

Annexation... A Dirty

By TED RUSHTON

If I were taking bets I would give slight odds that Orillia will be successful in its bid to annex 3,000 acres of Orillia Township.

The hearing ended Friday with the Ontario Municipal Board members promising a decision within weeks. Based on this and a few off-hand comments made by the OMB members seeming to favor the town, it would seem they would approve some annexation, even if the town's proposed area is enlarged or cut.

The case presented for Orillia stated the town was the logical centre of this urban area, and needed land for continued development. The township council agreed with this position,

but said the town application was hasty and ill-conceived and not taking into effect any plan for the entire area.

In effect, the Municipal Board members seem to have agreed in principle with Orillia's position, saying the annexation consideration was for the present, and not some nebulous future date.

By the time the dust settles over the battle-royale, and each side adds up its cost, everyone will likely be more amenable to calm and reasonable discussions as to future growth and planning for the area. We can hope that local municipal officials will realize the futility of local in-fighting, and a new spirit of endeavour will be one ad-

ditional benefit from the hearings.

A lot of 'dirty laundry' was aired at the hearing, both on the side of the town and township. One of the proposed sites for the new university was revealed prematurely, and the questionable financing within the OWLP was brought out in public view.

One of the sorest points for Orillia officials were the references to the "slum" area in the south ward of the town, and suggestions for urban renewal projects in this region.

A surprising feature of the hearings was the small number of people who put forth any private objections to annexation. At some annexation hearings