

Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY

Summer 1997

This year's Canada Day festivities are centered around the theme of 'community'. Our committee has planned a series of family activities in Parc Lagny starting at 4:00 and ending at 9:50, in time to get everyone home at a reasonable hour. The events include a children's field day, a make-up artist, a musical variety show, a canoe rally and a sound and light show on the lake jointly sponsored by Plomberie Ed LeSaux and the City of Ste-Agathe. We couldn't do this without our dedicated group of volunteers, the support of the local business community and the federal Heritage ministry. In order to help share the spirit, we are inviting you to bring along a donation of non-perishable food for Moisson des Pays-d'En-Haut, the local food bank.

Peter Hamé and France Duhamel have asked us to include an English copy of their appeal on behalf of Moisson in this mailing. Peter and France are the former owners of the local cable company and they have long been quiet, reliable benefactors within the community, involved in many different projects. They are very concerned by the hunger in our area.

Our Ste-Agathe Heritage Committee was honoured in early June with the *Hydro Quebec Grand Prix de la Culture* in recognition of the work done to save the railroad station and preserve the built environment of Ste-Agathe. This public recognition should give our committee a stronger voice in public decisions. The next project we have undertaken is the preparation of a heritage walk, with supporting documentation, through the centre of town. Carol McCann, of Restaurant Chez Girard, has taken the responsibility for guiding this project through to completion.

Good news from the Régie régionale de la santé. Last time we reported to you on the ground-swell of support for the maintenance of long-term care beds in Ste-Agathe. As a result, the Régie has changed its plans and will be building an annex to the hospital. This is great news not just for the elderly, but also for our whole healthcare infrastructure and the future vitality of our hospital.

The City of Ste-Agathe, with the support of the Chamber of Commerce, has undertaken a project to renew the waterfront at Parc Lagny. A major portion of the cost is earmarked for the improvement of the storm sewers that run down rue Principale to the lake. Improper run-off control has apparently been a major cause of pollution in the lake. A group of citizens is trying to stop the project on the grounds that it will only drive up municipal taxes. In fact, it is really the completion of work begun 30 years ago when that whole section of downtown was expropriated and demolished in order to create the park. Unfortunately, this was done without a proper study of its impact on the remaining parts of the village centre. As a result, the town has been living with its back to the lake. Even in these times of cutbacks, it is important to look to the future and plan in the best interests of the health of our community, our lake and our commercial centre.

(819) 326-4963

CURÉ LABELLE, LE ROI DU NORD

François-Xavier Antoine Labelle was born in 1833, the son of a shoemaker in Ste. Rose. Although his family had no financial resources to help him get an education, he pursued his studies first at the seminary in Ste. Therese, and then, from age 19, at *le Grand Séminaire de Montréal*. After his ordination in 1856, he was vicar in several small parishes where he witnessed a massive exodus. In 1867 he informed his superior, Mgr. Bourget, that, as so many members of his congregations had moved to New England, he felt obliged to follow them. Mgr. Bourget, feeling that he was too valuable to lose to the States, offered him the post of St. Jerome, which was a rich and prospering parish. His father had passed away in 1861 and his mother had found a position, probably with her son's help, in the presbytery at St. Jerome. True to the adage 'behind every great man....' the Curé's mother had considerable influence in the parish and became known as 'Madame le Curé.' She continued to look after the presbytery for the balance of Labelle's life.

From his vantage point in this new, rich parish, Curé Labelle began his mission. Working with business people and the Church, he promoted a vision of rapid colonisation of the North-West. He envisaged French-Catholic parishes from St. Jerome north-west, through present-day northern Ontario, all the way to Winnipeg. He spoke with conviction and authority. A tall, energetic and imposing man, well over six feet and weighing more than 300 pounds, he was not the kind of person often contradicted. Wherever he was, when he spoke of his dream, people followed. Arthur Buies, a writer who was his contemporary, began his career criticising the Church, but, after meeting the Curé, became his greatest admirer and ultimately wrote of the mission and life of the great priest, in the book *Au Portique des Laurentides : Une Paroisse Moderne*.

Antoine Labelle carried his huge weight up the trails and over the portages north of Ste. Agathe and was said to have kept a good pace. On those rough early trails horses and wagon were essential to any serious traveling, but the passengers would often have had to walk along behind. Among the more famous of these trails was the one that climbed the hill called *La Repousse*, so-named because it repulsed all attempts to build a road over it. Located a bit to the north-east of Mountain Acres golf course in St. Faustin, the road north of Ivry was the approach to this challenging pass.

The Curé became known as *L'Apôtre de la Colonisation* and *Le Roi du Nord*. He was so positive and convinced of his mission that people were in awe of him. Among

Labelle's companions was Narcisse Ménard, the first homesteader in Morin Township, whom we met previously. He was also over six feet tall. These were big men whose presence was felt. One can imagine that their arrival in a village was an event.

In 1873, Amable Godon of Ste. Agathe had his auberge license revoked. Depressed, he decided to sell his farm at a ruinously low price and move on. Around this time, Curé Labelle came to stay at the auberge on his way to investigate the mountain called *La Repousse*. In the morning he found some fresh butter and bread in his bag, placed there by the Godons. After thanking his hosts and explaining to them that he was a poor priest, he told them that the only way he could repay them was to give them a good piece of advice. He told them that they should not sell, that one day Ste. Agathe would grow into a much bigger town, and would absorb their farm. If you know Ste. Agathe well, Godon's farm can be located by the names of his children, commemorated in the names of the streets that once were a part of his fields: St. Bruno, St. Donat, St. Antoine, St. Joseph and St. Amable which was subsequently renamed Ste. Agathe, the whole bordered by rue Godon.

Among his friends, Labelle could boast both Adolphe Chapleau, Prime Minister MacDonald's Quebec leader, and Honoré Mercier, the Premier of Quebec. How the son of a shoemaker from an outlying village became the intimate of such powerful men may be less a testimonial to our democracy than a demonstration of the great charm and energy of the man himself. He never lost sight of his vision. It is hard to know if he foresaw the disaster that would befall the Laurentian colonists once the wood ran out, or whether he wanted to push the development ahead as fast as possible. Whichever, he knew that his north-country needed the train. In 1868 it did not even extend to St. Jerome. In the winter of 1871-72, Montreal experienced a firewood shortage. Labelle, seeing an opportunity to demonstrate how valuable the St. Jerome region could be to Montreal, organised a huge bee to collect firewood for the poorer families in Montreal. The city of Montreal contributed a million dollars towards the construction of the rail line to St. Jerome in the following years.

To Labelle, this was only a first step in his plans to have the train run right through his colony. He made repeated trips up the *Chemin de la Repousse*, helping to establish the village of La Repousse, (subsequently renamed St. Faustin), in 1870 and St. Jovite in 1875. The discovery of the fertile valley of the Red and Devil rivers spurred him on and by 1881, 200 families had made their way

This summer in Ste-Agathe:

Monday June 23

Sunday June 29

Tuesday July 1

Show & fireworks, Fête St-Jean

Sailing regatta, École de voile

CANADA DAY:

children's field day, canoe rally

(contact your lake association

for entry information), family

entertainment and more,

between 4:00 PM and 9:50 PM

Saturday July 5

Sunday July 13

Daily July 24 to 27

Daily July 26 to Aug. 17

Sat. & Sun. Aug. 2 & 3

Saturday Aug. 23

Craft show

Antique car show

Carnival midway

1001 Pots pottery show in Val David

Triathlon

**Klez Kanada '97 Grand Groyser Concert
at Camp B'nai Brith (Tickets available at
our office)**

Saturday Aug. 30

Family festival

Plus free live concerts in the park on Saturday evenings and other events throughout the summer. For more information contact the Information Office at 326-0457.

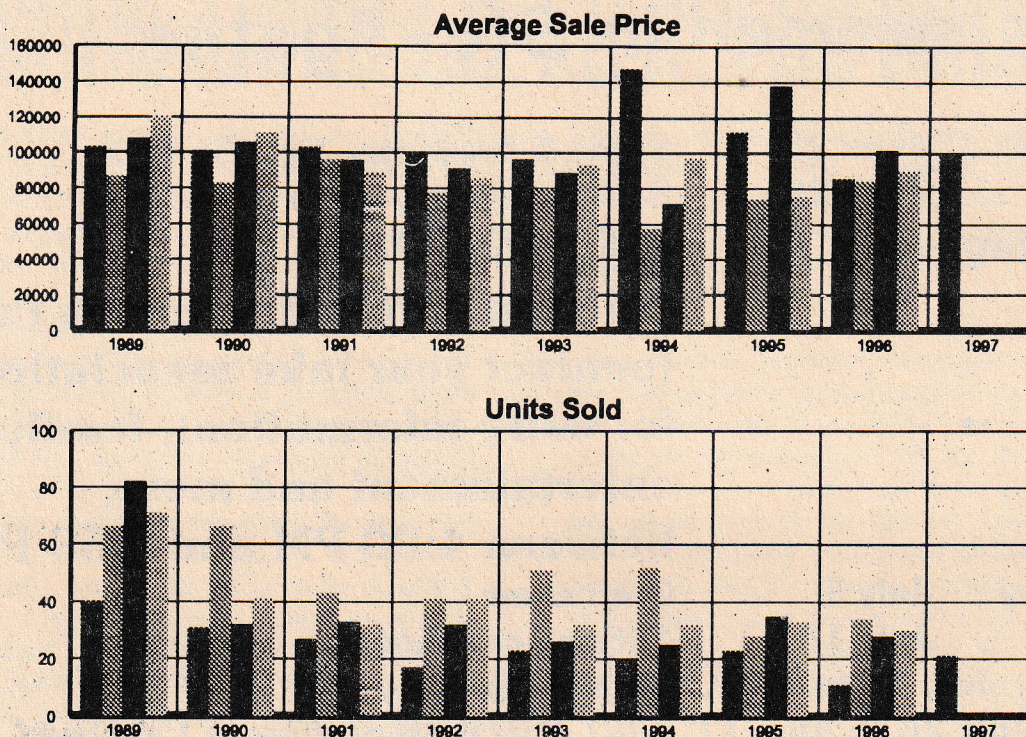
CURÉ LABELLE, LE ROI DU NORD, continued

over the notorious hill to find homes in this new area. Serge Laurin points out in his book *Histoire des Laurentides* that the Curé thereby stopped the advance of the Protestants beyond Arundel. It is doubtful that the Protestants were aware that they had been outflanked, since their development did not seem to have any agenda or particular direction. Surprisingly, many of the new homesteaders and colonists were the children of farmers who had established in Ste. Agathe. In many cases their parents' farms were on poor, rocky soil, and they responded to the news of a more fertile valley beyond the *Repousse*.

The Curé continued to work towards the building of a railroad that would link his northern valley to his parish. He managed to get a lottery accepted to finance the project, a very unusual means of fund-raising in

those conservative times. It is hard to imagine what drove him on. Did he imagine train-loads of produce finding its way from the northern valleys to Montreal or did he see the train as a means of bringing more and wealthier settlers north? He was clearly spearheading a movement to build Catholic communities, to stop the exodus that he had witnessed in his earlier years. Sadly he didn't live to see the train arrive in Ste. Agathe or climb *La Repousse*. He died in 1891, the year before the completion of the rail link to Ste. Agathe. The old photos of the first train arriving with all the important men posed before the station represent the beginning of a whole new age, an era of holiday and recreational use, of hospitals and ski-hills, of hotels and camps. Ironically, had Curé Labelle been standing in the middle of the picture with these ambitious, happy men, he would have looked like an anomaly, an anachronism.

MARKET TRENDS



While the price of the average sale in our sample area has dropped over the past eight years to about 85% of what it was in 1989, the volume of transactions has fallen off to under 40% in the same time. This suggests a very strong supply of properties available, but a continuing weak demand. However, once again as we studied the numbers that are behind the above graphs, we found that there were a few significant sales of recreational property which brought the average value up considerably. With the expected increased demand over this summer we should see a rise in the number of sales and a stabilising of the average price.

If you would like back issues of the Doncaster Ballyhoo, give us a call or drop by. We will happily add the names of your friends or neighbours to our list if they would like to receive their own copy. Please let us know if you change your address. Having an accurate mailing list helps us keep our costs (and waste) down.

IMMEUBLES
Doncaster inc.
REALTIES
Chartered Real Estate

150 Principale
 Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, QC
 Canada J8C 1K3

Tel: (819) 326-4963

Fax: (819) 326-8829

e-mail: doncaster@polyinter.com

Owned and operated by:

Joe Graham

chartered real estate agent

Sheila Eskenazi

affiliated real estate agent

Our office is open six days a week, closed Tuesdays.

(Not intended to solicit properties currently listed for sale)





Moisson des Pays d'en Haut

750, chemin Brunet, Ste-Agathe-Sud (Québec) J8C 2Z7 (819) 324-0009 Fax: (819) 324-0152

June 1997

Dear Member of the Laurentian Community,

Did you know that, in 1996, Moisson des Pays-d'En-Haut responded to 130,000 requests for food aid and distributed 600,000 kilos of foodstuffs with a market value of \$1,500,000? Each kilo given to the needy costs Moisson only 36 cents in operating expenses for administration, sorting and distribution.

In the past six years, Moisson has been able to balance its budget but this year brings a new challenge. Mount Sinai Hospital, which has been donating space, has been told by the government that it will have to close its doors in the near future.

To rationalize operations, a partnership is being arranged for the mutual benefit of Moisson and Resto-Nord des Laurentides, a cafeteria which supplies free hot, healthy meals to impoverished school children. The new headquarters will include a warehouse and refrigerators as well as a community kitchen for families and a center for the 50 to 60 volunteers involved weekly. The two organizations are planning to implement a work-study program in September 1997 that will facilitate the reintegration into the workforce of welfare recipients.

Moisson represents many years of effort and volunteer work, tonnes of food, thousands of people (mainly children) who now have food in their stomachs, plus hundreds more who have been helped to acquire the skills necessary to become productive members of our society.

We know that you are approached often to make donations to charitable organizations, and that there is a limit to every budget, but we ask you to consider the problem of hunger here in the Laurentians. There are thousands of your fellow residents (mostly children) who do not have the means to feed themselves properly. Just consider that every \$1,000 we receive covers one day of operations and feeds 500 people. Why not join our Birthday Club by sponsoring Moisson on your birthday? Moisson needs all members of our community to work together to combat hunger.

Peter Hamé

France Duhamel

PS We are planning a benefit dinner on August 22. Please see over for details.

It is with great excitement and pride that Moisson des Pays-d'En-Haut (the Upper Laurentian food bank) has joined with **BISTRO À CHAMPLAIN** to organize a fund-raising dinner.

The event will take place on August 22, 1997 at 7:00 PM in Sainte-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson.

Recipient for the 10th consecutive year of the *Grand Award* for the best wine cellar in the world presented by the American magazine *The Wine Spectator*, Bistro à Champlain is a required North American stop for any true lover of fine wine and fine food.

Tickets are available at a cost of \$200 per person from Moisson des Pays-d'En-Haut at (819) 324-0009, fax (819) 324-0152. A receipt for income tax purposes of \$100 will be issued for each ticket sold.

We hope that you will join us.
