

**Halton education chief attends Acton drop-in forum**

# 'School budget was pared to bone,' - Beevor

By CHRIS AAGAARD  
Herald Staff Writer

Halton education director Wally Beevor was the Acton drop-in centre's special guest Friday and, while few residents attended, those who did asked him to justify the board's recently approved \$132 million budget for 1982, which will raise taxes in Halton Hills an average of \$91 per household.

Almost as soon as he greeted town councillors Terry Grubbe, Ross Knechtel, Russ Miller and Dave Whiting and school trustee Arlene Bruce, Mr. Beevor was quizzed by Acton resident Bill Cook who demanded to know what residents get from their educational system in return for the high taxes they pay.

"When is the spending going to stop?" Mr. Cook asked. "I have no children so what do I get out of (the school board)? Teachers are getting paid exorbitant salaries; yet, when kids come in to apply for a job, they can barely write their own names."

Mr. Beevor argued that board officials and trustees pared the budget down to "a point where we could not go any lower."

"The board this year spent a great deal of time cutting things out of the budget," the board's education director since January said. "Budgetary debate wasn't taken in a casual manner and the responsibility of the people who attacked that budget was high and not done in a cavalier, 'don't give a damn' attitude."

He added that not all of the costly special education requirements outlined in the province's Bill 82 were met this year and said the board maintained one of the lowest per pupil cost increases in Ontario.

Although the board will hire more teachers to meet union contract demands and Bill 82 requirements, it expects the complement of full-time teachers to drop by 42 this year



**OUR ORATORICAL BEST**

"Do you think it's wise for a squirrel to forget to collect nuts for tomorrow?" asked one of the young competitors in the Georgetown Optimists public speaking contest finals March 30. The theme was "You and I and Tomorrow" and four girls and four boys vied for the male and female first prizes. Already winners at their schools, the youngsters were competing to represent the Optimists Club Zone 5 in Vanier, where trophies will be won. First prize winners were (seated, left to right)

Natalie Whiting, 12, of Erin, and Danny Glover, 12, also of Erin. Giving them a light squeeze for the top were (standing) Richard Sowers, 9, of George Kennedy Public School in Georgetown, Stephen Porter, 12, of Orangeville, Dan Nolan, 12, of Mississauga, Melanie Piers, 10, of George Kennedy Public School in Georgetown, Stacie Harper, 11, of Mississauga and Carolyn Reaton, 11, of Orangeville. The district finals at Vanier take place May 1.

because of declining enrollment. Mr. Beevor argued that current teachers' salaries are not unreasonable when one "looks across the public sector," and pointed out that Halton's teachers are actually in the lower half of the provincial salary average.

Had provincial funding for the board remained the same as last year, he said, this year's increase in Halton's mill rate would be about 13 per cent instead of the 19 per cent announced two weeks ago.

He explained that the province determined that Halton has better than average "wealth" and provincial funding for the annual budget dropped from 48 per cent last year to 44 per cent in 1982. Correspondingly, the ratepayers' responsibility for the board's budget rose from 52 per cent to 56 per cent.

Supported by a large amount of industrial assessment, Peel region is not paying as much per household for its educational costs, Mrs. Bruce said. While school taxes in Acton may be reflected by an average 22.7 per cent increase this year, Peel households will probably see a ten per cent increase in their share of school costs.

There is nothing new in the board's educational program except finishing up the expand-

ed French core program, implementing Bill 82 programs and providing lunchroom supervision as required by the province, Mr. Beevor said. He told the group that he personally supports Bill 82.

"There's no question that the province is trying to back out of education," Mr. Beevor said. "It's easy to be critical of the province, but one wonders how they can reduce their deficits, too."

Although enrollment continues to decline, Mr. Beevor said heating and maintenance costs continue to rise, whether the schools are filled or only partially used. He said that the process for closing and selling schools is long, difficult and often very bitter.

"People don't like to see their community schools closed," Mr. Beevor said. "After two years of debate, we will close three schools in southwest Oakville after this school year."

However, councillors noted that schools have limited "alternative" uses and don't sell well.

Asked whether last year's construction of a new gym at Glen Williams School was necessary in view of the small student population of 142, Mr. Beevor said he supports "the concept of building gyms for students" and emphasized that it is intended they be used by the entire community.

Coun. Knechtel suggested there is a communications problem between education officials and taxpayers which is reaching a critical enough level to prompt officials into solving the dilemma.

"I couldn't agree more," Mr. Beevor said. "It's not often we get to come out and be part of forums like this. It allows us to give our side of the story and there are many good things in the system which are overlooked and don't get publicized."

He expressed hope that board officials could return to the drop-in centre regularly.

## School problems same in UK visiting educator points out

Visiting from England, educator Keith Grimshaw joined Halton board of education director Wally Beevor and assistant director Bob Williams at Friday's Acton drop-in session and concluded that many of the problems discussed that afternoon affect the British educational system as well.

Declining enrollment and cutbacks in government funding are having an equally detrimental affect on the system he's most familiar with, Mr. Grimshaw noted, and causes just as much concern among taxpayers.

As one of eight education officers from England currently in the province, Mr. Grimshaw will spend two weeks visiting various educational jurisdictions. Next year, Ontario educators will travel to Britain on the second leg of the exchange program.

"We have common problems," he said, "and we want to see how you're tackling them. We're going to be visiting the local people to see what they have to say."

Meanwhile, drop-in organizers have announced that Halton MP Otto Jelinek will be at the centre, located in the community services offices, April 16.

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1 Church service  
5 Dry goods  
10 Auk genus  
11 Bacon slice  
13 Legal claim  
14 Cling  
15 Man-made fabric  
17 Coccomb  
18 Okay (colloq.)  
19 Big -  
20 "Capital" of Iran  
21 Belgian river  
23 Albacore, e.g.  
24 Gold or silver  
26 Mother chickens  
27 Exclude  
28 Thick fog (sl.)  
29 Liquor  
31 Encountered  
32 Against (abbr.)  
34 "Cakes and..."  
35 Supervise  
37 Fishing net  
39 State (Fr.)  
40 Less fresh  
41 Religious body  
42 Choice group  
43 Domino or die

DOWN  
1 Language of Indonesia  
2 Copper or Marble  
3 She's "turning night into day"  
4 Dispatched  
5 Volcanic depression  
6 Burdened  
7 Uzbek border town  
8 Jan de Hartog play (2 wds.)  
9 Brave belle  
10 Instant -  
16 "Green Mansions" hero  
22 Perched  
23 Greek letter  
24 Quagmire; swamp  
25 Try to equal 38 Lord, to the Hebrews  
26 "d'Azur"  
28 Hatam  
29 French painter  
31 One of a Tolstoy pair  
32 Insignificant  
33 Remainder  
34 Lord, to the Hebrews

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