81 YEARS OLD

VISITOR FROM HOLLAND

— Home Town Studio

MRS. VAN DER TOORN

Eighty-one year old Mrs. Van Der Toorn of Scheveningen, Holland, a resort town on the North Sea, is visiting with her daughter, whose name is also Mrs. Van Der Toorn, at 115 Park Street, Glen Williams. Spry and alert for her age, Mrs. Van Der Toorn said if she was 10 years younger she would stay in this country. She was particularly thrilled with the beauty of Niagara Falls despite the shutdow of the American falls. She plans to return to Holland in the spring.

IN THE MAIL BAG

What's Wrong? Teacher Says New Education System Excellent

12 McInfyre Crescent

Dear Sir:

A recent resolution sponsored by Ken Marshall, Councillor for Esquesing Township, sounds as if he has a personal axe to grind with educational people in this county. Rather than vent his ire on the entire county system Cr. Marshall would be well advised to let somebody know what exactly is bothering him.

Everyone who works for the Halton County Board of Education realizes that the system has its drawbacks but considering the wide differences in procedures and routines which existed in January 1969 I believe the trustees, director, assistant director, administrative officials, principals and teachers have done an excellent job of uniting our county schools. If Mr. Marshall is dissatisfied with its efficiency after only nine months of operation, I am sure that he cannot be aware of the complexities involved.

To suggest that trustees salaries be cut by 50% shows the small town thinking which must inevitably produce regional government. If the Halton County Board of Education is to continue to attract the well-qualified people who now compose it, we as taxpayers must be prepared to pay them. The spending of the millions of dollars involved in education today cannot be left to the inexperienced but must be carried out by well-qualified business minded people. Unfortunately these people are usually the busiest in the community. Surely our trustees are worth every penny they receive if they are willing to spend the time to successfully expedite our most important national requisite — education.

As a teacher-principal, I have never had so much backup help from a school board. With psychological services now available as well as the assistance of a host of subject co-ordinators, and consultants, teachers can more successfully meet the needs of individual pupils. The suggestion of slashing salaries of any employees is absolutely unacceptable because in the long run it would be the boys and girls of our schools who would suffer. This would ultimately defeat everything our county board has done to try to equalize educational opportunities.

If some other segments of the Canadian economy were accepting wage freezes then I'm sure its school teachers would respond accordingly but when prices and wages continue to spiral it is folly to ask the teaching profession to hold the line. The vast majority of teachers work long hard hours preparing lessons, teaching boys and girls, supervising pupils at noon hours and recesses, marking books and tests, and attending courses, workshops, and meetings to further their professional development. The mental fatigue experienced by teachers in our quickly-changing society is an immeasurable quality. While many teachers and principals study during the summer to increase their qualification for their chosen professions, there is a large group who really require the rest which they get in July and part of August. Teachers are so flogged out by the end of June — our busiest month — that they simply collapse after the last school child leaves in June. Most teachers and nearly all principals are back in their schools by mid-August preparing for the September opening. Mr. Marshall has administered a stinging slap in the face to those of us who work hard to produce a favourable educational climate.

In conclusion may I re-iterate my original statement: there are things wrong with education in Halton County but there are a great many more things which are right. I am sure that Mr. Marshall could find proof of those things about education which are causing him concern. He must not, however, see only the bad for then his resolutions become not constructive but destructive.

Respectfully yours,
Jack Reed

IN THE MAIL BAG

Scores Teacher's Remarks About Member of Council

128 Rexway Drive

Dear Mr. Editor:

I would like to comment on the response of the teachers and Halton County School Bd. members to the resolutions passed by the Esquesing Council. On the whole the arguments in the controversy were much below what one might expect from educators of youth.

As a member of the teaching profession, however, I would like to refer specifically to the letter written by Mr. Mann. In referring to a council member he says, "this idiot, who has been chosen to represent the people on council," also "some knot-headed councillor" (whatever that means). The electors of Esquesing will take a dim view of these comments. The language is unbecoming a responsible teacher. One of the often expressed aims of a teacher is to train youth to analyse, question and participate in dialogue in the society. How can a teacher using such abusive language be exemplary in this regard?

Mr. Mann states that he must resort to "cajolery" to help the "kids" get a "better understanding of life." My concern is for the children who fall helplessly under the influence of this type of teachir.

Mr. Editor, I would also like to comment on the press release of Mr. Armitage, chairman of the Halton County Bd. of Education. He expressed concern over the salaries of teachers, i.e. high school teacers at $8550 and public school teachers at $6200, etc. He might have clarified the issue by further reference to the salaries of board members (expense accounts included) and especially to the salaries of their employees on the administrative staff.

Mr. Armitage's comparison of the per capita costs of members of council versus the per capita cost of board members is utter nonsense. The services and numbers of persons involved are different. One might just as well compare the per capita cost of a part time dog catcher with the per capita cost of the Prime Minister and the president of the Bank of Canada.

The same illogical approach was recently made by one of our Georgetown councillors to justify a salary increase. The argument is born in desperation due to a lack of more valid reasoning.

I believe that the resolution by Mr. Ken Marshall was presented to bring into question the spiralling costs of education. In some respects the resolution contained comments, I believe, that were only intended to elicit dialogue from those involved.

Percy West.

Use Neighbourhood As Learning Aid

The neighbourhood should be used to help provide a child with a sound foundation for language and learning, an educational specialist says.

Elaine Matthie, program consultant for the Ontario Department of Education, says taking children out of classrooms and into the neighbourhood encourages youngsters to participate in learning situations by using vital everyday experiences.

This is preferrable to imposing artificial and foreign ideas on the student in the classroom she explains.

Miss Matthie, who is also a specialist and in language and early childhood education, was speaking to a convention of Halton County Separate School teachers.

Logical Result

She advised the 120 teachers and 20 student teachers that oral language experiences logically lead children to better written language.

Any short cut imposed in oral language could result in slovenly written language, she says.

Miss Matthie also recommended the reading of prose and poetry in the class every day.

The teachers meeting represented only about one third of the separate school board's academic staff.

Other teachers from the system were taking part in professional development day activities in various parts of the province.

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