

Students required to be in school

Dear Sir: In a "Letter to the Editor" last week, Mrs. Atkinson expressed concern that she encountered her son downtown at 10:15 on a day that she had seen him leave for school at 9:00. I wish to echo her concern, especially in view of the fact the student mentioned skipped his Biology class in order to "walk the streets" at that time.

The letter in question suggests lack of communication. I choose to respond to this letter by making a few general comments. Communication is one of the most difficult problems which a school faces.

There are numerous ways by which we attempt to keep parents informed. These include official report cards (six each year), public meetings, letters to parents, newspaper articles, parents' nights, special reports and private interviews.

Where the above do not serve to keep us informed of concerns that parents have, we sincerely hope that parents will contact the school directly.

School problems often involve personalities. Such problems tend to touch human feelings. It is therefore both prudent and humane that they be dealt with as discreetly as possible.

In the event that other readers may lack information about the school program and operation, I would like to review some of the details here.

The school year is divided into two semesters. Students take a minimum of four subjects each semester, earning a total of eight credits during the school year.

The majority of students find that eight credits a year is a significant challenge. Students with good achievement who are willing to expend effort to achieve results are encouraged to take nine or 10 credits during the year.

The school day consists of six one-hour periods. This means that a student who is taking a minimum (four subjects) will have one hour for lunch and one hour of unscheduled time.

Students are free to leave the school during their lunch period (which will be either period 3 - from 11:05 - 12:05 or period 4 from 12:10 - 1:10).

During the remaining periods of the day students are required to be in school. (An exception is made in the case of senior students who may leave the school during the last period of the day if they do not have

a scheduled class at that time. Grade 13 take students, by the way, are required by the Department of Education to complete six grade 13 credits to earn a diploma.

We insist, however, that such students take a minimum of seven credits in order to assure that they have a broader educational background and that they carry a minimum of three subjects in any particular semester.)

Let me return to the problem of the unscheduled hour which some students have included in their daily program.

Most students use unscheduled time responsibly. A significant proportion of students take an extra subject during that time in one or both semesters. This possibility allows students to enrich their school program or, if they continue to challenge themselves, graduate from school one semester or one year earlier than would normally be possible. It also makes it possible for a student to pick up a failed credit from a previous grade level without having to spend an additional year in school.

At the moment, we have 125 students involved in the "Assistance Program" during their unscheduled hour. About 55 of these students are helping Primary teachers at Robert Little and the M. Z. Bennett elementary schools. Nine others are working with retarded children at the Sunshine School and the remainder are involved in a variety of situations at the high school. These students are directly demonstrating those very valuable qualities of responsibility and co-operation.

Many students have informed me that they find their school program demanding and challenging enough that they need to spend their unscheduled time in the resource centre completing various assignments and projects.

Finally, we must not overlook those students who do not always make responsible decisions and do not always act

in their own best interest. There are some students who, from time-to-time, leave the school building and are seen downtown at times when they are expected to be involved in such more positive activities as I have already described.

When we become aware of this, such students are reminded of their responsibility toward themselves and an attempt is made to show them ways in which their time can be put to better use.

I feel very strongly that both the home and the school need to provide a strong deterrent, particularly with younger students, against "waking off" from school. The variety of mischief which presents itself as an alternative to idleness does not need to be repeated here.

The topic under discussion has introduced the word "responsibility" several times. Students who possess an abundance of this commodity do not require rules in school and will grow up to become model citizens. At that rate, I suppose we should include "Responsibility" in the curriculum and make it a compulsory subject. Unfortunately, the prospect of teaching responsibility is extremely complex.

I would like to digress long enough to explain some of the anxieties that haunt those of us who are directly involved with young people.

One of the most difficult problems facing parents and teachers of teenagers is to decide where concern changes into coercion and how much of each ingredient should be used with each individual.

Certainly it is of crucial importance to us that the young people with whom we are directly concerned will make thoughtful decisions regarding their own personal lives. Sometimes we are tempted to make decisions for them regarding their careers, their social lives or the people with whom we would like them to associate. This concern we show, with various degrees of

forcefulness (depending upon the situation) is often resented but is also a necessary ingredient in the lives of the great majority of adolescents.

As young people move through their teenage years they become increasingly responsible to society for "the reasonable consequences of their own actions."

While growing up, young people show us by their actions whether or not we have taught them those attitudes which will lead them to make wise and appropriate decisions about their own lives. This latter all-important task begins at a very early age and is the shared responsibility of parents, teachers, the church and a host of other agencies which function in our communities.

I emphasize this because surely young people form attitudes and obtain their "education" from their total environment.

We need to be conscious of the fact that the environment which influences and teaches our children is a very broad one which is expanding at a fantastic rate of speed. In this, it is easy for us to overestimate our influence as parents and teachers and to underestimate the influence of such things as television and other mass media. These various influences deserve our careful attention in that they are at times mindless or of questionable value and sometimes clearly negative.

The influence we provide needs to be thoughtful. Somehow, if young people are to become responsible adults our role needs to evolve from coercion through wise counsel to acceptance of youth as fellow citizens.

In summary, I want to express my trust in those that comprise our teenage community.

I am heartened by the qualities of citizenship and the sincerity of purpose expressed by the great majority of young people with whom I have been associated during ten years in this community.

I wish to similarly commend the great majority of parents for their continued expression of understanding and co-operation. Finally, I wish to express confidence in the quality of education which is being provided for my children and for those of other parents.

J. R. Bray

OUR READERS WRITE:

Y's Men champs

Acton Y's Men have been officially declared town broomball champions for this season. Y's Men edged the local Rotary Club 3-2 in the championship game of the annual April tournament at the 'community centre last Tuesday night. In preliminary games, Y's Men blanked Lions' Club 2-0 and Rotary Club nipped Acton Firefighters 2-1.

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Halton-Wentworth PC's choose Kemppling

Dundas businessman Bill Kemppling will carry the Tory banner into the fight for the Halton-Wentworth federal seat, now occupied by Liberal John Morison, who last month lost his own party's nomination to Norm McGuiness of Burlington.

Kemppling won the Conservative nomination Friday night on the fourth ballot in an exciting five man contest at Burlington's M.M. Robinson high school.

Burlington deputy-reeve David Coons 29, who placed first on the first three ballots, suddenly found himself 41 votes short of the 50-year-old Kemppling, when the two met head-on on the fourth and final ballot.

Final tally was 282 votes for Kemppling and 241 for Coons. Dundas high school teacher John Vola was eliminated on the first ballot. Dundas mayor Hugh Everett was ousted on the second and Burlington councillor Les Preston trailed on the third ballot and was sidelined.

Coons gained 11 more votes than Kemppling on the third ballot, but two-thirds of Preston's 140 votes went to Kemppling on the fourth ballot.

Decision late Meeting chairman Jim Swanborough declared Kemppling

the winner shortly after midnight, finally easing tension in the auditorium.

Kemppling supporters, who had been the most prominent in demonstrations throughout the evening, surrounded their jubilant candidate, as Coons came to offer his congratulations.

Later Coons made his way to the platform, where he pledged support for Kemppling and asked party workers to unite to bring

the Tories a victory in the riding. In his nomination speech, Kemppling said economics will be the major issue in the upcoming federal election. If elected, he promised to take an inventory within the riding to determine the depth and scope of local industries. He promised to see to it that all products in the riding were listed in a computer bank at the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce in Ottawa.

Kemppling also said he would establish a workable two way communication system between himself and the riding if elected. M.P. John Morison has been widely criticized for his alleged failure to spend time in the riding.

Kemppling placed third with 128 votes, behind Coons 163 and Preston 128 on the first ballot. Everett polled 92 and Vola 13. On the second ballot, Kemppling

equipment manufacturing company. Kemppling lives in Dundas with his wife Muriel, daughter Jane and sons Angus and Bruce.

President of a heavy truck

Obituary

"Twitter" Holmes death sudden

The sudden death of Frank James "Twitter" Holmes was a shock to family and many friends. The well-known plumber, who lived at 208 McDonald Blvd., had helped to push a friend's car before being struck. He died March 28.

Mr. Holmes was almost a life-long resident of Acton.

He was born here in 1920, son of the late Charles Daniel Holmes and Florence Green. He attended Acton public and high school. He was overseas in the second world war for five years with the Highland Light Infantry when Col. Jock Anderson was his padre.

Col. Anderson and the Rev. Harry Dawson conducted the funeral service at the Rumley-Shoemaker funeral home March 29, and there was also a special Legion service. Interment was in Fairview cemetery. Pallbearers were Herb Cook, Bus Chisholm, Joe Massey, Ben Bayliss, Jack Cooney and Doug Guthrie.

Except for the war years, Mr. Holmes spent all his life in Acton except for three in Vancouver.

Survivors
He was married here in 1940 and his wife, the former Kathleen Boyle, survives him. Also remaining are sons and daughters Pete, Bob, Jim, Mrs. Peg Graham and Mrs. Pat White; brothers Dave, Charles, George and Bob, and sisters Mrs. Daisy Kingshott, Rockwood;

Mrs. Lottie Tuck, Georgetown; Mrs. Ann Lamber, Sarnia; Mrs. Gladys Vincent, Owen Sound; and Mrs. Ivy McKarny, B.C.

Everywhere he travelled Mr. Holmes promoted Acton and particularly its teams. He was a goalie for the 1938-1939 Acton Intermediate O.H.A. championship team and later coached minor hockey.

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