

Possible \$3 million budget cut shaves 3 mills, \$22 tax saving

Proposed budget cuts amounting to \$3 million which would reduce this year's expected education mill rate increase by three mills were unveiled at a public meeting Monday in Georgetown by Halton Board of Education Finance Committee.

Facing severe financial difficulties brought on by increasing costs and reduced provincial grants, Halton Board of Education announced last month that residents could face a 15 mill tax hike if the board tried to maintain all programs and services at their 1975 levels. The 15 mill jump would cost the average Halton Hills taxpayer an extra \$112 a year and the average ratepayer in Milton \$75.

The possible three mill cut back announced at Monday's meeting would mean an average tax saving of \$22 in Halton Hills and \$15 in Milton.

Finance Committee Chairman and Milton Trustee Bill Lawson said the proposed cuts, most of which he expects will materialize, will cut the board's 1976 budget by \$3 million from \$76 million to \$73 million. Lawson noted a mill is equal to about 1.25 million but cautioned the ratepayers that this won't mean a six mill reduction because 55 per cent of the cuts will be lost in provincial grants. This year Halton ratepayers will pay only 45 cents of each dollar the board spends.

Besides the already announced death of Primary Task Force and the values education pilot project, Lawson revealed possible cuts in administration, professional development, capital costs, school operations and maintenance and instruction.

A voluntary freeze of senior employees wages, reduced courier service, the death of Halton Education News, deletion of the Director of Education's special education development fund and reduced seminar funds for senior staff will mean a savings of \$57,900 in the administration area of board operations.

The east education centre (Oakville), vacant classrooms, small schools (none in North Halton) and reduced supplies and services would save the board \$387,300 in school operations and maintenance.

The board expects to save \$455,300 by ending orientation and induction programs for new teachers, in-service training for teachers already employed by the board, the educational development plan and the availability of professional development books in school libraries. In addition the board plans to reduce the amount of money set aside for staff leadership and professional development.

Both new and replacement equipment and furniture purchases will be eliminated in 1976, except in emergencies, for a saving of \$589,000.

Board funds for field trips, athletic trips and library books except for new schools and supplemental art and music programs were among the victims in a list of 10 cuts worth \$1,544,350 in the instruction category of board operations. Swim programs for Halton students will end this June and not resume in the fall, the board will reduce the use of supply teachers and their pay will be chopped, advertising for new teachers will be limited and the allocation for consumable supplies for each secondary school student will be reduced by 10 per cent.

The board also intends to explore other areas where cuts conferences, the hiring policies for consultants, coordinators, area superintendents, mileage rates for teachers, having secretarial staff working only 10 or 11 months and increasing the pupil-teacher ratio. Lawson noted these areas are just now being looked at and no possible savings have been calculated.

One resident suggested the number of consultants employed by the board should be looked at seriously because cuts are needed.

Another resident was glad field trips won't be financed by the board any more because that job should be left to parents and while a diversified education is great if students were taught to read better their knowledge could be broadened without frills in school because they could

read a variety of books.

The same taxpayer said fine buildings and facilities don't mean fine education and suggested the board's financial emphasis should be placed on teachers because they are the key to quality education.

Trustee Doug Wood noted \$112,500 will be saved by ending board financial support of field trips. He added teachers are the emphasis of board financing since they will get 76 per cent of the money spent this year.

A former area principal cautioned the board against making cuts which will affect the quality of education like increasing the pupil-teacher ratio.

Lawson informed the audience many of the cuts are short term and if they weren't and continued for a few years it would cost the board twice as much later to bring things back up to standard.

A high school teacher suggested trustees go back to giving their services for free like they did years ago.

One resident responded by saying it was fine for the

teachers to recommend cuts like trustee wages but noted they aren't likely to take cuts in their pay. He added teachers say make cuts but don't touch my pocket.

He suggested the board cut back on busing students and either have them walk to school because it is good exercise or else have parents pay for the right each day to have their children bused.

Trustees pointed out busing isn't that big an expense and is really needed in rural areas.

Lawson concluded that while all of the cuts are not proposed right now he expects the finance committee will follow through on most of them.

"There are always a few sacred cows so some might escape being cut," he stated.

Six of the extra mills will be due to decreased provincial grants and nine of the mills are a tribute to inflation.

Without budget cuts this year's levy in Halton for education would be 53.8 mills. If cuts do materialize the levy would be 50.8 mills.

Lawson said many people feel repeal of section eight of the act is coming up soon and he asked the board to request the province to delay any action until accommodation for the problem children can be found in Halton. He added the board isn't the only group concerned about the changes because the police and Children's Aid Society are also worried.

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Principals surveyed about drinking age

Halton High School principals are being asked to comment on the effects of the lowered drinking age on their schools.

Director of Education Emerson Lavender revealed at Thursday's Halton Board of Education that a while ago principals in Halton were asked to comment for the board how the lowering of the drinking age a few years ago from 21 to 18 has affected their students.

Lavender said the board has received a letter from the Lambton Board of Education asking for Halton trustees' support in persuading Queen's Park to raise the drinking age from 18 to 20.

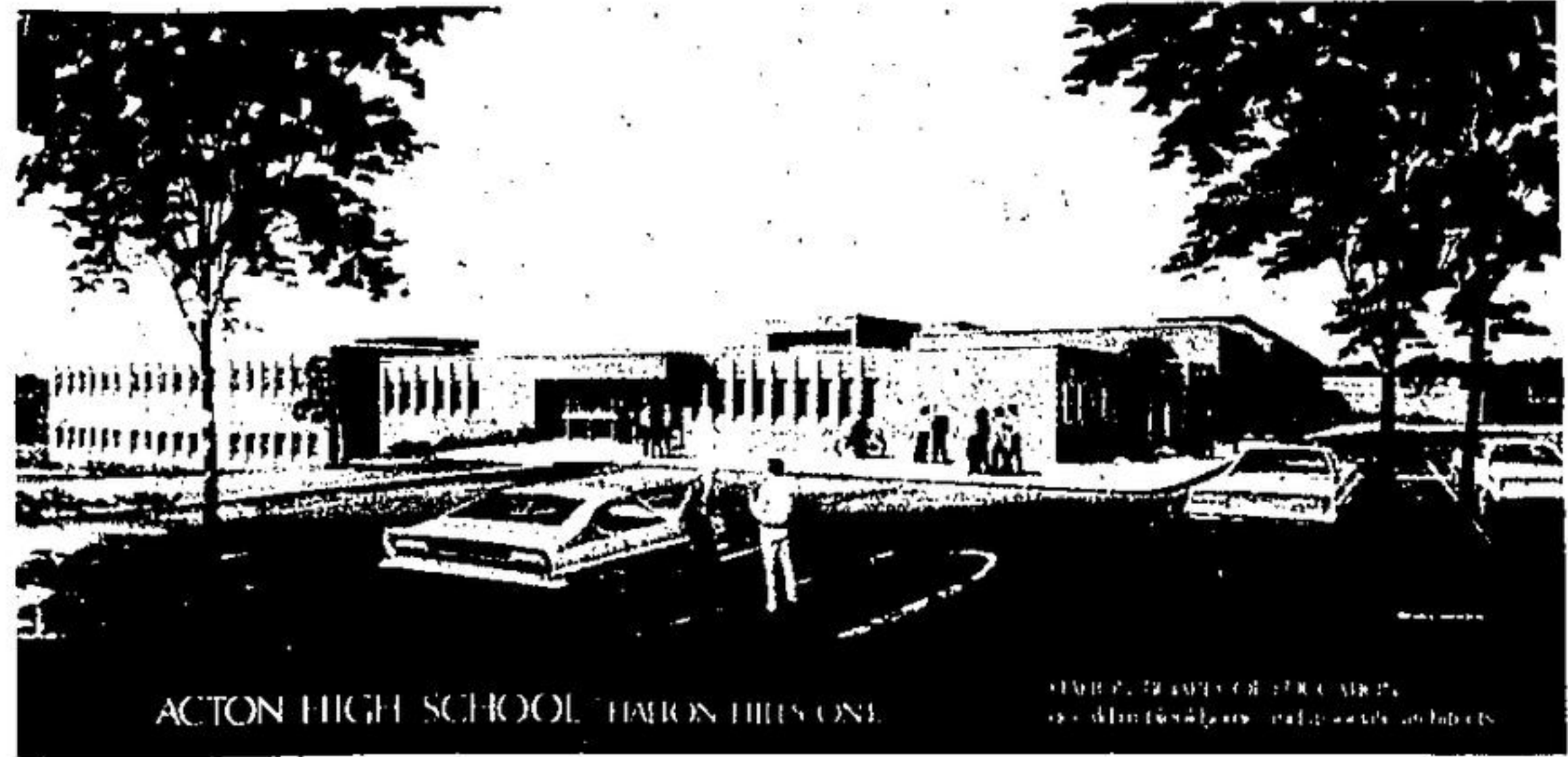
Trustee Len Auger said since principals are being surveyed, high school student councils should also be ques-

tioned, because he knows some students are also concerned about the effects of the lowered drinking age on schools.

The board decided to delay any comment of the Lambton Board's request for support until they get answers from principals and students about what the lowered drinking age is doing to Halton schools.

New homes by Legion

Construction began Monday on foundations for new homes in the Legion subdivision. About six or seven basements have been dug out already.



SKETCH SHOWS how the new Acton high school will look on completion. Tenders are now being

called. Road construction is underway on Churchill Rd. N.

Training school changes worry Halton trustees

Halton Board of Education decided Thursday to ask Queen's Park to delay repeal of section eight of the Training Schools Act until facilities are available in Halton for problem children.

Section eight of the Act provides for an incorrigible child to be sent to a training school after a court order.

Superintendent of Special Services John Graham said when that section of the Act is repealed a child can no longer be brought to court unless he has committed a criminal offense.

He explained that in the past children who continually played hooky, ran away from home, were unmanageable in class or refused school and parental control, could be sent to training schools.

Graham stated the repeal of section eight will have serious implications for Halton and its schools.

He predicted about 40 children who formerly left Halton each year for training schools will now remain in the community and must attend schools. They all need special

programs and counselling he added.

Graham said group homes are the ideal solution but there aren't any available to problem pupils in North Halton and there isn't any room at group homes in Oakville and Burlington.

He said in light of financial restraints the board can't set up any special facilities or programs for these special pupils and suggested the Ministry of Correctional Services give Halton some of the funds it has for training schools.

Graham said many people feel repeal of section eight of the act is coming up soon and he asked the board to request the province to delay any action until accommodation for the problem children can be found in Halton. He added the board isn't the only group concerned about the changes because the police and Children's Aid Society are also worried.

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provinces should forestall repealing section eight of the Act.

Trustee Bill Priestner said this was just another example of Queen's Park shirking its responsibility and passing it on to other government bodies.

Graham said training schools haven't been as effective as had been hoped by the province. He noted one judge has told him only 10 per cent of the children who end up in training school benefit from the experience.

Trustee Bill Lawson said group homes could be severely hurt by the fact Children's Society's budget will be limited to a 5.5 per cent increase. He said if the few group homes which are operating are closed then problem children "will be dumped on our doorstep."

Lavender said the community is the place to rehabilitate problem children. "The problem is that we haven't the resources or facilities to deal with them," he concluded.

Study economy — Bodnar

Georgetown Trustee Ernie Bodnar wants to make sure Halton students study various political and economic systems and understand them.

At Thursday's Halton Board of Education meeting Bodnar noted there is a lot of talk these days about the free enterprise system, democracy, socialism and capitalism and he wondered if pupils understand the difference between the terms.

Superintendent of Program John Boich told Bodnar that the philosophy behind various political and economic systems is studied in business law, economics and social science courses. He noted the programs aren't as sophisticated as those offered at universities and expressed regret the courses aren't taken by many pupils.

Bodnar said communism and socialism get a lot of publicity and wanted to make sure students in Halton learn about democracy and the free enterprise system. He added even if pupils do study the Canadian political and economic system the board should make sure they study it more.

Boich said he would look into the subject and report back to the board.

Snow goes
Halton Hills work crews sunshine and rain are vying for the honor of causing the disappearance of the most snow this week.

Theft from Duby garage

A Toronto man reported the theft of a 24-volt battery and two sets of floodlight tractor lights with brackets from a front end loader stored in a garage on Duby Dr. The theft occurred some time during the winter, the owner told police.

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Financial problems delay chairmanships

Halton Board of Education decided Thursday to delay any action on implementation of chairmanship reorganization at Halton high schools until the budget is struck.

Director of Education Emerson Lavender compared the motives behind chairmanships to a three legged stool. He noted one of the legs is financial.

He also said under the chairmanship system funds presently paid to major and

minor department heads and assistant heads would be given to each school for chairmen's salaries, staff and program development.

He said the present fiscal problems the board faces are immediate and overriding and suggested the board delay any action concerning chairmanships until the financial situation is clarified.

Board Chairman Judy Alexander noted it will be at least six weeks before the financial situation is clarified.

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in Georgetown, Acton and districts (villages). Area Captains and Canvassers urgently needed. If contacted, please volunteer, or phone 877-4466, 853-1868 (for Acton) or 877-1332 and donate a few hours to make 12 calls.

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