

School budget: litany of waste

Halton taxpayers are again facing what has become an annual tradition - one of contradiction, one of confrontation and one of extreme frustration.

Stated simply, the provincial government at Queen's Park echoes the long-standing advice offered to consumers by the federal government in Ottawa: if you're feeling the fiscal pinch, tighten your belt a little more; don't spend so much.

The contradiction arises, of course, when yet another level of government, this time represented by the Halton board of education, fails to take that advice and slaps consumers who are already sucking wind because of their tightened belts with yet another unjustified tax increase.

There are fewer students in our schools; there is less cause for the elaborate educational services some enjoyed in the 1960s and '70s; there is feverish public demand for spending restraint in the public sector; and STILL, the board increases its draft annual budget by 13.7 per cent.

It is barely justifiable to the parents of school-age children, let alone the taxpayers who no longer directly use the schools, for the board to propose spending more money this year than last. Its finance committee chairman, Bill Priestner himself, points out several onerous areas of the budget where substantial reductions could be made. Still, the litany of waste goes before the trustees for approval: \$132 million for 1982.

There is no way around it - most of the blame for rising educational costs lies with the teachers' federations. So strong are their unions, it appears, that the board must contravene its own policies, hire teachers where none is needed and routinely grant them raises each and every year.

Regular teachers' salaries account for about \$75 million of the draft budget; there's another \$3.4 million for the special education teachers ironically deemed necessary by the Ontario government's Bill 82; another \$4 million goes to employee benefits (teachers and other staff alike).

The bureaucracy at board headquarters (which spent enormous energy and money "streamlining" the budget) absorbs \$2 million.

Twelve years ago, the average Halton teacher was paid \$9,492 annually. By 1976, that had increased to \$17,993. With the latest contract, it is \$32,140, each teacher's salary rising yearly simply because they made it through another season. (In fairness, taxpayers must realize that they are supporting a generally "more experienced" teaching staff, with teachers boasting an average ten years' experience now compared to four years' experience in 1970).

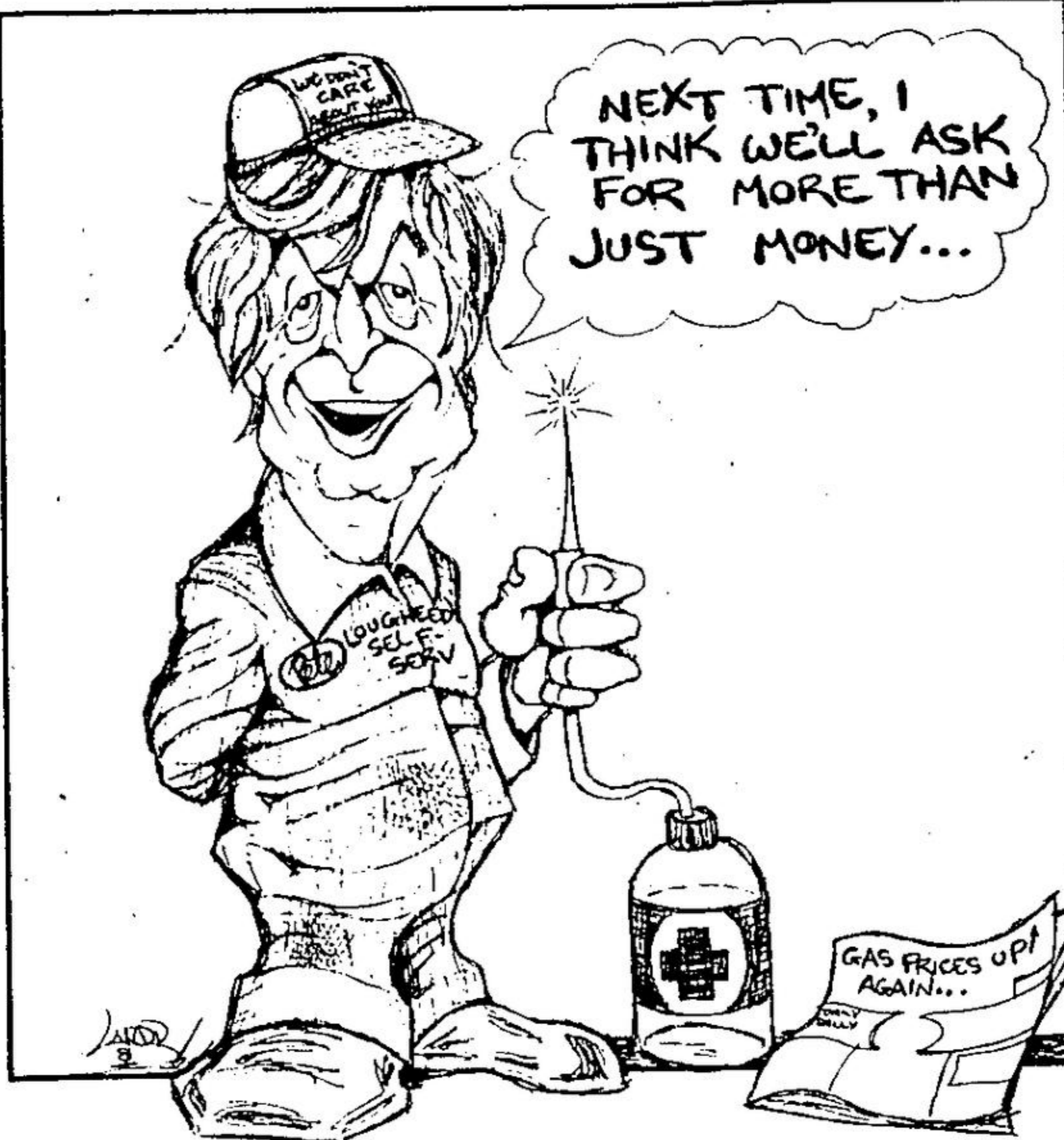
That same contract that made teachers among the most highly paid professionals forced the school board to agree to hire more of them. Eight more teachers will be hired in Halton this year even though a 3.3 per cent drop in enrollment should justify a decline of 106 teachers!

Again, the province - those champions of belt-tightening - help justify the need for more teachers enormously by imposing "special education" programmes. In economic hard times, we feel, such programmes must join professional development days and advanced psychological health services under the taxpayers' microscope for special scrutiny.

Also, the federal government's sanction of a major increase in postal rates, as just one example, confronts the board with a whopping 76 per cent increase in those costs. Halton now foots the bill for \$94,000 worth of school board stamps.

If consumers are truly to take Ottawa's and Queen's Park's messages seriously, we must trim the school board budget substantially. We all want "the best" for our students, but spending roughly \$2,500 on every elementary school pupil and \$3,500 on every secondary school student is just too much. There are fewer of them every year, but somehow in spite of all the belt tightening, we are asked to spend about 18 per cent more on each one.

Tell the trustees; tell the government MPs and MPPs: no thank you - that's too much.



Quebec Grits should be wary of UN party's enthusiasm



Ottawa
Report

By Stewart
MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald
With the next Quebec provincial election probably three years away and with Premier Rene Levesque busy wrestling with enormous economic problems and internal discontent, the province's Liberals perhaps think they have plenty of time to get their act together.
But as party memberships dissipate, and as fund-raising efforts become more anemic, the Quebec Liberals shouldn't be too casual as they quietly bide their time waiting to see whether Claude Ryan will step aside this summer to allow for a fall leadership convention. It's not just the Parti Quebecois they have to watch.
As the Quebec Grits lapse into lethargy under Ryan's austere and lofty leadership and await a new

many Quebec voters in search of a comfortable political home.

The UN's leader, Jean-Marc Belliveau, came away from the Montreal meeting almost gushing with enthusiasm. "By the end of this year our objective is 100,000 members and if last weekend is any indication," he said, "we're going to make it."

It's an ambitious target for a party that is still suffering from a touch of rigor mortis and has precious little to offer in the way of platform or policies. But then, what are the Liberals offering the voters right now?

The conventional wisdom seems to be that Claude Ryan has to go, having failed to win last April's election, and having failed to inspire the party since then. There is outspoken dissatisfaction within Liberal ranks, and it wasn't long ago that a party official wrote in a Montreal newspaper that Ryan "is a more dishonest politician than any member of the Parti Quebecois." With support like that, is it any wonder that fund-raisers are having trouble?

Clearly a growing void is being created, and if the Liberals don't soon start pulling together, that void will be filled by others. And it doesn't have to be filled entirely.

A third party can easily siphon off enough votes to act as a spoiler, and if the UN is able to struggle back to its feet, it's the Liberals who will bear the weight, not the PQ.

Messiah, there has been a faint murmur coming from the grave of the once-mighty Union Nationale. There is still some life there. Perhaps not enough to strike fear into the heart of Claude Ryan's Liberals, but enough to warrant a moment of silence.

PAYWAY
No one seems to have given much thought to the Union Nationale since last April 13 when, under the leadership of Roch LaSalle - who has since returned to Ottawa as a Tory MP - the party was buried in the election that also shattered Ryan and swept the Parti Quebecois back to power. The UN was whitewashed. Not one candidate was elected, and debts were reported close to \$250,000.

And so, Quebec became a two-party province, with all the attention focused on Levesque and the disheartened Claude Ryan. Apart from the occasional death of a former UN member, the party's name never reached the newspapers.

But last weekend, more than 1,000 Union Nationale supporters paid their own way to Montreal to talk about reviving the historic party that was once the private preserve of Maurice Duplessis. And while 1,000 people don't make provincial powerhouse, this gathering can't be dismissed out of hand - particularly when there is so much disenchantment with the two major parties. Obviously, there are

A starboard list to Bill's recent cabinet shuffle?



Queen's
Park

By Derek
Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald
Somehow the word is abroad in the land that the recent cabinet shuffle here is an indication of some kind of "swing to the right" by Premier Bill Davis' Progressive Conservatives.
Responsibility for economic matters has passed to "adamant right-wing politicians" (as David Crane in the Toronto Star put it) who are "ideologically opposed" to interventionist government economic policies.
And even though it is nonsense, this view is continuing to gain ground.
Ideology may play some role in cabinet shifts, but the key factor (other than loyalty and being on the waiting list) in the premier's mind whenever he shuffles cabinet appears to be "can he do the job?" - a subsection of which means "can he keep the government out of trouble?"
The theory about going right in the recent shuffle seems to centre on three cabinet ministers in particular.

THREE RIGHT
Those are Treasurer Frank Miller, who didn't even move in the shuffle, Industry Minister Gord Walker, who came from Consumer and Commercial Relations, and George Taylor, who has newly entered cabinet as Solicitor-General.
Now it is true that all three ministers are generally considered "right-wing", and to the degree the term means anything it usually signals

someone who prefers private-sector action to government action.

But what one believes and what one does in government are entirely different matters.

Under right-wing Frank Miller Treasury spending this fiscal year is soaring 16 per cent, four per cent more than inflation. Critics call this cutting back. Imagine what a left-wing treasurer would do?

Actually, Davis always puts a right-winger in Treasury, then makes them spend. It could be a subtle form of torture. Did Ontario really have to buy part of an oil company?

GROSSMAN TOO
Then there is Walker's move. He replaced Larry Grossman, a left-wing or interventionist type when it comes to the economy. This might indicate a shift to the right, except for one problem.

Grossman told a reporter a while back his job at Industry was finished and he wanted to move on. He had already done the interventionist things such as setting up high-tech research establishments.

(Whether he wanted to move to Health is another matter. Some suggest that burden is Davis' punishing Grossman for being too over-eager in seeking to fill the premier's shoes.)

But industry plans are in place, and Davis wanted Walker out of Consumer and Commercial anyway. What better place to move him than Industry? A "social justice" portfolio is not his style.

TAYLOR TOO
As for Taylor, he was just next in line for a cabinet post.

The whole exercise about the "shift to the right" is rather ludicrous in the light of the most recent Conservative convention. There Davis read restive right-wingers the Riot Act.

In essence he said that if the party has been moving anywhere it is left, and it is going to keep going that way, except the pace is going to pick up from eight inches a year to gallop speed.

Shift to the right, huh. It'll be lucky to avoid falling off the political road into the left-hand ditch alongside the NDP.

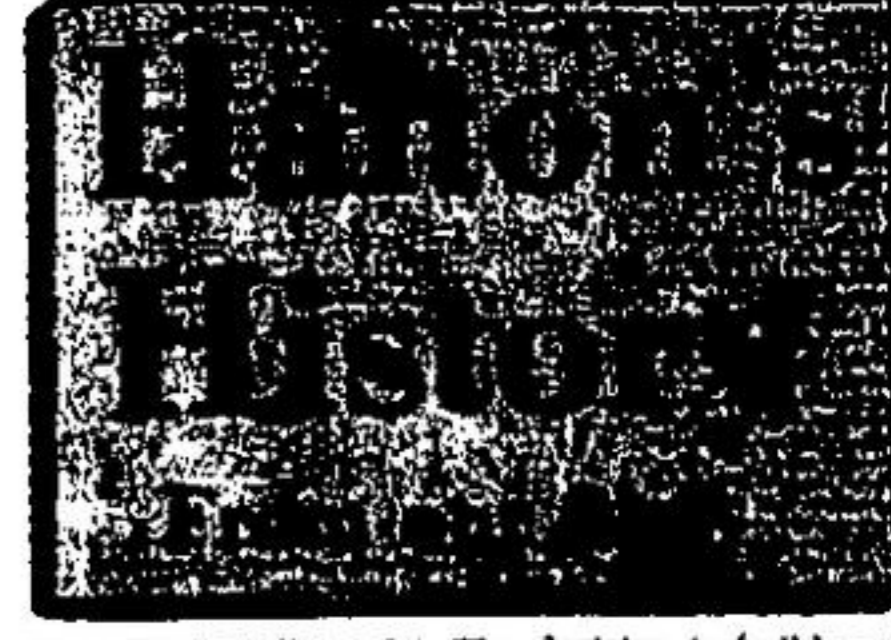
POET'S CORNER

Didn't Care Enough

If you see me just above
your pillow some night,
say hello.
I won't be there long because
morning comes so soon.
Sometimes you pray that night will
last forever.
Not when you're alone, though.
You were the warmest experience
that ever took hold of me.
You couldn't last forever because
not even life is that long.

You tried to understand
but didn't.
There were times when fears
threatened to take you away from me,
but you helped,
by loving.
Sorry if you ever felt
left out.
You never really were, you see,
because you were my life.

—By Marlowe C. Dickson,
RR2 Beeton



THIRTY YEARS AGO—The decision to build new high schools at Georgetown and Acton was made at a meeting of North Halton high school district board Thursday in Milton. Last year a similar decision had been made, but as new members had joined the board, it was decided to reopen the discussion in order that all members might have a part in the decision. Estimates of building two schools will be about \$940,000 on which a grant of \$600,000 is paid by the government. Cost of operating the two schools, taking into account the issuing of debentures is \$84,000. The board felt that in spite of a saving of about \$25,000 a year in operating costs there are more factors in favor of building two schools in the two towns than one school in the country. It is important to consider that one or both towns might grow to such proportion that a school in the town would be a necessity and in future a school in the country could be a "white elephant".

Going to the movies may be good for your vision according to the American Optometric Association. "Looking at motion pictures under proper conditions gives valuable training to the eyes and muscles and nerves used in seeing," says Dr. Elmer Soles. "In fact, visits to the movies are recommended as an aid to correction of some visual problems."

Anyone who was at home Friday night was just a stick in the mud according to Herald editor Walter Blehn. He couldn't remember when there was more doing in the town and district. There was a play at Stewarttown, a mock trial at St. George's Church, euchre at the Oddfellows Hall, juvenile hockey at the arena with the IOOE dance upstairs, a meeting of Credit Lodge and the Friday night dance and social at the Legion Hall—a pretty full evening for a small town.

Indications of a growing awareness of mutual aid among neighbors is shown in discussions about fire protection for Esqueping taking place between town and township councils. The question of fire protection in outlying districts has always been a difficult one. The Georgetown volunteer brigade is supported by Georgetown taxes and has no reason to go out of town limits, but there has rarely been a case where aid was refused. A scheme in which rural areas provide a fire truck and Georgetown agrees to house and man it when necessary is in the wind, providing fire protection to rural residents in Glen Williams, Norval, Stewarttown and Limehouse.

TWENTY YEARS AGO—Georgetown's newest industry is a structural steel fabrication plant. Ferro Structural Steel commenced operations in part of the former Alrex Contracting building on Armstrong Avenue Thursday. However, quarters are temporary and Jim Rundle, the firm's vice president and general manager told the Herald his company will be building here sometime this year. They've purchased land on Armstrong Avenue.

Five acres of land on the Check Line and Highway 7 have been purchased by Esqueping township as the site of a new municipal building. The land was obtained from Charles Greig for \$7,000.

Georgetown's share in costs of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority this year will be \$9,189. This assessment is based on 69 cents per person with the town's population taken as 10,325. "I suggest we pay the bill with pleasure," said Reeve John Elliott as the motion was carried.

Anglican parishioners welcomed a new rector, Rev. John McMillin, Sunday morning to St. George's. The McMillins moved into the rectory beside the church Thursday, a few weeks after Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Richardson moved to their new home in Hamilton.

TEN YEARS AGO—Georgetown police force chief Harry (Bud) Lowe has resigned to take another position. The commission has named Sgt. George Louth as senior officer in charge pending the appointment of a new chief. Appointed chief in December 1967, Chief Lowe joined the force in 1956 when it consisted of four men. The 18-man force he inherited has now increased to 22.

A small U-shaped shopping mall, with a landscaped courtyard and benches will be built on Mountainview Road, north of the bowling alley, Karl Magid, of ICI Realty told council Monday night. He said he had the building permit and planned a service type mall with a maximum of nine stores. Parking for 56 cars will be provided around the back of the stores. His company has purchased the Georgetown Market from Brunac Development and Mr. Magid told council he had seen a sketch suggesting a town centre or an arena in that area.

Halton's proposed 1972 education budget at \$43 million shows an increase of 6.2 per cent over last year's costs. Most of the \$3.5 million increase is attributed to increases in staff wages. Halton teachers are more experienced and better qualified than in previous years, resulting in an increase of about \$2.5 million in wages for instructional staff. "This trend is going to continue," says Burlington trustee Fred Armitage.

More Bantam hockey teams than ever before have applied to take part in the 12th annual International Bantam Hockey Tournament to be held here March 10-25. The sponsoring Kinamen have had 78 requests; however, they can accommodate just 44 teams. The 44 teams taking part are divided into four categories according to population and each will play an opponent twice with total goals the deciding factor.

ONE YEAR AGO—A Supreme Court of Ontario judgement Wednesday rejected an application to overturn the nomination of Fran Baines, Progressive Conservative candidate for Halton-Burlington. The ruling, handed down by Justice R.E. Holland, quashed an injunction before the courts by former party member Oriens Currie who said Mrs. Baines had been improperly nominated. It was the first time in the history of Ontario anyone sought an injunction to overturn a nomination for election. Mrs. Currie, 46, of Campbellville, said she was one of about 400 people disqualified from voting in the Feb. 9 nomination meeting in which Mrs. Baines was chosen.

The Georgetown Agriculture Society won't have to pay \$1,336 for turf ruined during last year's Fall Fair at Fairgrounds Park, town councillors decided Monday night. Warning that the 135-year old fair would probably fold if held responsible for minor damages sometimes caused by events, Society spokesman Ian MacCallum argued that the fair brings in revenue for local merchants and has contributed money to the parks upkeep in previous years. The fair has never before been billed for damages, he said referring to the \$1,800 bill originally charged the Society.

The GDHS swimming team proved they were the best team in the province last Friday by winning the OFSAA (provincial) swimming championships held at Etobicoke (Olympic). Of the 87 schools attending the finals, Georgetown placed first in the open girls division, dominating second place T.L. Kennedy from Windsor 137 points to 81 points. North Toronto placed third with 63 points. The boys team placed fourth with 53 points, seven behind third-place Oakwood and 70 points behind first-place Ridley College. These totals combined to give Georgetown a lone first place with 200 points, 63 points ahead of second-place Ridley College with 123 team points and T.L. Kennedy with 120 points.



BOOK 'EM, DANNO

Cubs attending the Resource Day held Saturday morning at the Ballinafad community hall attempted to peer into their respective futures as they participated in the art of "chiro-mancy", the reading of palms. The demonstration was provided by Fourth Georgetown Cubmaster Brenda Baaliger. Cubs attended from Georgetown, Acton, Limehouse, Ballinafad and Norval. Cubs' palms were inked and then pressed to sheets of newspaper to give the boys a "lasting impression" of the day's events.