound interest on the down payment. But so far prospective buyers want a percentage of market value, a formula that would turn low-cost housing today into high-cost housing tomorrow as shortages and inflation continue to push up house prices.

Non-profit housing must be exactly that, especially in a city where there's not enough accommodation for families with modest incomes. CMHC is right to insist that the investment of public money must assure the houses remain low cost. If the prospective buyers won't agree, others who will should be found.

Argos take note

Some people think it's unfair that the tickets allotted to Toronto for the Russia-Canada hockey series are being reserved for season subscribers of the Toronto Toros. That means a minimum cost of \$144—\$24 for two tickets, and \$120 for the lowest cost season ticket.

But at least there's an alternative. The Sept. 19 game in Toronto will also be televised locally.

That's more than can be said for home games of the Toronto Argonauts, who wailed on a promise to lift the local TV blackout on sold-out games in return for the federal government's ban on a competing World Football League team in Toronto.

Federal Health Minister Marc Lalonde, who made the football deal, ought to tell Toronto fans what play he intends to call now.

The new man shows he's in charge

President Ford didn't make much news at his first press conference yesterday. But he reassured any doubters that there's a new man in charge at the top.

He easily handled questions on a wide range of topics: Inflation, amnesty, energy, the Middle East, arms limitation talks and ethical conduct of the White House staff.

He was congenial and self-confident. The entire performance emphasized that the people helping him through the transition period from the Nixon administration are doing their job well.

This take-charge demonstration is as important for other countries as it is for Americans. During the final stages of Nixon's presidency the American government was virtually paralyzed, a situation that

threatened anyone or any country doing business with the U.S.

Ford's change-over has been carefully managed to reinforce the public confidence Ford has been nurturing since taking office 20 days ago. It is welcome, nonetheless, and it comes in a refreshing forthright style. Asked yesterday if he would devise a code of behavior for the White House staff, he said: "The code of behavior will be the example I set."

Wage and price controls, he said, "are out, period." And on reduced government spending "No budget for any department is sacrosanct, including the Defence Department."

As neighbors who almost daily have something to yak about with the Americans, it's nice to have the White House open for business again.

Not so tough to divide property

Any married couple who can fill out an application form for a mortgage can master the necessary paperwork to divide their property if they separate or get divorced.

So former federal cabinet minister Judy LaMarsh was wrong when she told the Canadian Bar Association that such a procedure would be so complicated that it would make divorce even more costly than it is now.

Indeed, one reason divorces are so costly today is because of the complicated arguments over who gets what. These arguments could be settled quickly if there were a law governing the division of property, as recommended by the Ontario Law Reform Commission.

The commission said property acquired during marriage should be divided equally upon dissolution of the marriage. Lack of such protection earlier this year cost two western women shares in the farms they'd helped their husbands build up.

But the commission complicated its recommendations by adding that persons being married could opt out of the law's provisions: Miss LaMarsh is right to say that too many options complicate the law.

The basic recommendation for an equal division of property is simple enough. It should cause no protracted court proceedings for any but the very wealthy with complicated property holdings. And they, presumably, can afford to pay lawyers and accountants to do the reckoning.

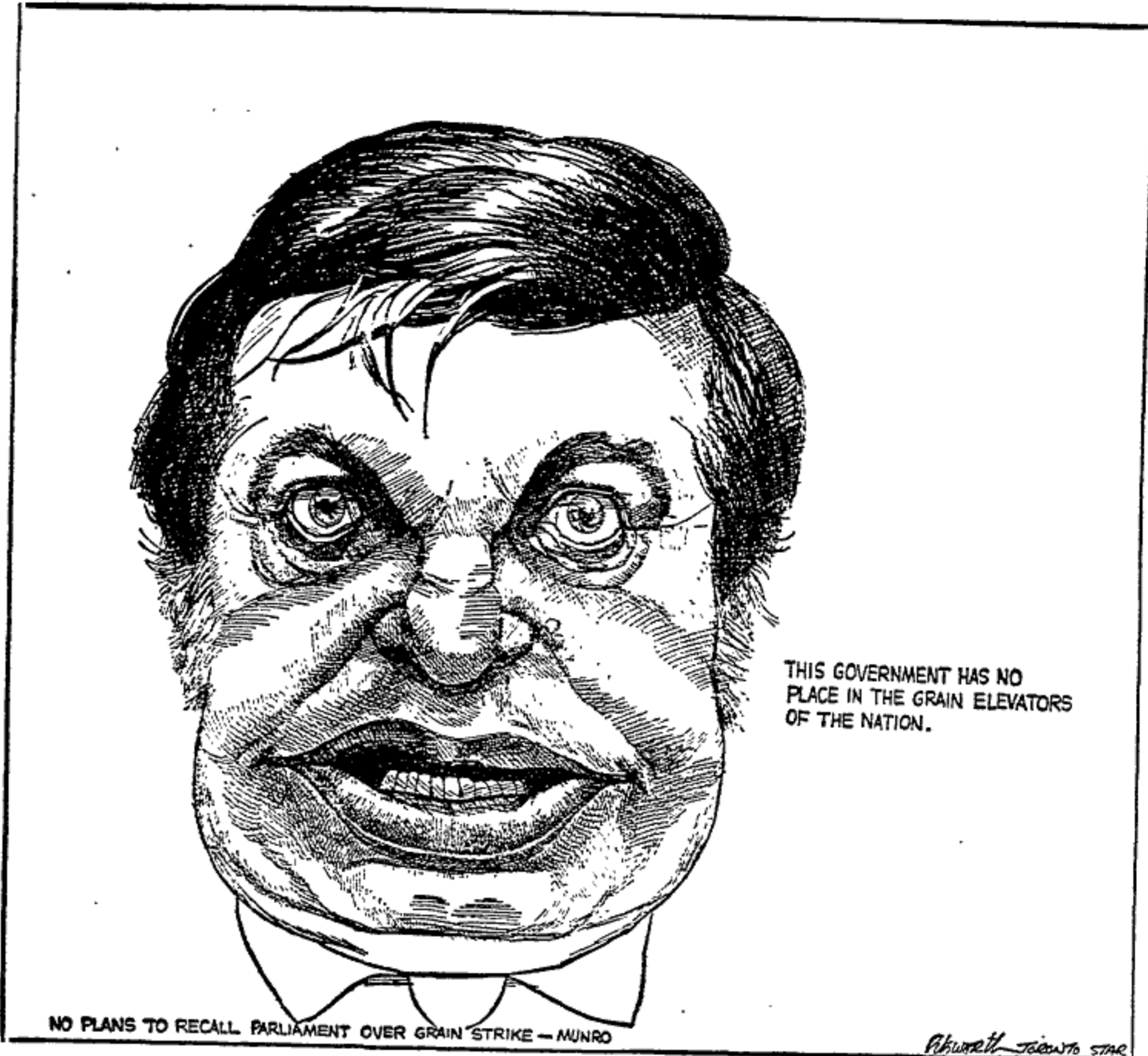
What's needed now, and what Attorney-General Robert Welch ought to do when the Legislature resumes this fall, is to bring in a law to provide for a simple division.

Skin-deep

So Gerald Ford refuses to use make-up to keep his bald spot from shining when he goes on television.

We've heard that tune before. In 1960, many thought Richard Nixon lost the television debates—and the presidency—with John Kennedy because of a threatening 5 o'clock shadow. Tricky Dick learned his lesson about cover-ups and got himself some "make-up" men. The rest is history.

People who concern themselves with that sort of thing will have to keep a sharp eye on that gleaming bald spot.



THIS GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLACE IN THE GRAIN ELEVATORS OF THE NATION.

NO PLANS TO RECALL PARLIAMENT OVER GRAIN STRIKE — MUNRO

Robert Toronto Star

Nobody's winning in the taxi business these days

By KIM NOSSAL

"You must be making a bundle with the strike on," the man said as he stepped into my taxi.

That's everybody's view of the taxi business these days. People figure that with no public transit, and the Metro Licensing Commission allowing us to pick up multiple fares, up to now illegal, we must be rolling in business.

It's true that there's more business. Ask anyone who's tried to get through on the phone. Most companies automatically tell the customer there'll be a half-hour wait anywhere in Metro.

But this hasn't made taxi drivers rich. For while business picked up, so did the volume of traffic. Going south during the morning rush hour the roads used to clog at 8.15. Now it's as early as 7. In the afternoon everything is hopelessly snarled from 3.30. And during the day the downtown core is clogged.

Wages average out

So—before the strike I averaged \$25 to \$35 a day. Since the strike I've been making about the same.

Granted I work shorter hours. I used to drive from 7 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. But after hitting that afternoon crush, I decided to quit at 1.30. A taxi only makes money when it's moving. I rent my cab for \$21 a day. When I'm sitting with the meter on, it makes \$6 an hour. When I'm moving, I make \$12-\$13 an hour. So to heck with clogged streets.

Lots of people must feel the same. Driving has changed since the strike began. People get mad easier. They're impatient. They cut you off trying to change a lane where before they'd let you through. They block intersections trying to make a light where before they'd hold back.

It's too bad, because when the strike started, everybody thought the taxis could really help out. The cab industry's finest hour, so to speak.

But they messed it up from the start. The Licensing Commission wanted to develop a system where Metro's 2,100 cabs would always be full, thus making full use of the available resources.

Old ruling suspended

So they suspended the rule that prevents a taxi from picking up a fare when someone is already in the cab.

Instead, the first person in was responsible for paying what was on the meter at the end of the run. But the driver would be allowed to pick up additional fares along the route, and these people would pay \$1 each, regardless of how far they went.

This scheme was a radical departure from the traditional concept of taking a taxi. Up to now, a person who took a taxi did so at considerable personal expense, and in return was chauffeured about in privacy and roominess.

Now the commission was talking about a paid car-pool, with some members paying more than others.

The first problem was that there wasn't

Opinion

★ Kim Nossal, 22, is a doctoral student at the University of Toronto who drives a taxi during the summer.

enough publicity about the plan. There were stories announcing it in the newspapers, which many drivers innocently left folded at the appropriate place on the front seat. But how long can you carry around The Star of Aug. 14?

But the biggest problem was that people simply didn't think the plan was fair. As the taxi crawled down Avenue Rd., the meter ticking over, the first person in simply resented the fact he would have to pay what was on the meter while other passengers paid only \$1.

So strike or no strike, people simply refused to recognize the commission's ruling.

"If you stop once more," an irate woman



—Star photo by Ron Bull

TRYING TO SEE a way out of the massive congestion in Toronto's downtown is

a cabby's dilemma during the current TTC strike, as cabby Kim Nossal discovered.

Too many laws are making life tough for Joe Public

By WILLIAM SOMERVILLE
Society is trying to achieve perfection by passing more and more laws to handle the bad guys.

These laws in turn require more and more people to make, enforce and adjudicate. They mean more and more regulations to carry them out and bring more and more restrictions on conduct in all aspects of living.

Would you agree with the proposition that the moral health of a society varies inversely to the number and complexity of laws and the number of lawyers they bring in their train?

For experience shows that despite all the laws, someone who is determined to gain by crookedness is, until caught, quite immune from the elaborate and labyrinthine requirements of bureaucracy.

Notwithstanding this simple truth, the process of seeking perfection through more laws operates on some segment of the community in quite idiot fashion.

Nobody seems to ask, or if the timid question is put, nobody seems to listen to the ques-

tion. "What are you doing to the reasonable and decently motivated, responsible members of the community who live or work in the context of the subject matter under legislative consideration?"

If the complexity can, in reality, only be justified on an unexpressed premise that everyone in the activity under study is dishonest and criminal, then it will either be a bad law or no law will do any good.

But the fact is, countless thousands of Canadians are filling out forms, reading and trying to understand regulations which are part of an insane sieve to strain out criminally minded citizens, when these gentry will supply

commit perjury or skim the cash from the register or forge documents or whatever may be necessary to make a dishonest buck.

I am asking you to consider seriously keeping a healthy scepticism of the lawyer or lawmaker as Hero-Knight Errant in gleaming armor on a white charger. Is there any greater harm to society generally than the disillusion which results from the failure of false and inflated expectations?

You and I shall not legislate righteousness into the secret heart of man or make the human condition immaculate. As good lawyers, we do have an honorable part to play which can contribute something of value and importance. That is the pursuit of justice, persistently, consistently, for all men and women in the mature realization that the pursuit is unending and the goal in an absolute sense, is unattainable for human beings.

This paradox is of fundamental importance and anyone who promises the perfect system is a false prophet.