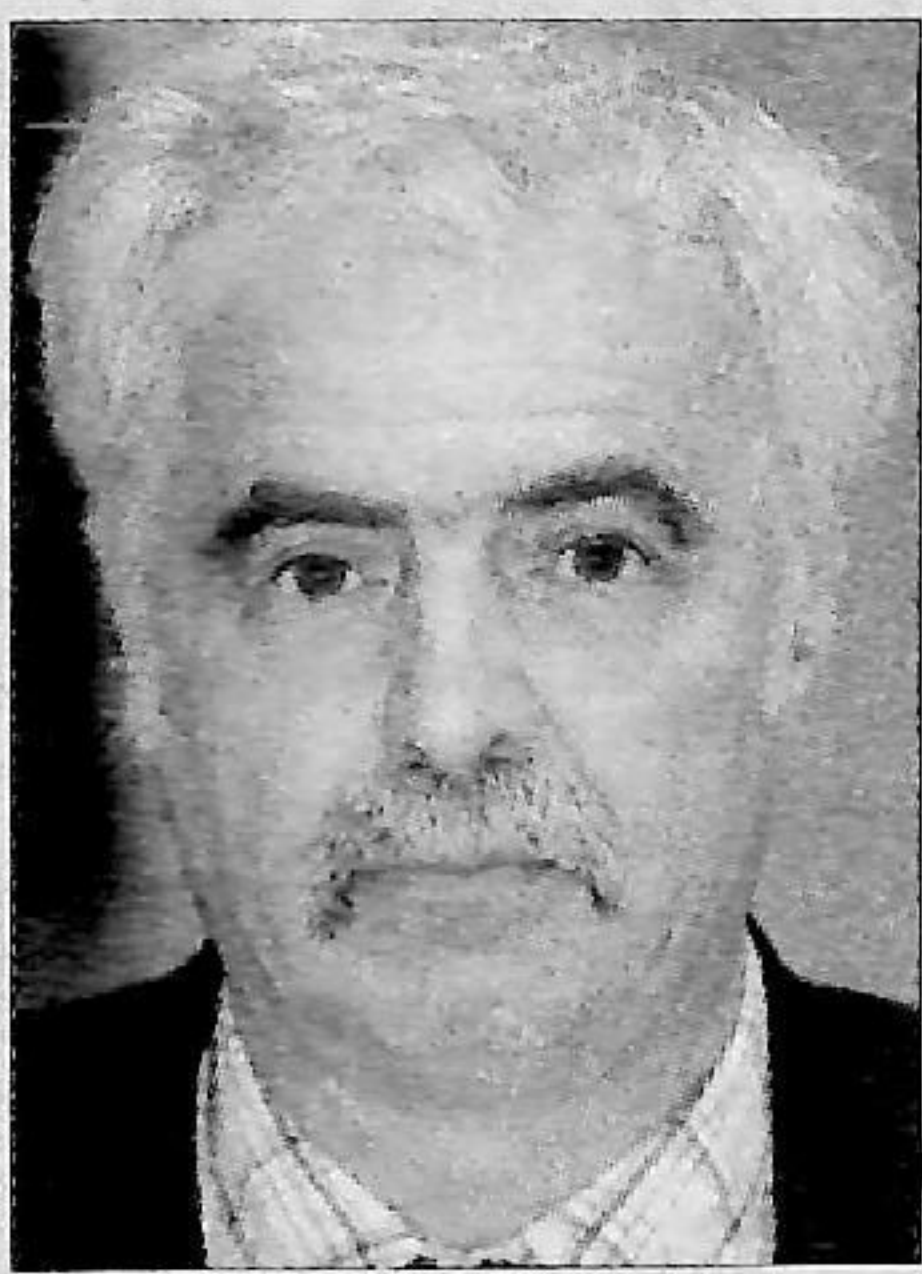


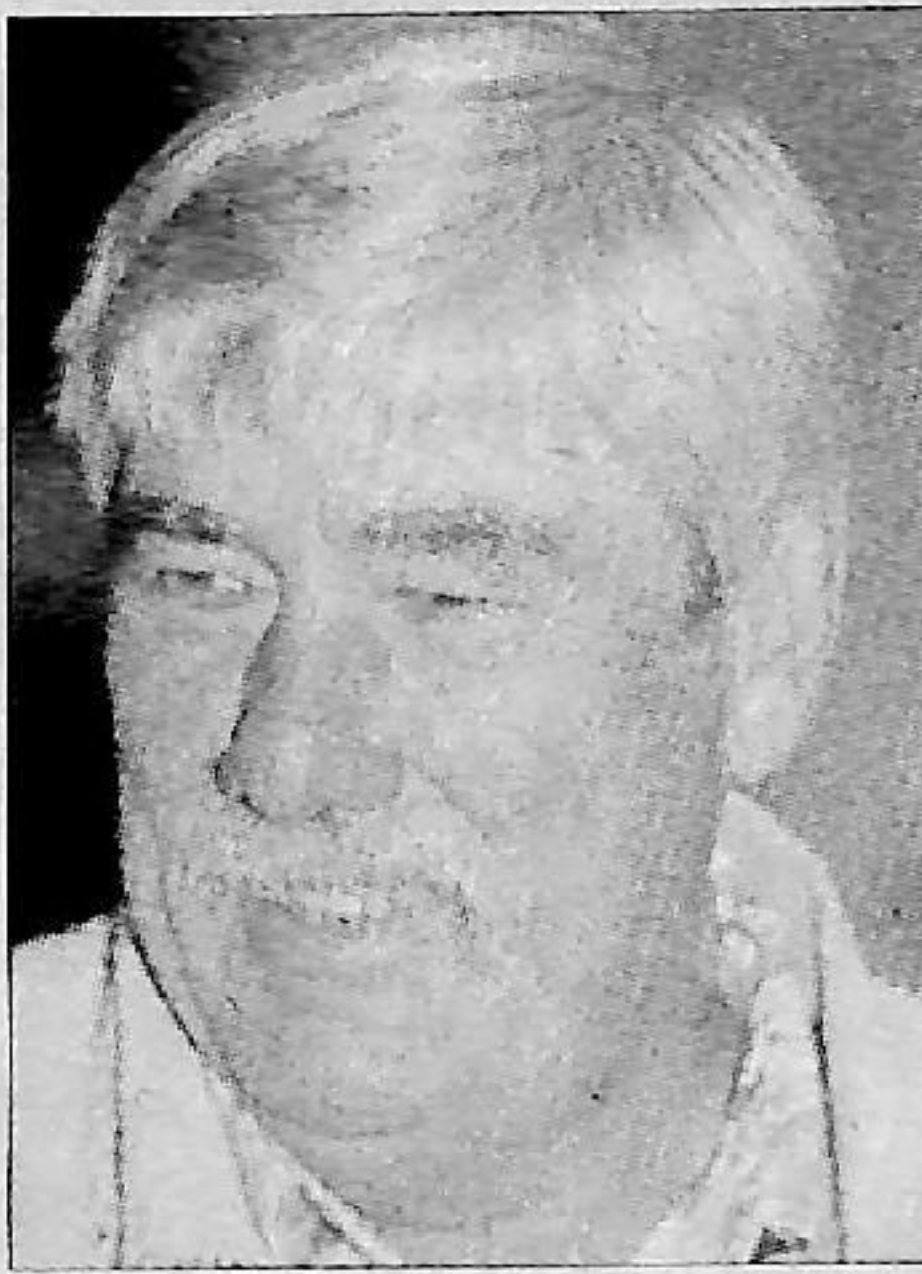
# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY



DOUG GALT



LOU RINALDI



MURRAY WEPPLER

# Candidates say end school strikes, cut private school tax, show teachers respect

BY JEANNE BENETEAU  
STAFF WRITER

## NORTHUMBERLAND

Local Liberal candidate, Lou Rinaldi says, if elected, his party will limit class sizes in the primary grades to no more than 20 kids

Should the NDP form the next provincial government, Murray Wepler says individual boards will be given more control over curriculum and greater flexibility over budgets at the local level.

And if Ernie Eves Conservative's nab a third consecutive mandate, Northumberland MPP Dr. Doug Galt says taxpayers can expect an end to work-to-rule and school strikes.

"Education is about children," says Dr. Galt. "Every child should have the opportunity to be in school everyday. Strikes and work-to-rule are not helpful to students and teachers want to be in the classroom, they want to teach."

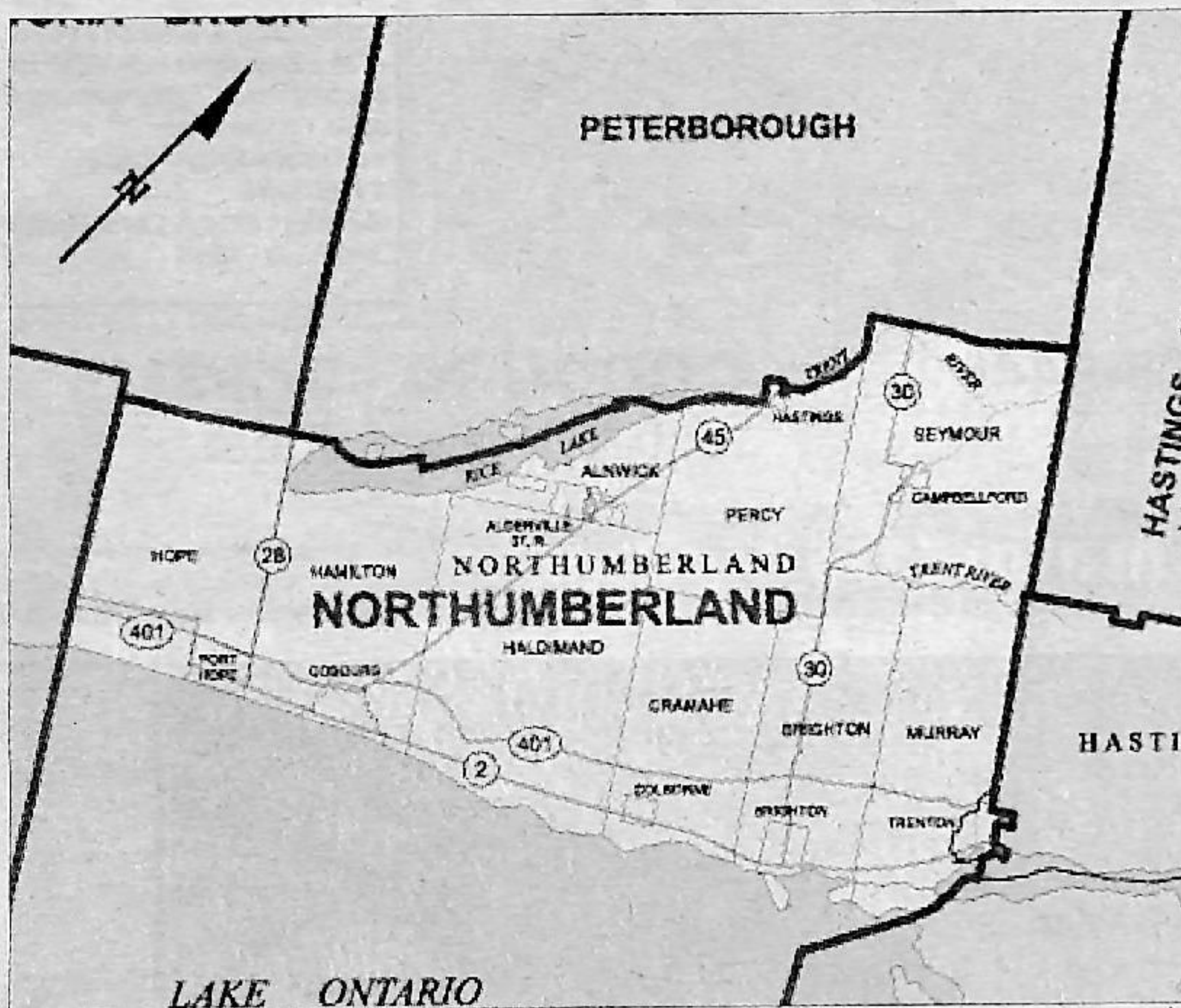
So who's got the best education policy?

It's up to Ontario voters to decide when they take to the polling booth Oct. 2.

Teachers are dedicated people, says Mr. Wepler. But over the past eight years, they have been made scapegoats, taking the blame when it's inadequate government funding for schools that is the real problem, he says.

"Reduced staff, fewer librarians, fewer guidance counselors... the workload increase is not good for teachers and certainly not good for our children,"

*Sept 16/03*



he says.

Adequate funding to schools is the key to soothing problems between school boards, teachers and the province. The NDP has pledged to restore \$2 billion to schools almost immediately and scrap the Tory private school tax credit, putting money in the public school system, where it belongs, he adds. And it's time for bureaucrats to quit telling teachers how to do their jobs.

"We understand that schools in smaller communities are essential, a key part of a healthy community," he notes.

Mr. Rinaldi's Liberal's have also vowed to axe tax credits for private schooling and pump money into rural schools.

"We need to pull back that money and invest it in our public school system," he says. "Young children should not have to ride a bus for up to two hours a day. They should be in the classroom."

The Liberals are also committed to keeping kids in school until they are 18, says Mr. Rinaldi. Through apprenticeship and skilled trade programs offered in the school environment, young people will leave high school with the necessary skills to make it in the workforce.

He adds it's time to treat teachers like professionals; only adequate funding to schools will allow this to happen. Under the Conservatives, the relationship

with teachers has eroded over the past eight years, he contends.

"While we don't condone strikes, teachers do have the right to bring their issues to the table. And if worse comes to worse, there are mechanisms in place to get teachers back in the classroom. But if schools have adequate funding, many of the problems and issues can be solved without strikes."

However, problems between the province and the teachers union are nothing new, says Dr. Galt.

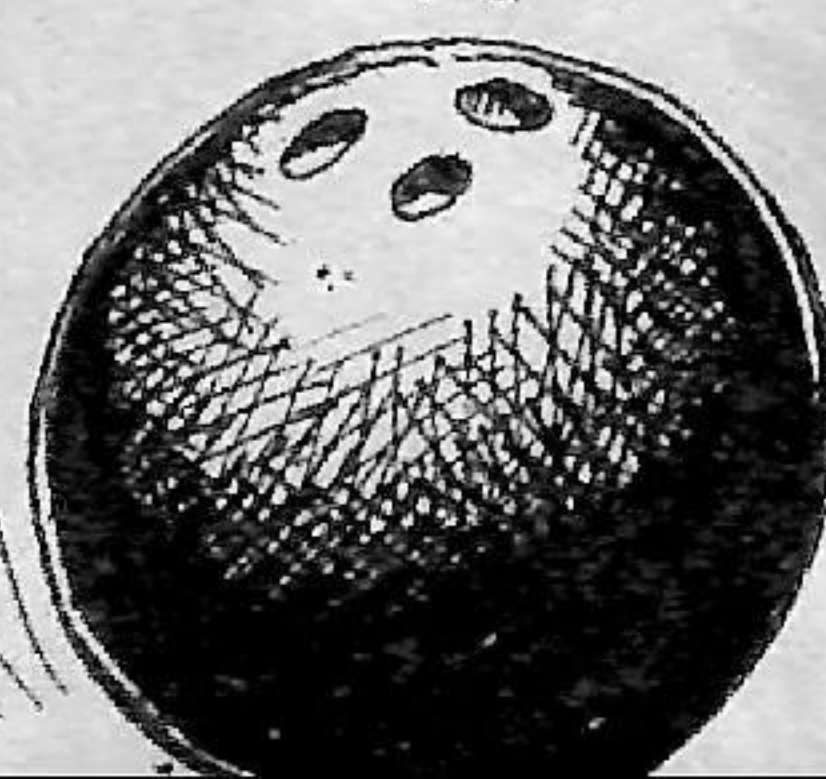
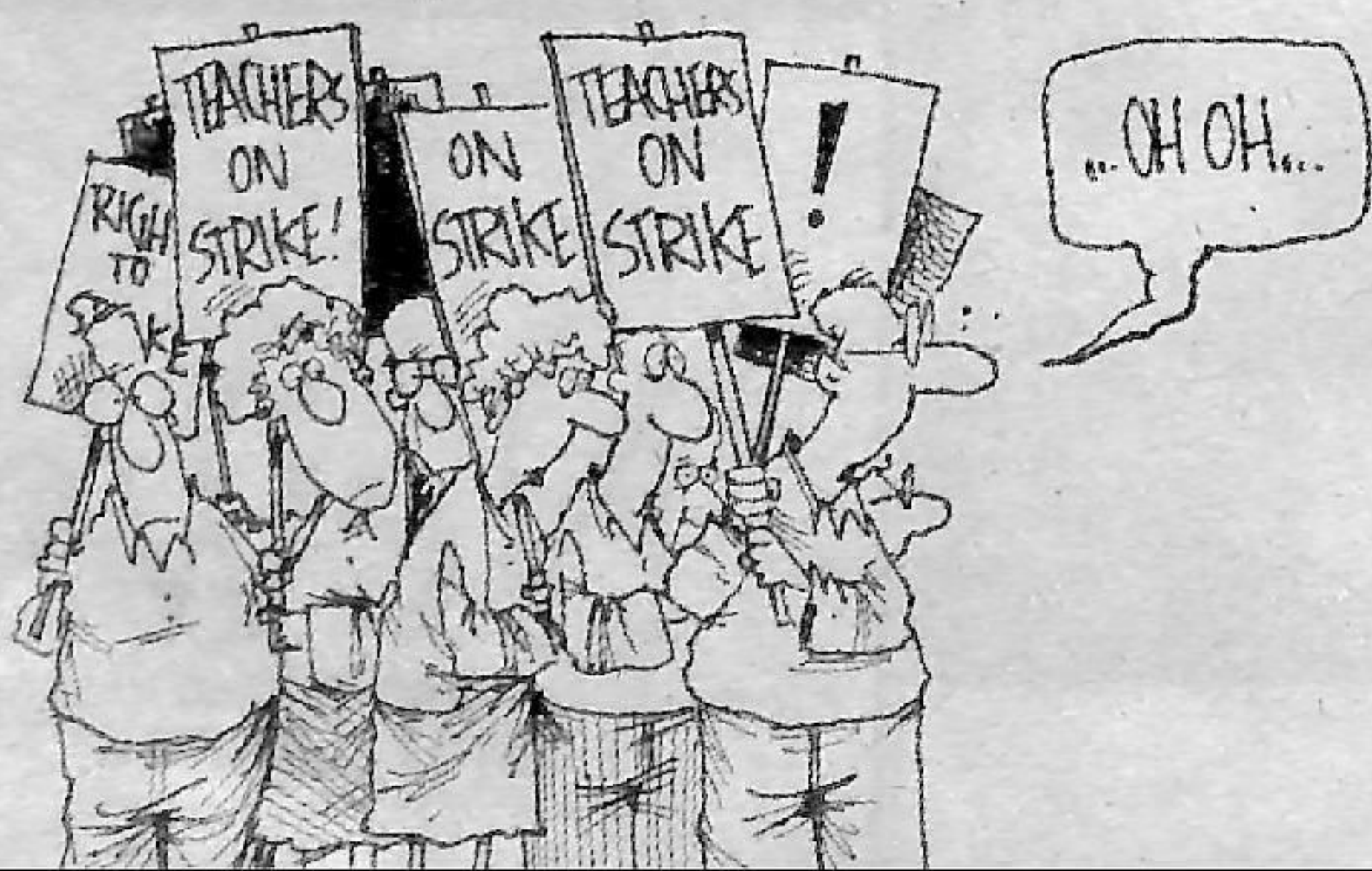
"Teachers were upset with the Rae, Peterson and Davis governments," he explains.

What's important to focus on is the results in the classroom over the past eight years, he says. In 1995, Ontario school children were not rating very well in international testing. Today, the Grade 3 math and science marks have increased 35 per cent, thanks to the new curriculum, standardized testing and standardized report cards.

The Conservative government remains committed to quality education for Ontario school children, says Dr. Galt, to the tune of \$2 billion over the next term.

"It's evident by the achievement of Ontario school children, student-focused funding is working," says Dr. Galt.

Today's Editorial  
See page 6



DRISMAN