

y Fight.... Won By Town?

reds of people demand to
e their views known either
or against proposals which
believe may affect their

is lack of public concern
puzzling to the two OMB
bers and may be a direct
ence on the final decision
hand down.

e township presented a mar-
s defense. With the town-
reduced to an almost en-
rural municipality if an-
ion is approved, it should
ly simplify dealings be-
n the town and township.

e hearing does commem-
one century of fighting be-
n the town and township.
e was long and bitter op-
on to Orillia when it separ-

ated from the township and be-
came a village in 1866, one of
the main issues of that day be-
ing who would get the Library
and who would get the books.
It would be fitting if the Ontario
Municipal Board, in handing
down its decision, also made
some commemoration for a cen-
tennial celebration of town-town-
ship bickering.

While the township had the
more daring and long-range
plan for the area, the board
emphasized that it was strictly
concerned with the present day
needs of the town. On this basis,
their decision in favor of an-
nexation seems likely.

Orillia will jump to almost
20,000 persons, with a healthy

yearly growth rate, and could
conceivable take the next big
plunge into separation from the
county and incorporation as a
city.

Both sides indicated they
would like a decision as soon
as possible, and the OMB have
indicated one won't be long in
coming.

The real criteria on the week's
battle, and the thousands of
dollars spent daily on legal
counsel and professional advice,
will only come in future years.
It won't depend on whether
Orillia gets the land it applied
for, is awarded more, or is
turned down again.

The township has indicated a
bold new concept in regional

planning. It appears Orillia's
annexation application was ne-
cessary to force the township
into this new thinking. Until
the annexation application was
filed they dragged their feet on
even a township plan.

But, in having got their feet
wet in area planning, there's
no need for the township to
draw back. Provided town and
township officials can co-ope-
rate, and provide leadership for
other municipalities in this
area and including Ontario
County, a bold new concept of
regional development and gov-
ernment may yet be devised.

The annexation battle, hard
and furious, may be a turning
point for the entire area.