

CONSIDERS TAKING CHILD OUT OF HALTON SCHOOL
Smith attacks education system

By **MAGGIE HANNAH**
 Herald staff writer
 Despite his previous belief that his children should be educated in a public school system, Stuart Smith, leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, says he is now seriously considering taking his children out of the Halton public school they attend.

Smith delivered his scathing attack on the Ontario educational system to a small group at Sheridan College last week as part of the college's Education '77 series. His visit was arranged in co-operation with the Halton and Peel public and separate school boards.

Smith says his main concern with the changes which occurred in education since the 1960's is the lack of accountability in the system.

While removing the set structure of the old system might be excellent in theory and motivation, he pointed out, no one has ever really tested the results.

Students themselves have no idea how well they can perform tasks because they are not tested.

The new type of report card mystifies parents. Teachers and school boards have no way of comparing results with results in other areas. Taxpayers are asked to take it on faith

that the new higher costs of education are justified.

While the idea of shielding a child from failure might be acceptable, Smith feels that the school has not been consistent in carrying out the idea. One of his own children came home upset at not winning something at a school field day. The children are only protected from failing exams, he says, not from failing in sports or other school activities.

"Simply being told they have failed an examination is probably not the traumatic experience we think it is," he suggests. "They can be taught to handle it."

Now that products of this untested system are reaching the job market their inadequacies are showing up and everyone is blaming everyone else, says Smith.

"We've raised a generation that is ignorant of the history of our country, not good at reading English, and hopeless at learning French," he says.

His solution to the vicious circle of blame is to set up a core curriculum for high schools, a suggestion which the government has already adopted, and to establish a system of province-wide testing at the end of Grades 3, 6 and 10. The results of these



STUART SMITH

tests would be made available to the children, the parents, the teachers, the school boards and taxpayers.

He suggests that taxpayers wouldn't mind paying what they pay now if they felt they were getting their money's worth.

Smith wants to see an end to open concept schools claiming

that "nobody in their right mind would try to teach children in Grand Central Station."

When a teacher in the audience challenged Smith's statement that "children usually do better in closed concept schools" she was informed by Liberal education critic, John L. Sweeney (MPP Kitchener-Wilmot) that the statement is based on the results of a recent study done in California.

Smith agreed that the open concept will work with small groups who can be taught through the project method. However, it won't work the same way with larger groups of children. In large groups set goals via the project form of teaching there are always children who sit and do nothing.

Smith suggests it would be better to give these students a text, no matter how bad the text is, than to let them stare at blank space for half a year.

He also suggests that there should be some sort of standardized examinations at the end of Grade 13.

"Not the old Grade 13 departmentals," he says, but something to measure skills where possible, rather than facts learned.

Education critic Sweeney says the range of Grade 12 and 13 marks for students to equal ability is now so wide that some can enter university and some cannot, depending on the type of marking standard in the school they attend.

"We can't leave those types of vagaries for kid's careers," Sweeney says.

Smith wants a re-emphasis on basic teaching schools where there is a lower pupil-teacher ratio.

"Thirty-seven children in Grade 2 is just not acceptable," he says.

Smith's Aide, Sweeney, feels that the pupil-teacher ratio in a primary school should be 20:1.

Teacher training is also inadequate according to Smith, who quotes beginning teachers themselves as complaining of lack of practical experience before they begin actual teaching.

Smith is also concerned that parents are not consulted enough about the way a school is run. When he and his wife went to an open house at the Halton school his children attend, the principal stood up and introduced the teachers, gave a breakdown of how the classes would be organized, then invited everyone to break for coffee. If a parent objected to a system or placement in the school, he was told, "I'm sorry but it's already done."

Smith notes that parent-

teacher organizations in Montreal accomplished a good deal toward influencing schools and he would recommend parent-teacher councils as a way of dealing with school administration in Ontario.

Another matter which displeased Smith is the way good teachers who want to advance their careers have to learn the classroom and go into some sort of administrative position. Dr. Smith feels they "shouldn't be penalized economically" for remaining in the classroom if they are good at teaching. They should be rewarded for staying in the classroom.

"We're already top heavy

with administration," he says. "We'd still get an annual increase in the education budget even if all the children in Ontario were wiped out."

Smith would also prefer to see fewer experts going from school to school telling teachers how to teach.

A way to get the school budget back prospective Smith suggests would be to set a pupil-teacher ratio that the boards must meet, and allow only the money left over after that to be used on administration. He also feels that primary schools should receive a larger portion of the education tax dollar than secondary schools.



AN AFTERNOON 'RIDE'

It might be a little chilly but that doesn't stop you from enjoying an Easter afternoon "ride", four-year-old Andrew West appears to be saying in this picture taken by a Herald photographer at the Delrex Parkette. Andrew is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Rick West of Terra Cotta.



VISITING GRANDMOTHER'S

Easter was spent away from home visiting grandmother for Jamie Zmija, 3, front and sister Nicki, 7, of Acton immediately behind; and Debbie, 10, standing rear, and Jennifer Burnett, 4, of Port Hope, as they played at George Kennedy school Sunday in Georgetown. Below Debbie demonstrates her prowess on the climbing bars at the school playground.



Site F opponents take action, region faces legal battles

Landowners in the Tremaine-Britannia area of Milton have instituted legal action to prevent the use of Site F as a central regional landfill site.

Site F, located in the Tremaine-Britannia area, has been the centre of controversy for more than one year during a series of regional studies on alternative landfill locations.

A notice of motion has been filed with the Ontario Supreme Court calling for a stop to the development of Site F as a garbage dump. The notice, which will be heard April 19, seeks to quash March 2 council resolutions which designated the site as a dump.

The resolutions also called for further testing on the locations and for negotiations

to start toward the purchase of up to 250 acres of land in the area.

In addition to the writ which was served on regional chairman Ric Morrow last Wednesday, six "nuisance actions" have been filed against the region by landowners in the vicinity of the proposed site F.

The April 19 motion also calls for the court to rule that action taken by council is in contravention of zoning bylaws and the Planning Act.

Named as applicants in the court action are Tremaine-Britannia Citizens Group members James and Margaret Holmes, Stuart and Freda McFadden and Arthur and Sarah Laing.

The writ was served on regional officials immediately following a council meeting at which a letter from lawyer David Estrin, representing the citizens group, was received and filed.

The March 11 letter from Mr. Estrin called the action by council illegal and cautioned that any court action could tie up the final approval of Site F for as long as five years.

Contents of the letter were discussed in camera and council recommended that all future correspondence be forwarded to the regional solicitor.

Mr. Estrin called for an end to work on the site prior to any

court date, and for council to rescind its resolutions. Any attempt to rescind the action taken March 2 would have to be initiated by someone who voted in favor of the resolutions. They carried 11-10 in the 24-member council following nearly five hours of discussion.

A report by regional solicitor Michael Martin called the action taken by council well within the terms of the Planning Act and zoning bylaw if the town of Milton amends its official plan and bylaw. Milton regional councillors voted en bloc opposing Site F.

If Milton refuses to amend its official plan and bylaw allowing landfill operations on the land designated, the region can apply to the Ontario Municipal Board for approvals after the land has been purchased.

The six nuisance actions call for temporary and permanent injunctions against the development of Site F.

Named as plaintiffs in the writs are David and Anne Katz, Warren and Sherry Hinkelok, and Mary Elizabeth McLauslin.

They are requesting the injunctions on grounds that the site proposed for landfill may constitute a nuisance to use and enjoyment of the land.

They also state that it may impair the quality of the surface and underground water supplies on their lands.

Square dancers meet

Many Georgetown, Erin, Orangeville and Ballinacree couples are square dancing at the Shamrock Squares every Tuesday night.

Their sessions are held at Brisbane Public School which is just South-West of Erin on the Highway 24.

For this year's activities a new Executive Committee has been elected with Jim and Betty Kennedy as President, Bob and Ruby Pinkerton Vice-President, Allan and Ann Trueman Secretary, and John and Jen Dawson Treasurer.

We were especially pleased to welcome the square dancers who just completed the course given by the Halton Hills Recreation Department to our group last week.

The group has had two dances so far this year. The recent St. Patrick's dance on March 19 was a great success. The hall was beautiful thanks to our crew of decorators headed up by Bob and Ruby Pinkerton. Glen Helkun did a fine job calling.

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