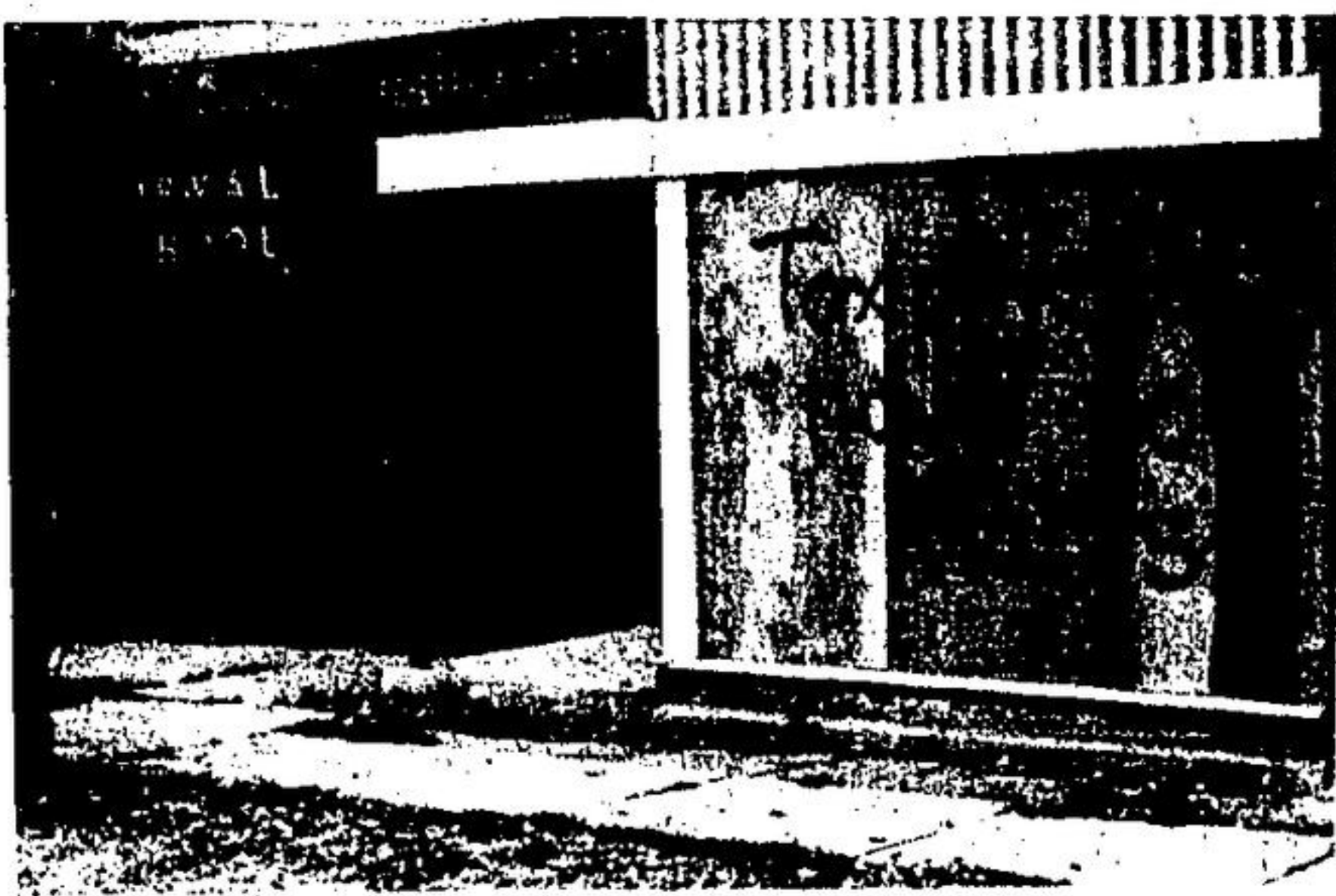


Norval Residents Bitter About Closing

By Dorothy McLean
A sign stating "Democracy is dead" appeared in front of Norval Public School last Thursday evening following the special meeting of Halton School Board when Norval ratepayers went down to defeat in their battle to re-open Norval school with a vote of 4-10.



NORVAL SCHOOL AND SIGN

This sign summed up the feelings of the 45 people from Norval who had attended the meeting. They left white faced and too angry to talk to reporters but most of all with a feeling of disgust and helplessness because they realized that the people have no say in this so called democratic country of Canada—land of the free.

RAY OF HOPE

They found out that although all of the Norval school area people wanted the school open for the pupils on September 3rd, and were backed by the majority of Halton Hills ratepayers, this meant absolutely nothing to the Halton School Board who consider themselves above the will of the people they represent and who pay their salaries.

HORNBY

Mrs. Jim Hamilton
Birthday greetings are extended to Kimmy Hamilton, who celebrated her sixth birthday on Sunday September 1. Those who attended were Janice Break, Kendra Hamilton, Stephanie Kee, and Kent Hamilton. Games were as follows—London Bridges, Doggy Doggy who has the bone, and Sucker Hunt, Messages and Balloons. A delicious lunch and birthday cake was enjoyed by all.

Birthday greetings are extended to Willis Hamilton, who will celebrate his birthday on September 5. Best wishes to Willis.

Friends were sorry to hear that Mrs. Bessie Marshall Sr. is ill at her home. Best wishes are extended to Bessie.

Mrs. Edna Waite and Mrs. Doris Sharpe, enjoyed a very happy trip to the West Coast.

Birthday greetings are extended to Mrs. Bill Tallyn, who will celebrate her birthday on the 7th of September. Best wishes to Jeannette.

Birthday greetings are extended to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Belford, who will celebrate their wedding anniversary on September 10. Best wishes to Peter and Phyles.

Once during the evening when a discussion involved a yellow form sent out by the school board giving local pupils the option of attending other schools and naming the schools but leaving out Norval school as an option but no one had a copy as they had to be returned, and the school board members apparently didn't know anything about the form, Lawson said he thought he had the answer but the form he had in mind was not the one the Norval parents had referred to. This was the extent of his conversation for the evening and he was first out the door following lunch served by the hostess and several mothers of the Norval pupils.

QUESTIONS

The other four board members, however, asked questions and presented their views and listened to the Norval representatives and left knowing the reasons why Norval ratepayers wanted the school open for the 64 pupils from Grade One to Five and 14 Kindergarten pupils from the school area. That the main objective of the parents was stability for their children, pointing out the fact of growth in the east end of Georgetown and asking what did they plan for the Norval pupils when the George Kennedy school was full?

They suggested that if there were not enough pupils from the Norval area to fill the school some parents in the east end of Georgetown might prefer their children to attend Norval school. They already come to Norval for Cubes, Brownies and soccer practise.

They told the board members present that they were willing

for their children to do without a gym as they felt the friendships made in a small school where everyone knew everyone else, the feeling of belonging and the sense of identity the children gained far outweighed the few minutes they could spend in a gym. They pointed out that Norval school was a happy school where every child participated in school activities, with good parent participation, and a good parent and teacher relationship that they have found is absent in the larger schools—this they wanted to continue for their children.

IN FAVOR

At the meeting on Thursday evening Mr. Wood, Mrs. Alexander, and Dr. Howard Lock spoke in favor of Norval school remaining open. Others, however, seemed very concerned that one teacher would have to teach grades three, four, and five and thought this was too much to expect from any teacher. They talked about two teachers, one for grades one and two, and one for grades three, four, and five. Never once was it mentioned that Norval is a three-roomed school and had always had three teachers there until last year when the board removed grade one and grade six and reduced the number of pupils to 43.

A survey by the Norval ratepayers showed that the parents of 14 kindergarten pupils and 64 from grade one to five preferred their children to attend the Norval school. Mrs. Alexander mentioned the new trend in education today is for "family grouping"—several grades in one room where children can learn from each other and learn

The quality of the education at Norval school was never an issue as the majority agreed that the quality depended on the teacher. R.E. Goodin of Ward three Oakville, who has voted for Norval consistently over the past three years was away on holidays. It was apparent that most remarks by the board members on the issue were from closed minds such as Miss E. Robinson from Ward three Oakville, who stated "our policy is to close all small schools and build large ones so I vote no." It was also quite apparent from the remarks of Chairman W. J. Priestner of the Separate School, that he was opposed to the reopening of Norval School. Following the vote which was Bodnar of Georgetown stated by a show of hands and not a that "We are in the business of education not recreation" Hugh McFarlane before the which was resented by the board Norval group very much, as carried on with the next item of over the past three years the Norval ratepayers board members have been left the meeting, mostly in stressing that what the Norval pupils were missing was an angry remarks. One parent lovely big gym that would be available to them at a larger Burlington would enjoy their school. They have always understood that a gym was for exercise and games—just what the Norval pupils have enjoyed only outdoors on the skating rink and playing baseball in the summer—in other words recreation.

Mr. Alexander pointed out that Norval parents wanted the school to be a community school and she thought this would be an excellent idea as the community was so interested in the school and this was the only recreational grounds in the village. Ernie Bodnar of Georgetown stated by a show of hands and not a that "We are in the business of education not recreation" Hugh McFarlane before the which was resented by the board Norval group very much, as carried on with the next item of over the past three years the Norval ratepayers board members have been left the meeting, mostly in stressing that what the Norval pupils were missing was an angry remarks. One parent lovely big gym that would be available to them at a larger Burlington would enjoy their school. They have always understood that a gym was for exercise and games—just what the Norval pupils have enjoyed only outdoors on the skating rink and playing baseball in the summer—in other words recreation.

FINAL OUTCOME

W. D. Herd, Ward four Oakville, remarked that the vote should be taken and get the agony over with as they all knew the final outcome. Bill Lawson gave a very contradictory trade against the people of Norval. He started by saying that he had known the Norval people longer than any others present, long before there was a Halton School Board, and his experience was that groups from Norval were always asking for something more for their school. Then he said that he was against large schools and had always been against them, but in the next breath continued on against the people of Norval saying that at the previous board meeting the Norval people had said that they would be happy with the school as it was but at the meeting on Tuesday evening they were asking for more, even to a new school, and if they reopened the school this is how they would find the Norval people, always asking for more. After this tirade he stated that Norval people had his sympathy, indeed he felt sorry for them but he had to vote no. (It

felt sick and disgusted that a bureaucratic few could sit in their ivory tower and tell a whole community what they must do—the people who are helping to pay for their time, and at the same time are paying with their tax dollars for a school system that they are not happy with. Norval lost this battle but in doing so they have drawn the attention of the voters of Halton to the many weaknesses of the Halton school board and their elected trustees who have the education of all the children of Halton County under their jurisdiction. There are a few members on the board with open minds but those with closed minds far outnumber them.

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