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THIRD SECTION

\$691,000 addition at Systems Construction

Esqueusing council approved a building permit Monday for a 115,260 square foot addition to the plant of Systems Construction Ltd. one mile north of Milton. The addition, estimated value \$691,000, will almost triple the plant's size.

Mervyn O. Hurst, director of development for Marchland Holdings Ltd., appeared before council to outline plans for the addition to the present plant which is situated in Lot 5, Con. 3, just north of Milton.

He told this newspaper the new building would house the entire working area, much of which presently was being done in the open.

Plans call for a steel mat area of 8,100 feet, a concrete mix area of 4,700 sq. ft., a precast area of 4,800 sq. ft. and a new factory area encompassing 100,660 sq. ft.

The addition will almost triple the size of the present 62,000 square foot assembly plant, which started operation this spring.

Systems Construction true to its name, constructs, equips, decorates and finishes rooms in a factory and then assembles a finished building on the site. First project of the new company is the 252-room Yorkdale Holiday Inn at Highway 401 and Dufferin St. opposite the Yorkdale shopping

centre in Toronto. It was recently awarded a large contract for a student residence at University of Guelph.

The hotel's 240 bedrooms were assembled and completed, complete with bed linen, at the plant.

Capacity of the plant is 1,000 units a year but with expansion this can be increased to 1,500 units. Mr. Hurst said the success of the product has made expansion necessary.

Plenty of seats in north schools

The trend for population decreases in rural north Halton has reached an end, according to a report on elementary school enrolment figures presented to the Halton County Board of Education Thursday at their regular meeting in Oakville.

The report notes until this year the loss of agricultural population in rural areas has been offset by rural residential development. This year however, rural residential development declined in line with the slow-down in growth in other areas. The board report notes it is expected to take

another year before a more rapid growth rate will take place in urban areas of North Halton due to the amount of primary services needed.

Kindergarten down
The report notes kindergarten enrolment in September 1970 was 278 less than September 1969. It is interesting to see enrolments in grades two, three and four are lower than the enrolments of the previous year in the next lower grade.

The report shows elementary enrolments 618 short of expectations for 1970 and predicts the gap will continue to widen, reducing the need for pupil places. However the report acknowledges the fact that the space may not be in the area experiencing growth.

While it appears there will be no need for further facilities in the north until 1974 there is some pressure for new facilities in the Montclair-Falgarwood area of Oakville.

Upon completion of the addition to the George Keeney School in Oakville there will be a reduced need for portables and these portables can be used to ease pressure in any area.

There are three North Halton schools still without libraries (Harrison, Wrigglesworth and Limehouse). Conversion of classrooms in these would reduce pupil places.

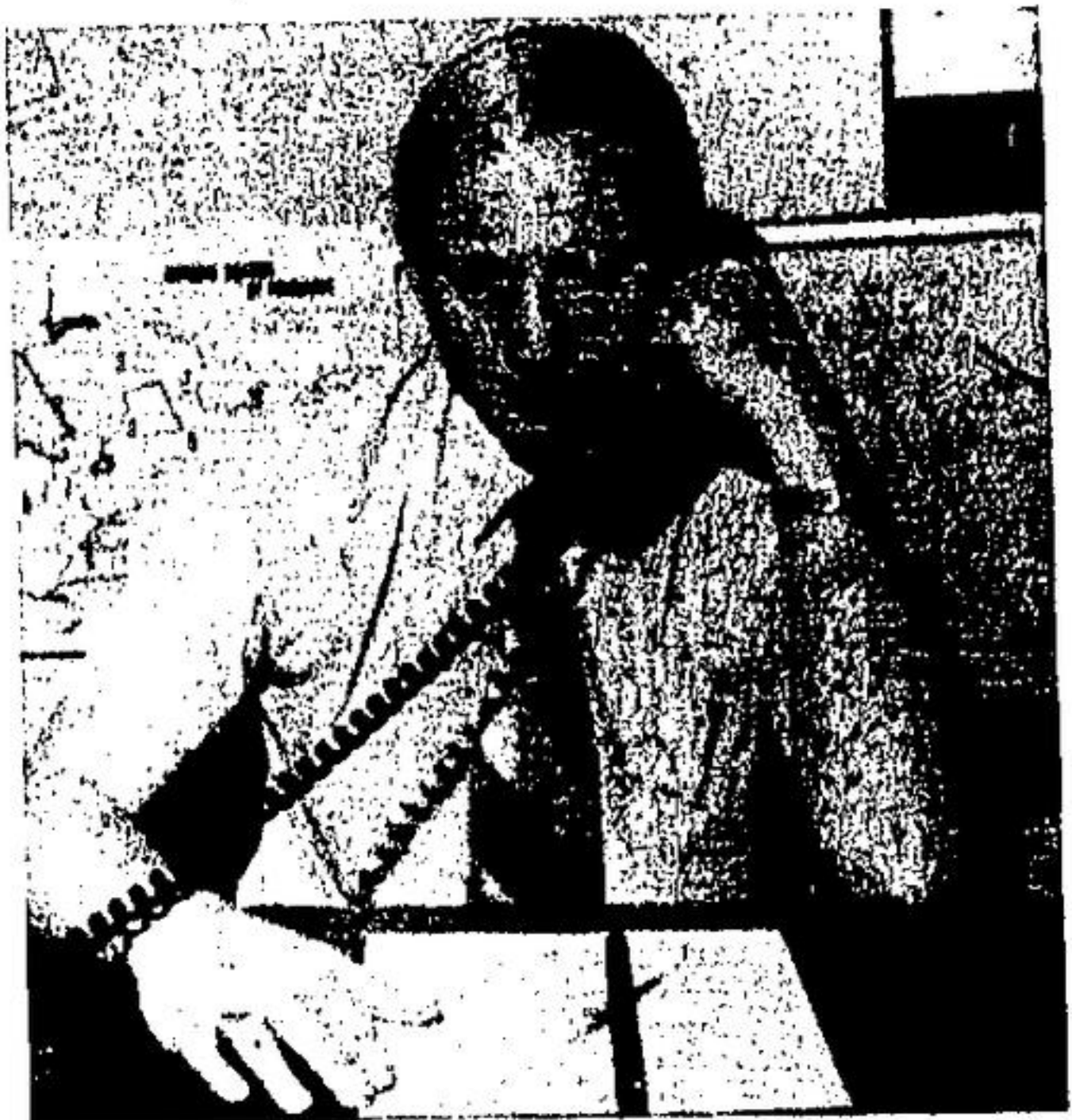
According to the report there are a number of schools in the county that will have to be renovated or closed. "The Department of Education's policy on renovations and up-gradings will determine how much can be done."

The report points out capital budgets in 1968 by the 10 previous boards in the county called for an expenditure of \$7,825,000. In 1969 the county board reduced the 1971 planned expenditure to \$5,270,000 with the further reduction in 1970 to \$3,345,000.

The three recommendations in the report were not voted upon because only 11 of the trustees were in attendance for the second half of the meeting. Several left after the first portion of the meeting to attend meet the candidate meetings.

The recommendations will be considered at a future meeting of the board. They ask that provision be made in the 1971 capital budget for additional senior school facilities in the east education area, north of the Queen Elizabeth, the size and location to be based on a report submitted early 1971.

It was also recommended a new school west of the Gladys Speers area of Oakville and additional student places be considered in the 1971 capital budget.



He's a modern day truant officer

BILL COON, North Halton's Attendance Counsellor, always has a busy day ahead of him. The phone is constantly ringing with calls from parents and school principals from all Halton schools north of Highway 5. He deals with about 40 cases of truancy every month.—(Staff Photo)

Bill Coon, counsellor

By Anne Redfearn
Journalism Student
Sheridan College

Anyone who thinks the modern day Truant Officer is just a glorified dogcatcher (with human victims), has another think coming.

Today's attendance counsellors, as they are now called, have to be psychologist, sociologist, policeman, teacher and concerned parent all rolled into one.

Bill Coon of Acton is one such man. His office is in the Halton County Board of Education's north education centre near Milton, but he spends little time there. Most of the time he spends in schools, in homes, and in police stations in the northern part of Halton.

He is the son of Mrs. Bill Coon and the late Bill Coon of Acton.

Helps students
A soft-spoken, athletic sort of person, Mr. Coon has worked with young people for 14 years. Now his job is to counsel students in school attendance.

"There is more to this job than chasing kids," he remarks. "We work with a social work agency, the police, probation officers and health units."

Problem children are usually referred to Mr. Coon by the principal of a school in his area. Mr. Coon talks to parents in their homes, but often calls them to the school.

"Interviews are more of a success when they are conducted in the school," he says. "The parents take school interviews more seriously."

Precludes court
Interviews often take a long time, but he feels it is always better than simply taking the offending student to court when there may be no need for it. Offenders may be charged under the Juvenile Delinquents Act and tried in juvenile court. Mr. Coon handles about 40 cases every month but so far has charged only one.

"Schools are so large these days, all schools are bound to have problems," he says.

Truancy, he explains, is not such a big deal. But it often leads to other things. Some students going AWOL find themselves involved in theft and other petty crimes. Often the family already has a record of petty crimes to its name. Children from these families, statistics show, are bound to get into trouble of some kind.

New faces
Generally, the offenders are not always the same group. "There are always new ones cropping up."

Mr. Coon makes a routine visit to police stations every day. "The local forces are great to work with," he comments. "They sometimes help in locating some of the students who are skipping."

Many students have problems at home, and many simply are not properly disciplined. Some parents do not think their children should go to school because it is too far to walk.

Before working with the Board of Education, Mr. Coon was a supervisor with the Department of Correctional Services.

All types
"Here I can work with 'good' bad students, borderline cases, and really bad. There, I only worked with the really bad ones," he says.

"Most parents are very receptive, and co-operate fully with us," he says. "Some are quite irate."

Some of the problem with the children who skip he attributes to living too close to the downtown area, where amusements like pool halls and restaurants are close at hand.

"A lot of them just do it because they want attention. I don't have many problems talking to them. We try to point out that everyone is there to help."

Information helps
A job like this sometimes has its problems. "Sometimes I have a case I really don't know how to solve. Then, when I drop into the school and talk to someone, I can get just the little bit of information I need."

He also talks about some of the children giving him an argument when they are caught. "You have to admire them, really, and think of them more as a person. When they just sit quietly and listen, I don't feel as though I'm getting through to them."

Mr. Coon enjoys working with young people and is on the executive of the Acton minor hockey organization. "Every child should be involved in something like that," he says. "It is good for recreation and for social contacts they can make."

For the child
His position as an attendance officer is between the school and school board, and the home and children. "We are primarily interested in the child's welfare."

He also takes sociology courses at Waterloo University, and expects to take a course next summer. Despite all his efforts, some of his cases are beyond his help and have to be referred to a psychologist.

"You get a lot of laughs from working with young people, but you also see some pretty sad cases," he concludes.

Study social services

A committee has been established to study co-ordination of existing social services in north Halton.

The committee was formed after a meeting of 40 representatives of education, Children's Aid, community services, Health Unit, legal branches, ministerial, Social and Family services and other agencies. The meeting at Milton District High School was held under the auspices of the Health Unit and the Board of Education with J. K. Graham, assistant superintendent of special education and student services in north and east Halton, as the chairman.

Areas of need
Discussion groups considered the availability of existing services, the inter-relationship of the services and the methods for getting the services to areas of need.

Gaps, overlapping, duplication and incomplete co-ordination of the six areas of service such as health, education, welfare, children's aid, corrections, legal and community organizations were noted.

Named to the committee representing the areas of service were Dr. J. Chamberlain, Medical Officer of Health; Miss I. Davey, Psychological services Board of Education; Judge K. Langdon, Judge of the Family Court; Mrs. E. Farley, Children's Aid Society; Mrs. F. Jamieson, Public Health Nurse; Paul Henderson, Separate School Board special education consultant; Rennie Vivian, County Social and Family Services; Jim Dills, Publisher; Dr. Michael Thompson, Ontario Department of Health and John Graham of the Halton Board of Education.

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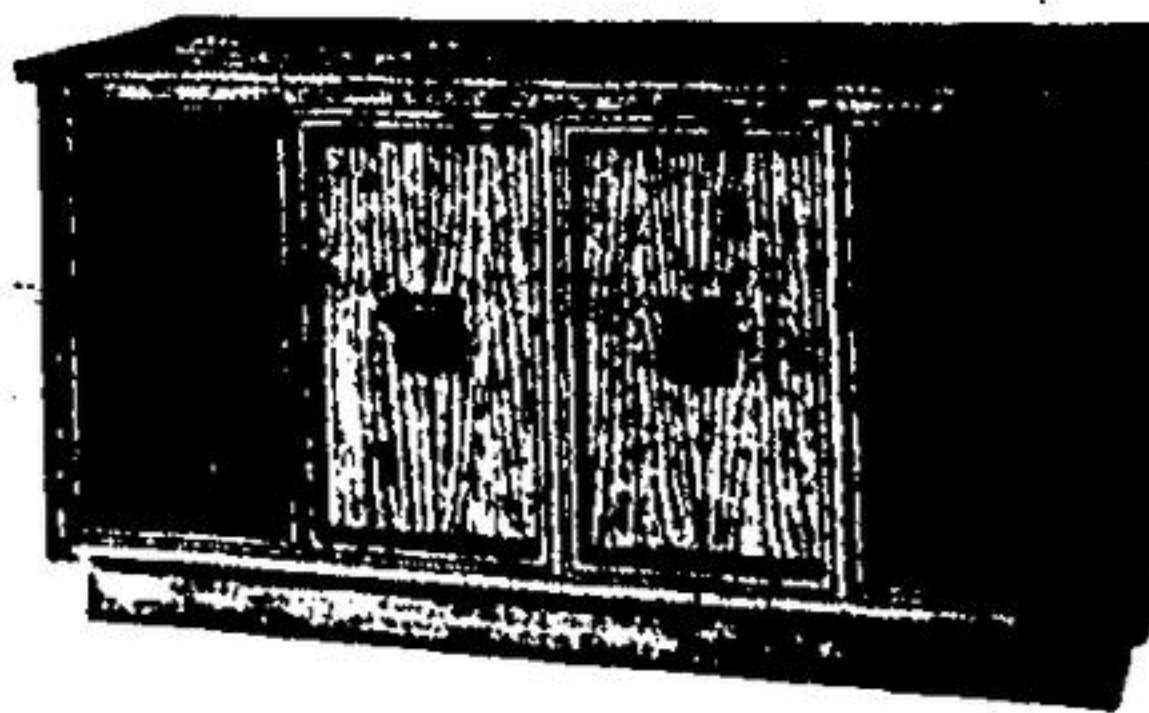
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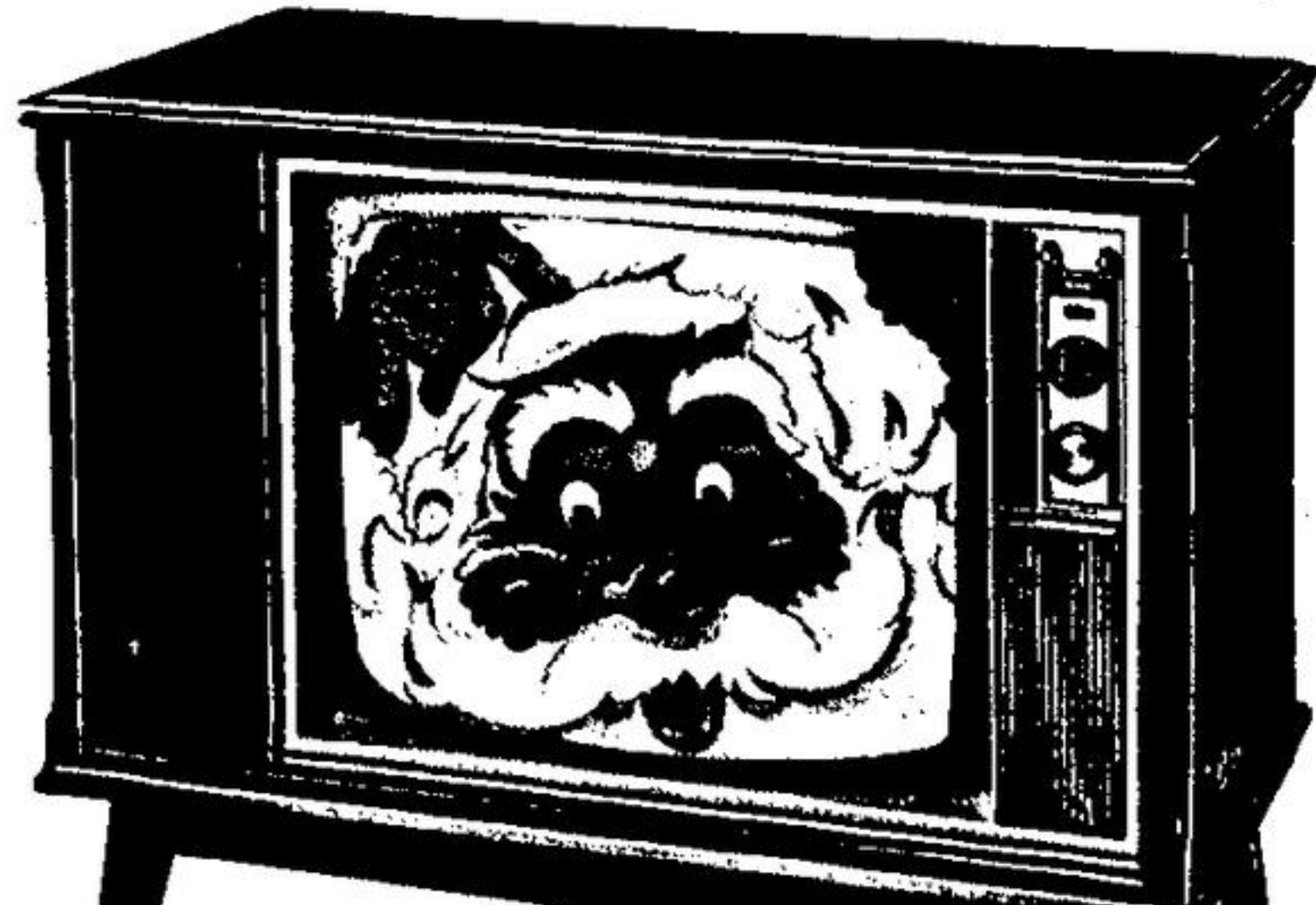
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