

PANEL PEERS INTO THE EDUCATION PICTURE



HIGH COST OF LEARNING — This was the panel that discussed value received for education costs at Centennial school last week. From left, board of education trustee Jim Price; Georgetown high school principal Mike Furlong; assistant superintendent E. S. Lavender; Father Martin VanderSteen; ratemakers' association president Dave Berry; councillor Harry Levy; a parent, Mrs. Mary Cooper; a student, Farley Helfant; and a personnel manager, Rex Cock.

Billed as the "High Cost of Learning" the Halton Hills Ratepayers panel discussion on education, covered cost, efficiency, role of the school, the Hall-Dennis report, religion in the schools, and the relevance of education to today's society.

The panel consisting of E. S. Lavender, assistant superintendent, Michael Furlong, principal of Georgetown High School, Mrs. Mary Cooper, parent and president of the Girls' Softball League, Farley Helfant, Grade 12 student, Father Martin, Superior Capuchin Fathers, Rex Cock, personnel manager, General Fireproofing, Harry Levy, Cr. Ward 3, and Jim Price, Oakville representative Board of Education, was chaired by Dave Berry, president of the Ratepayers' Association.

SEX EDUCATION

Mrs. Mary Cooper came out strong for sex education in the schools pointing out sex education should be taught in a matter of fact way to help students adjust to people and promote mental health. She came out just as strongly for a full 20 to 4 school day, in the high schools, with the extra curricular activities confined to after 4. "They get half a day off to go to football games and most of them don't even go to the games," she maintained. She urged all recreational programs be conducted after regular school hours, "4 o'clock, I mean not 3:10," she added. She urged the same procedure for teachers' conventions. "They should be held in the holidays, not on school days."

TOO NARROW

"The nine to four tradition existed when everyone had an hour to an hour and a half for lunch," commented E. S. Lavender.

In reply to a question asking if he felt the educational system helps youth to fulfill a meaningful role in society, Farley Helfant claimed it was far too narrow and stifling to promote the complete education needed of a meaningful role in society. "I am afraid that I'll be no more ready to face the world upon graduation than I was when I entered Grade 9," he remarked. He claimed too much time is spent preparing the student to function within the "technological temper" rather than preparing them to adjust against it. He claimed the waste of time and money was tragic. He suggested more and more students were moving into the world under the pressure of getting a job, which is really the remaining socially and intellectually barren.

"How can we expect an education without regular exposure to the outside world?" he asked. "Won't the knowledge of our global neighbours be a prerequisite for survival in the 21st century?" he demanded.

MOST IMPORTANT

In conclusion he complained of a lack of emphasis on guidance, "probably one of the most important departments in the school."

Cr. Harry Levy pointed out that Georgetown paid \$600,000 toward education in 1965, but paid \$1,100,000 in 1969. He listed some points for the consideration of the Halton County Board of Education. 1) make sure full use is being made of the schools; 2) Cut building costs by developing prefabricated systems, "they don't need palaces" he added; 3) Let's have closer consultation with teachers, they know what they need; 4) Keep administrative salaries in line with industry; 5) Teachers' qualifications should not be cut, we are here to educate not run offices; 6) confer with municipal councils before final passing of the budget.

Jim Price pointed out that Lord Elgin High School was the result of consultation with teachers, while Mr. Lavender added that the new Joseph Gibbons school to be built in Moore Park was designed by a teacher committee.

"The Hall-Dennis report does not say there should be no competition in the schools" stated students. "They must be given more freedom to make mistakes and learn by experience," he concluded.

He admitted he was no authority on the subject having only recently read the report.

REGIMENTED

"Simply because he advocates the deletion of exams does not mean lack of competition, we had weekly tests when we went to school, so the teacher knew if he was getting across to the student," he said. He emphasized there was no more competition in industry now than there ever was. He branded education in his day "archaic" and "regimented" where everyone was supposed to digest knowledge at the same rate. He felt the Hall-Dennis report was gradually being implemented in the schools, with education now geared to the student. He claimed industry was now working along the same lines with employees being tried out in various jobs, until the right one is found. He was speaking of unskilled labour in this case.

While expressing some doubts principal Mike Furlong stated he agreed with most of the Hall-Dennis report. "In the past we had done things the same way so long, we had forgotten why we did them, now at least we are trying to see what can be done to satisfy the needs of society," he remarked. He stressed the present attempt to turn out people who can adapt to changing situations and can think for themselves. "Now we try to give the student a choice, and to match the courses to their needs" he continued. He pointed out the

Oakville representative on the county board Jim Price, replacing Georgetown's Ernie Badnar, stated the trustees are

caught in a squeeze play between taxes and the quality of education. "I don't necessarily accept the thesis that the cost of education is too high, the investment we can make, is in our young people" he maintained. Admitting costs of education had increased, he wondered if they had increased more than anything else. He suggested the fairness of the property tax as the only base for education costs was debatable. He stated that teachers' salaries now account for 70% of the budget, and forecast an increase to 80%.

Price said that by increasing the student-teacher ratio by one student in secondary and elementary schools, the board could save \$1 million. But the board couldn't do it because it is under constant pressure from teachers to reduce the ratio. Further saving could be made by hiring non-teachers as teacher-helpers, he suggested.

He told the ratepayers they shouldn't be complaining about the cost of education since residents of Ontario in 1967 paid out \$125 per person for alcohol and \$33 per person for education. He predicted by 1975 the education cost will jump to \$110 and the alcohol to \$150. "It's all a matter of priorities," he stated.

In conclusion he stated that the problem might be solved by the end of the 1970's, since fewer children are being born.

Father Martin, in discussing the subject of religion in the schools, pointed out that separate school stands for including explicit religion in a total atmosphere of living, while in the public school sys-

tem there is an assumption that they should be more and more neutral as far as faith and conviction are concerned. "Explicit Christian teaching is out in suggests. They must be wise, the public schools, but I'm grounded in philosophy, and strongly convinced that the values of Christianity will be sinned" he maintained. In contrast he stated the teaching with humanistic values, "he should be dropped, but the values of the Christian faith must never be dropped."

He termed the Keiller-Mc-

ASHGROVE

Presentation Acknowledges Work of Church Leader

The Friendship Unit of the U.C.W. held the first meeting for 1970 on Tuesday afternoon Jan. 13 at the home of Mrs. Vern Pickett, with Mrs. Ward Brown presiding and opening the meeting with a poem from the Friendship book. Devotionals were read and Mrs. George Wilson in a few minutes introduced the speaker, Mrs. Keith Hawkes. Mrs. Brown-Hawkes introduced the new study book Reconciliation in a broken world. We as Christians must go forth and work at the reconciliation. We love because we have first loved us. We have capacity to love everyone into reconciled fellowship with any one and anywhere. A lengthy discussion followed and many questions and answers were talked over freely. The last month's minutes were read and Mrs. Roll Call answered with a New Year's verse. Mrs. Ward Brown, Mrs. Harold Bailey and

her mother Mrs. Norman Wrigglesworth both on the same day and Lois McNabb.

To all these we say Happy Birthday and many many more. — Mrs. John Beilbuddy.

TWO TAKING LEADER COURSE

Howard Ferguson and Dean Smith of Georgetown are taking the Red Cross Leader Award Course at the Huron Park Recreation Centre in Cooksville.

Both swimmers were reimbursed by the Georgetown & District Red Cross branch. A new course will start in April.

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