

### Acton School Board Member Urges More Emphasis on 3Rs

Acton, Ont., January 2nd, 1958

Dear Mr. Editor:

In the hope that your readers will find food for thought in my remarks, I am sending you a submission made to the North Halton High School district board. The opinions are my own, and any comment by you or your readers will be welcomed.

The principal of the Acton high school, at Commencement exercises expressed an important observation: "The acceptance and general approval," by society today, of the norm or average student and citizen tends to dilute the real goals of perfection, thereby depriving, through lack of enthusiastic recognition, many persons of latent capacities from ever tasting that real satisfaction of a job truly well done."

This observation is also stressed by an eminently qualified philosopher, George Santayana, "Perfection is the justification of being."

The message outlined was ironically supported by the newspaper coverage of the commencement exercises. One newspaper heard and assimilated and reproduced the message. The other newspaper reproduced a rather more popular but negative theme: too many students are satisfied with average records. Again, unfortunately, this rather negative observation is heard on the streets and in gathering places, and, even though a popular practice, robs available supporting man-hours of the correct, positive observation.

Is our school board, in the writer's opinion composed of citizens appointed to be workers and leaders in idealistic educational facilities and programs, within the taxpayers' capacity to provide, helping the students toward this desirable goal? Or are we, too, encouraging the well-balanced, all-round, average citizen and thereby stifling potential achievement?

Let's listen to and think of what is heard and read all around us today. University heads implying the needs of government subsidization; government spokesmen implying the needs of capitalistic industrial educational subsidization, university professional personnel decrying the educational standard of entrants; secondary school principals decrying the educational standards of entrants; elementary school spokesmen decrying student-teacher background, while urging some home responsibilities, possibly reluctantly relinquished; school board members decrying teacher capabilities (as though the average member could differentiate).

Something is obviously wrong. Self-defensive thinking and crying might seem to be more widespread rather than less necessary in our more law abiding citizenry.

I have recently observed a secondary-school grade thirteen student, on the record a first class honours student throughout school-life, earn a genuinely heart-breaking 50 in English composition; a discouraging and widespread occurrence in grades 12 and 13. A study of this particular problem reveals that capacities are inadequate, without outside contributory time and thought-robbing interests.

The history of a good student's working hours is:

- Approximately 14 hours weekly at school from age 5 to 6, yearly total 560 hours.
- Approximately 27 hours weekly at school from age 6 to 12, yearly total 1,000 hours.
- Approximately 27 hours weekly at school plus 2 hours homework from age 12 to 13, yearly total of 1,100 hours.
- Approximately 25 hours weekly at school plus 5 hours homework in grades 9 and 10, yearly total 1,125 hours.
- Approximately 25 hours weekly at school plus 7 hours homework in grades 11 and 12, yearly total 1,200 hours.
- Approximately 25 hours weekly at school plus 15 hours homework in grade 13, yearly total 1,600 hrs.

A grand total of approximately 15,000 hours of school work.

Now an obvious deduction, if the student fails in capacity to reach recognized standards in this time schedule, would be: not enough available school work man-hours.

There could be three separate solutions:

1. A reduction in the content of each grade, with a consequent increase in the total number of elementary and secondary school-years.
2. An increase in the daily or weekly, and therefore yearly, school attendance hours.
3. A decrease in the number of school-work fields, towards that older, basic, so-called 3R curriculum.

In support of solution 3, the following reasons could apply:

Between the stages of kindergarten and secondary-school graduation, achievement in academic examination percentages plus a supporting every-student participating recreational program could possibly hold off dual-type bore-

## Sugar and Spice

Dispensed by BILL SMILEY of the Warton Ebb

I can't see why there's so much fuss about colour. We adopted a coal-black baby this Christmas, and already he's as dear to us as one of our own. Of course, we didn't stipulate, when we were looking for him, what colour he was to be, as so many would-be parents do. We just wanted a baby, and we got a dandy.

The kids aren't bothered by his colour, either. They've wanted a new baby brother for years, and they're fascinated by him. They spend hours looking at him, playing with him, fetching him toys and warming his milk.

We had quite a time training him. His new parents wanted something dignified and distinguished, like Othello. Various friends and relatives contributed all sorts of suitable, if unoriginal monikers. But the name the kids chose for him was both original and suitable. So "Playboy" he is. And not a bad name for a seven-week-old spaniel pup, at that.

It's the first dog we've ever had at Draughty Windows, the old family manor. And it's apparent already that he's going to dominate the scene. It requires the combined strength, patience and ingenuity of the entire family to cope with the little black devil.

His first night in the house gave us a taste of things to come. He went to sleep like a baby in his new bed. But about 2 a.m. I was dredged out of a deep and honest sleep by the loudest, most pitiful wailing you've ever heard. So I spent the next two hours sitting on the kitchen floor in my pyjamas letting him gnaw my hand, the only thing that would shut him up.

Every time I'd get him settled down and start to sneak away, the little black head would bob up between the paws on the edge of his box, the brown eyes would give me a look of desperate appeal, and the heart-rending crying would resume.

Three nights of this and I was about ready for the honeydew. My nerves were shot. I was worn out. I was snapping at the kids and the old lady. We tried everything. "Put a ticking alarm clock in with him" suggested dog owners. He promptly launched the alarm clock with a full-scale christening. Extra blankets, warm milk, prolonged caresses, had no effect. He wanted company.

I was about ready to start shooting the nubbles into him, when somebody suggested trying a hot water bottle. I know how Archimedes felt when he leapt out of his bathtub crying "Eureka". Playboy now sleeps through, his alarm clock ticking away and his mother, in the guise of a hot water bottle, under his fat little belly. I know it will be the ruin of him, and that he'll probably need psychiatric treatment when he finds out that his mother leaks when you bite her, but for the present, we are both getting some sleep.

But that's only one department satisfied. The book says when he makes a mess, you're supposed to hold his nose close to it, say "No!" in a firm tone, then put him on the paper he's supposed to use. I have personally done this at least 84 times but Playboy apparently hasn't read the book. He goes right on using any portion of any floor he feels like using. He's made the living room rug three times, despite the utmost vigilance.

It's a good thing I'm in the newspaper business. My wife used to complain because I brought home so many newspapers. Now she's crying for more, and we're going to have to step up our press run. It's not that Playboy uses the papers. But he likes the game of trying to find a spot on the floor that doesn't have a paper spread on it.

Now, for years I've been bored to tears by people telling me about the cute tricks their dogs have performed. I've been horrified to see people treating dogs like children. I've been annoyed by large dogs with dirty feet planting the latter firmly on my trousers. So don't think that one mere small spaniel pup is going to destroy all those fine anti-canine prejudices I've built up.

Less dilution of directional effort should increase individual and collective results and rewards. The higher standard student will study and learn better. A specialized field of art and craft or profession.

A well rounded, balanced, adjusted citizenship job. Avoidance of "a little knowledge is dangerous" or "Jack of all trades, master of none" or "a well rounded vegetable." This presentation could earn a title of oversimplification; but it is possibly axiomatic that people over-complicate simple and obvious deductions, in pursuit of self-improvement.

An Acton board member.

But when the fight between garden lovers and dog owners gets into full swing next spring, don't be surprised to read some stirring editorial about the divine right of dogs to roll in the tulips.

### Says Insurance Plan is Great Ontario Blessing

Dr. R. W. Ian Urquhart, chairman of the Ontario Hospital Services Commission, said in Toronto today that the people of Ontario can help to make the forthcoming hospital insurance plan one of the greatest blessings the province has ever enjoyed. The plan, which began at one minute past midnight on New Year's day, will provide all basic hospitalization needs for more than 90 per cent of Ontario's 5,850,000 population.

"This is a really great plan," Dr. Urquhart told a press conference at Queen's Park. "great in its concept and great in its scope. We like to believe that the people of this province will show the same good sense and spirit of cooperation in using Ontario Hospital Insurance as they did in registering for its benefits." Dr. Urquhart told press, radio and television reporters, that the Commission did not anticipate a "queue of would-be patients outside each hospital door on New Year's Eve."

"More than 72 per cent of the population already have some form of hospital insurance through insurance companies, Blue Cross, and other prepayment plans," he said. "For these people there will be no novelty about prepaid hospital care, even though OHI will be far more comprehensive than any corresponding plan in the past." Dr. Urquhart said the Commission is specially happy that the medical profession has offered to encourage local hospital medical staffs to set up committees to assure the most effective use of hospital facilities. "This is in keeping," said Dr. Urquhart, "with the commission's expressed desire that hospitals should retain their local autonomy under the plan."

Referring to the many ways in which the introduction of Ontario Hospital Insurance will assist the hospitals of the Province, Dr. Urquhart said that one of the most noticeable

benefits will be the near-elimination of the indigent patient problem. This, he said, will be done in two ways. Residents who receive Public Assistance from the Ontario Department of Public Welfare will be covered without paying premiums, and municipalities have been invited by the Commission to insure their own Unemployment Relief Cases and other potential hospital indigents. Dr. Urquhart added that although this was a fairly recent decision, already many municipalities have indicated that they will pay OHI premiums for their relief cases rather than run the risk of footing heavy hospital indigent bills as they occur. Dr. Urquhart paid a special tribute to his predecessor as Commission chairman, Arthur J. Swanson. "Despite constant ill health," said Dr. Urquhart, "Mr. Swanson devoted himself unsparringly to the development of the plan from

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