

Editorial, *Camrose Canadian*, January 14, 1948, page 3.

A Plea for the Esthetic

Our town has for many years been known as the prettiest prairie town in Alberta. Of this factor the citizens are very proud, and justly so. We all appreciate the honor of being known as Camrosians. Any stranger who has been fortunate enough to cross our bridge at the hour of sunset and has seen the great canopy of color reflected in the waters (Nature's daily gift to us) has been, to quote an ex-school teacher, "Truly been smiled on by the Gods". I often wonder how many citizens ever take a few minutes off to think of and really appreciate in their hearts, the beautiful setting in which we live. If they do then why, oh why, has no one ever started a strong agitation about the town's ugliest sore spot, "The Bridge"? It is really an insult to ask anybody to cross this defaming evidence of the town's neglect. Persons who use it habitually are familiar with the repair crew who are frequently working there. In the long run the expense of these numerous repairs will amount to more than the cost of a new structure. No citizen in our town has a mind small enough to object to a slight raise in taxes in the coming year if it means the abolishment of this horror. People get used to seeing the same thing day after day, and bad things are of less importance when you see them often: but consider those passing through! The approach from the east leads you through streets of little houses nestling in lilacs (Camrose is famous for her lilacs) and then the shock of coming across a decayed wooden bridge in the midst of a tranquil pool of blue waters!

Last fall the town had a beautifying campaign, but did anyone mention the bridge as an essential in town beautification? Surely everyone keenly feels the need for action. This is 1948, a New Year, time for a new start, so let's see some action down by the reservoir. – Ardis Stewart

Ardis's note about this editorial: I don't suppose it is relevant but there was some fallout from my 1948 student editorial in the *Camrose Canadian*.

The day after the paper came out I received a phone call from the Manager of the Calgary Power Office in Camrose. He ordered me to come to his office the minute school got out. When I arrived he furiously berated me for writing about the bridge. He told me that my father could lose his job as a result of my actions. He then drove me to the Mayor's office. The Mayor first suggested that the editorial should be withdrawn but on second thought decided that any action would cause more attention to be drawn to the matter. It seemed that the town was negotiating with the Province about whether the town or the Province should pay for a new bridge on Highway 13 which runs through the town. For some reason the negotiations were being conducted in secrecy and they thought I had "rocked the boat".

Historically in Alberta the Province was responsible for highway construction except within towns and villages. For years the pavement of Highway 2 stopped at the limits of the town of Millet. The portion inside the town was an unimproved gravel stretch which the traffic bumped over.

As for my father, when I told him about the danger to his employment, he just laughed and said it was an empty threat.