

Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY No. 16 Late Autumn 1997

Thanks to everyone who came out to support Canada Day and especially the canoe rally. It was great fun for all involved. A report describing the event is available to anyone who asks. We had a large turn-out and the kids had a lot of fun thanks in large part to the efforts of Marcel Boisvert. Roby Mavounzy worked very hard on organising the great entertainment we had, and Raymond LeSaux really did quite a job on the fountain and light show. Everyone seems to be keen to do it all again next year.

Moisson des Pays d'En Haut expresses its gratitude to all of you who responded so generously to their request for help in feeding the poor of the area. Terry Turcot, the director, has worked with the Heritage Committee in Ste Agathe for years and puts in long hours at the food bank where, along with a large team of volunteers, she co-ordinates the collection and distribution of food to community counters throughout the Upper Laurentians.

Carol McCann of Restaurant Chez Girard has taken on, on behalf of the Heritage Committee, the difficult task of creating a walking tour based on the architectural history of Ste. Agathe. She is working closely with the Chambre de Commerce, the Town and the historians who did the study of our built environment that we commissioned on behalf of the Town and the Ministère de la culture. She is hoping that the project will be completed by next spring. Carol is also co-ordinating a project to gather copies of photographs of Ste. Agathe taken before 1950. A call has gone out through the local high school asking people to lend their photos so that they can be copied and classified. If you have any photos you would be willing to share, please call Carol at 326-6914. She'll get them back to you as soon as the copies have been made.

These past years a number of businesses in Ste Agathe have organised "Noël blanc, Noël d'antan". All participating businesses have decorated their buildings with clear (white) lights. It has a remarkably pretty effect. If you appreciate it, please mention it when patronising a well-decorated establishment. It is great encouragement to a small business owner to know that this kind of effort is appreciated by the public.

Everything that's old is new again. More and more people are taking off into the woods on 'back country' skis. These are skis that are a little shorter than cross-country skis and as wide as downhill. The harness is more reminiscent of the old beartraps we used years ago, and the heel is free to come off the ski when you stride. What makes them different from standard cross-country skis is that you can actually do powder skiing with them. They open up a whole new area to the skier: the uncharted woods. Most of the ski stores carry them and if you want to consult an expert, we know quite a few.

Heather Sullivan and the board of the Laurentian Canadian Club have done a great job of getting the chapter going and keeping it running for three years already. About once a month, on a Tuesday afternoon, a speaker makes a presentation to the members and their guests at the community hall of Trinity Church in Ste. Agathe. There have been some quite stimulating speakers, with more scheduled for the rest of the season. If you are interested in coming to one of these events, call us for the name of your local representative.

(819) 326-4963

A Time of Transition: 1868 to 1891

Curé Labelle's time, 1868 to 1891, was one of great change in Ste Agathe. While the town grew, the forests almost disappeared and along with them went species of wildlife we'll never know. When Jacques Cartier first visited the St. Lawrence River in the 1500's, he reported fauna of much greater variety than we find today. His chronicler made particular mention of the large number of seals that lived in the St. Lawrence valley. The horsehead, or grey seal, is mentioned, along with its smaller cousin, the harbour (phoca) or dotar. Farley Mowat, in his book *Sea of Slaughter* explains that the dotar was also found in fresh water, and that there was a colony of them in Lake Superior as late as 1800. Before our interference, Laurentian rivers flowed all the way to the Ottawa without having to go through dams and mills. When the mills were installed they acted as barriers to the easy circulation of many species up and down the North and other rivers. The indigenous fauna must have been much more varied in those early days, permitting the migration of a great variety of river life.

We get an inkling of this from reports of a monster that inhabited the depths of Lac des Sables. According to eye-witnesses, the monster had "the head of a horse and feet like a stove". Here is an excerpt from a report in Montreal's *La Minerve*, from February 20th, 1873: Two boys "*étant allé à la pêche...avait pris la fuite à la vue de ce qui leur avait paru comme une tête de cheval avec une gueule affreuse, se montrant en dessus de l'eau et agitant la surface du lac autour d'eux avec un bruit effrayant.*" Further reports, from the adults, confirmed the sighting and added that the monster had feet "*la grandeur et de la forme des pattes d'un poêle*". Could it have been a seal?

While curious *Agathois* were pondering the monster in Lac des Sables, others were faced with the very real problem of distributing water to the many houses that were being built in the village. In 1878 *La compagnie de l'aqueduc de Ste Agathe des Monts* was given the right to place pipes in the roads in order to supply water. The directors of the company were Reverend Thibodeau, the curé, who had homesteaded the large peninsula on the lake now known as Greenshield's Point, Dr. J.O. Lallier, and Edouard St. Aubin. The water source was located on the property of Moïse St. Aubin, currently the location of the Baumgarten condos at 154 Tour de Lac and La Calèche and the pipes were made of wood. (One such wooden pipe was unearthed a few years ago in St. Adolphe. It had been laid between Lac de la Cabane and Lac Ste. Marie in what is now the Reserve Morgan. It consisted of logs laid end to end and wrapped in wire. When the back hoe broke it, water gushed out through the hollow centre.)

The clean, clear water of Lac des Sables, and the excellent fishing found therein, were the first things to attract

vacationers. The lake, along with lakes Manitou, Grise, Brume, Rougeaud and Cornu all sit in two parallel valleys that run in a north-west south-east axis. All were exceptionally clean and filled with trout (and monsters) in the 1870's. The provincial government decided in 1884 that the lakes and rivers were so important to the development of rural Quebec that it passed a law stating that all future letters patent issued to farmers homesteading property would be subject to a reserve in favour of the Crown (represented by the provincial government) for the purpose of allowing game fishermen and hunters to use these properties. The reserve was limited to the first three chains (a chain was a measure 66 feet long) back from all non-navigable waterways. Navigable waterways fell under federal jurisdiction. The difference between navigable and non-navigable waterways was a grey area that allowed some lakes to be defined one way and others in another way. Prior to 1884, there was an advantage to the non-navigable status, since in such circumstances the land under the lake was ceded with the Letters Patent. The base of navigable lakes was the property of the Crown represented by the federal government, and the colonisation was a provincial responsibility.

The farmers in Ste Agathe were much too preoccupied with survival to contemplate this new legal twist. Those who had already obtained their titles were not affected by it and the presence of fishermen and hunters from as far away as the United States was already showing itself to be beneficial. In any case, the winter of 1885-6 brought with it a plague of small-pox that would leave fifty people dead by spring and, following hard on its heels began the first year of a three-year drought that would leave many farms abandoned.

To add to these hardships, in the spring of 1888, the church's presbytery caught fire and Curé Thibodeau perished in the blaze. Had it not been for the heralded arrival of the train and the economic spinoffs that accompanied it, Ste. Agathe may well have remained a tiny mountain village.

It was into this environment that the first '*étrangers*' arrived. Ste Agathe and all the villages that resulted from the initiatives of A.N. Morin were peopled virtually exclusively by French Catholics and the '*étrangers*' were almost everyone else. While there was only a period of 10 to 15 years between the peak of the foresting and the beginning of the recreational period, it was long enough for the rural and Catholic identity of the towns to set in. There were clearly English Protestants involved in the logging and the surveying, however, they tended to see the area more as a *chantier* than as a destination for any pleasurable or permanent purpose.

What's it Worth

or

The Goods and Services Taxes

We have received many compliments on the quality of our English. We wish to apologise in advance for the incredible number of conjunctions that need to be used in the course of discussing tax law.

If you sell a piece of land, are you obliged to charge the Goods & Services Taxes? What happens if your property is owned in a company name? What about rental? If you rent your house out over Christmas, do you have to charge the tenant these taxes?

Generally, sales of buildings and land held by an individual for private residential purposes are exempt under the GST and QST rules. However, if the sale of land occurs in the course of carrying on a business, the seller is responsible for the collection of the taxes.

While an exemption exists for residential property, sales of undeveloped land are taxable. However, the sale by an individual of a piece of land out of a larger parcel does not necessarily oblige the vendor to charge the taxes. You must be careful though, because if two lots are sold, or if a number of subdivisions are created, the transaction will not be exempt. In such a case, the tax authorities can claim the 7% GST plus the 6.5% QST (7.5% from January 1, 1998) even on any parcel previously sold. Your actions, not your intentions, will be the basis of tax department decisions.

Often we come across circumstances where a large property is held by an individual's estate and the family needs to sell. Sometimes the neighbours are the ideal candidates for parts of this land. If you are planning such a sale, it might be possible to sell all of the various parcels to the interested neighbours jointly and let them split it up afterwards. That way, you have sold only one parcel, and you should be able to sell the balance to someone else without triggering a responsibility on your part to collect the taxes.

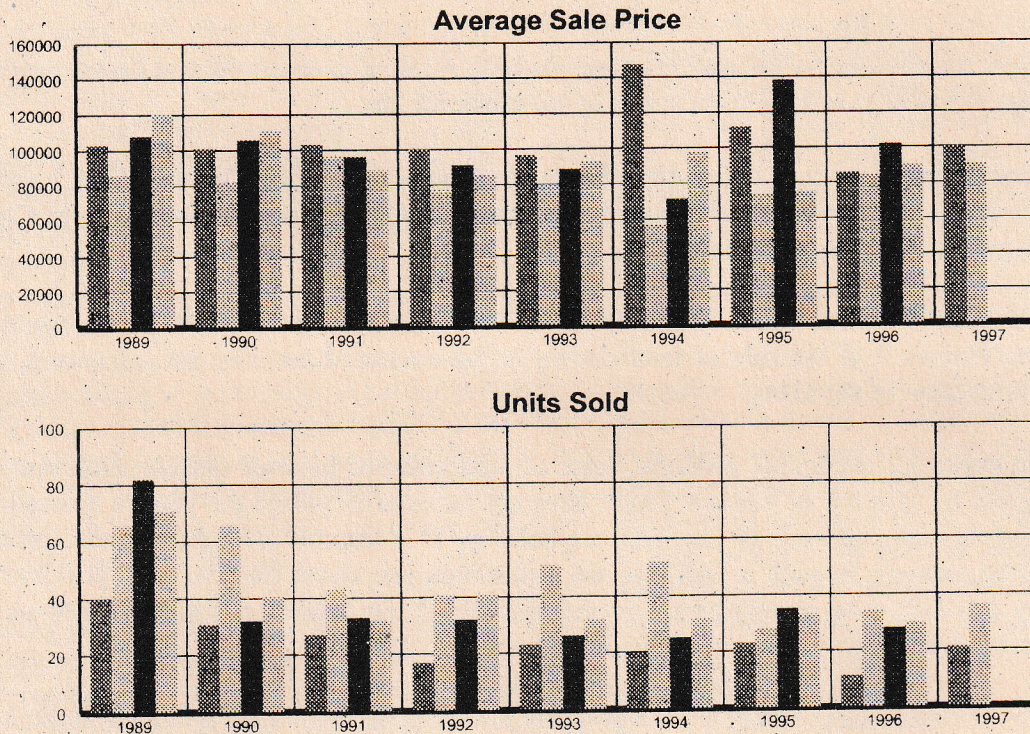
Where land is owned in the name of a company, the company is obliged to collect and remit these taxes. If the company owns a house or building used for residential purposes, this part and the related land may not be subject to the tax, but any excess land will be.

The rental of a residential property is exempt from the GST and the QST. However, where a property is usually rented out for less than 60 days*, it may be considered as commercial property in the same way that hotel rooms and cabins are not considered residential. In such a case, the transactions will not be exempt. Nevertheless, providing the operation does not generate in excess of \$30,000 per year of revenue, there is no obligation to register for and collect the GST and the QST.

Each situation regarding real estate is different. In all cases we advise you to seek the advice of a tax professional first, rather than after, you sell or rent property. General rules, such as described herein may or may not apply in your specific case.

** A July 1997 modification to the Quebec Tourist Establishments Act obliges anyone renting, even his own home, or a room in it for a period of less than a month to obtain an operator's permit. This has nothing to do with the GST and the QST and is only an attempt on the Ministry's part to establish guidelines and standards. It is hard to see how this modification to the law will be policed, however fines start at \$640 for a first offence*

MARKET TRENDS



Figures in the first two quarters of 1997 suggest a marginal increase in the average price in our control area as well as an increase in the number of units sold. Very little can be made of this since the first quarter of 1996 was the first quarter following the Referendum of 1995 and its low numbers tend to skew the results. The most positive interpretation that we can put on things is that they are more stable.

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.

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Our office is open six days a week, closed Tuesdays.
 (Not intended to solicit properties currently listed for sale)

