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## Assessment Commissioner Comments On Separate School Assessments

Georgetown, May 6, 1959  
Dear Mr. Editor:  
On Sunday, April 26th, the following pamphlet was distributed to parishioners of Holy Cross church:

### HOLY CROSS SCHOOL Items of Interest Catholic Education

We wish to thank His Excellency, Bishop Ryan, for his generous remarks about the school trustees and their work. It is indeed encouraging to hear His Excellency lend his unequivocal support to Holy Cross School and to hear him reiterate the need for Catholic education.

The need for 'Separate' schools is not a form of social snobbery, nor is it a form of discrimination. As Catholics, we recognize that our children should learn the teaching of Christ and of His Church. This, we recognize as our moral obligation. We also recognize that apart from any obligation as such, that our children because of religious teachings and atmosphere are better Christians, are better persons and are better citizens.

In addition in every child, as in the adult, there is a basic spiritual need. This need should be satisfied and cherished, and school is one of the places where this can best be done.

### Allocation of Taxes

It has come to the attention of the Board that some of the new members of the parish are not aware of the procedure involved in allocating their taxes to Holy Cross School.

To be a Separate school supporter, there are two qualifications:

1. The property assessed must be within 3 miles of the school.

2. The tenant must declare himself to be a Roman Catholic.

It should be noticed that the person who OWNS the property pays the taxes, but the property must be assessed for school taxes according to the religion of the TENANT. The school attended by the tenant's children, or the fact that there are no children in the tenant's family, has no bearing whatever on the allocation of the taxes.

Assessment and taxes are two different things. The assessor is an employee of the municipality and is a public servant. He merely makes an assessment of the value of the premises. It is not the assessor's function to advise the owner or tenant of the property where he should allocate his taxes. However, under Chapter 24, Section 16 of the Revised Statutes of Ontario, the assessor must make diligent enquiry as to the religion of the tenant and then enter his statistics on the assessment roll. Any parishioner who has not as yet transferred his taxes to the support of the parochial school, or who has any questions concerning the assessment or tax situation in general, should contact Stan Walsh, 41 Delrex Blvd., telephone TR. 7-9233. Stan is chairman of the assessment committee for the Separate School Board.

### Separate School Mill Rate

In the first few years of operating a new modern school, many of the expenditures including the building costs are of a capital nature and will not be repeated. Despite these heavy financial commitments there will be no difference between the public and separate school rates. Separate school supporters will, therefore, not be required to pay anything in excess of the rates established this week by council for public school purposes.

Sunday, April 26th, 1959

In view of the fact that the writer of the above sheet did not have the intestinal fortitude (the guts) to sign it, in view of the fact that I have been unable to obtain a list of members of the church from the Pastor and in view of the fact that I consider it an under the table attempt to discredit myself as Assessor, I should appreciate the privilege to make a few comments in the Herald, because in my opinion the above letter will help to confuse present and future Separate School supporters and make an already difficult task more difficult, for the Georgetown Assessment Department in the allocation of Assessments and advising assessed persons who may and those who cannot direct their assessment to Separate School Support, under the Assessment and Separate School Acts, thereby clarifying the situation so that I may be able to prepare as accurate as possible Separate School Assessment Roll for the year 1959.

Under the heading of "Allocation of taxes" in paragraph 5 the letter says in part "The property must be assessed for school taxes according to the religion of the tenant." That is definitely not so. Nothing could be further from the facts and is further evidence that if the writer of the letter has any knowledge of Assessment Practice at all, it is extremely limited. Proof of this is that I am a Roman Catholic and I am a public school supporter. Any person regardless of his or her religious affiliation has that privilege and most sig-

nificant is the fact that in the Assessment Department the records show and prove that 60% of the Roman Catholic families in the town of Georgetown have not directed their taxes to be applied to Separate School support. The primary reason for this letter as assessment commissioner is to call to the attention of all tenants, occupants, and owners of assessed properties, in this municipality who desire to be Separate School supporters, the responsibility which is theirs and the responsibility that is the Assessment Commissioner's. Section 56 of the Separate School Act provides that: Every person paying rates, whether as owner or tenant who wishes to be a Separate School supporter shall on or before the 15th day of July notify the clerk of the municipality in writing that he is a Roman Catholic and a Separate School supporter, and Section 63 (2) of the same act provides that the Clerk shall enter in an index book, (form 1) the name of every person who has given to him notice in writing that such person is a Roman Catholic and a supporter of Separate School, and Section 23 of the Assessment Act provides that the Assessor shall be guided thereby in ascertaining who have given the notices which are by law necessary in order to place them on the Separate School assessment roll. Therefore, when the Separate School assessment roll is being prepared consideration will only be given to the Separate School supporters, the names of whom appear in the clerk's index book. That is my interpretation of the Assessment and Separate School Acts, and that is the procedure I shall pursue, and I respectfully suggest that with cooperation between assessed persons and this Department, assessment for tax purposes will be placed on the Public or Separate School assessment roll to comply with the people's wishes to the extent that the Assessment and Separate School Act permit, and if there are any errors or omissions the assessed person has the right under Section 69 of the Assessment Act to appeal to the Court of Revision any time between the time of receiving the assessment notice and the 16th day of October.

In the letter referred to, the writer makes the statement that the assessor is an employee of the municipality and a public servant. I am pleased to be able to say that is correct; and I'll take one guess and say that I have been happy to be in this position long before he was lucky enough to move to a good town like Georgetown. He makes the statement "the assessor merely makes an assessment of the value of the premises" and it is not the function of the assessor to advise people and that he must make diligent enquiry as to the religion of people, etc. "Wow!" all of which again convinces me of his lack of knowledge of the subject he is making such a feeble effort to discuss sure—Mr. Mystery Man, it is my function and duty to advise people who request advice in connection with my work as an assessment commissioner and if you had availed yourself of the opportunity to be advised you probably would not have written such scrambled chatter.

You say there is a Mr. Stan Walsh, who is chairman of the assessment committee of the Separate School Board. Sounds like an important committee. I wonder what his function is? But I do assure Mr. Walsh that as an assessed person, he is entitled to, and shall receive the usual courtesy advice, and good service as any other good ratepayer, regardless of whether he were chairman of the Catholic Committee of the Knights of Columbus or chairman of the Protestant Committee of the Loyal Orange Lodge, and that prompts me to be serious enough for a moment to inject a personal note, to say, most sincerely, that I shall never be unmindful of the many mutual genuine friendships that were established and maintained down through the years between members of the last named organization and myself.

The second paragraph of the above mentioned letter appears to me extremely ambiguous and I am reluctant to discuss it because of the remote possibility that the writer might mean that any particular religious teaching makes better persons and better citizens. Oh, no, I can't imagine anyone having such a one track mind and taking a chance of being shot at sunrise, especially by Catholic parents who are sending their children to public school!

Realizing as I do, Mr. Editor, that this letter has taken more valuable Herald space than I intended, I assure you there will be no further press comments in the future by me on this subject.

Very truly submitted  
—JOSEPH GIBBONS  
Assessment Commissioner

GOOD FISHING

Eleven-year old Bill Ewins, R.R. 2, is proud of a 15 inch speckled trout which he hooked on Thursday. The fish had a girth of 10 to 12 inches and was one of the best reported so far this season.

Another good catch was an 8 lb brown trout caught by Gene Logan, Glen Williams.

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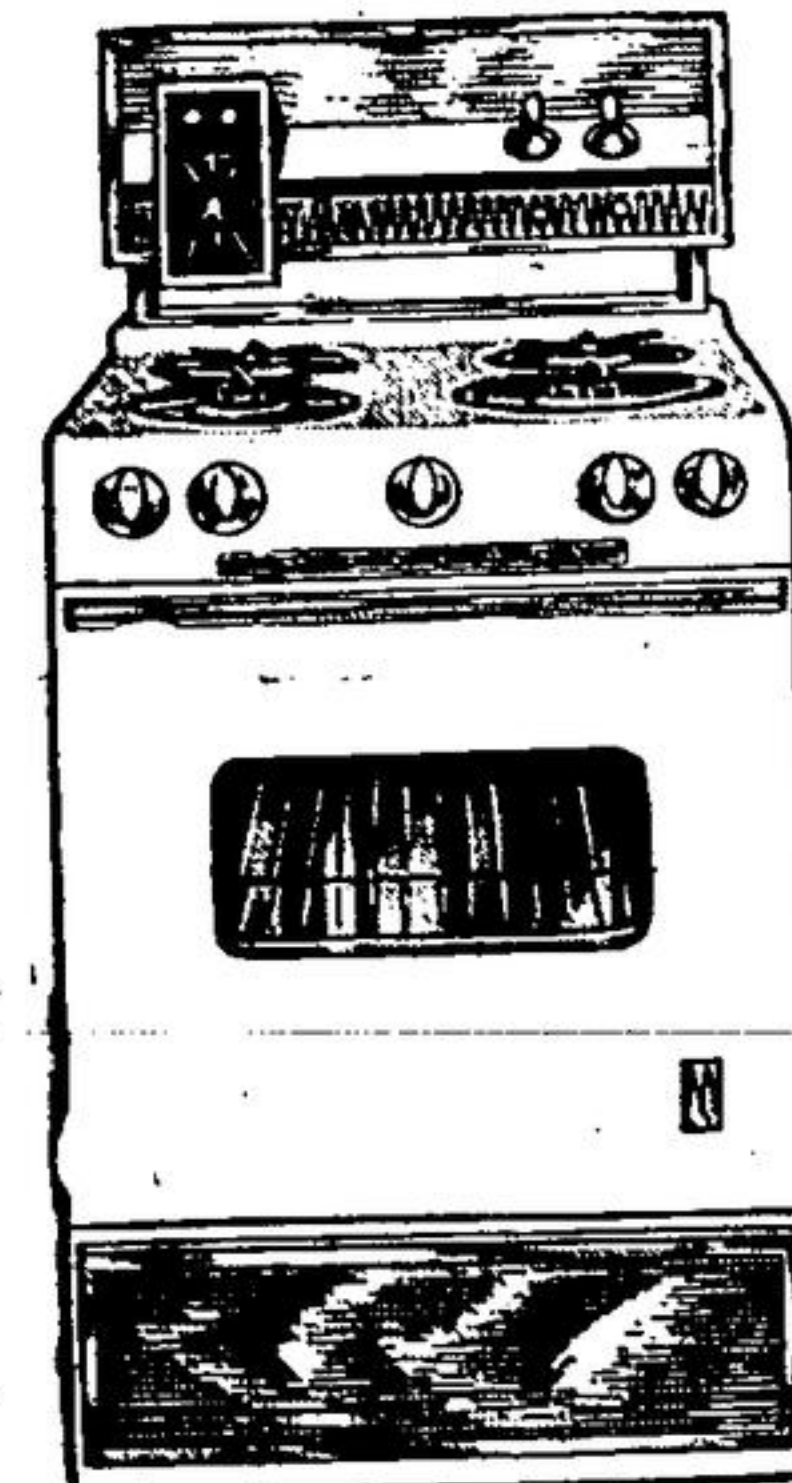
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