'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 house-

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 exhorbitant salarles; 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 regulrements 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

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

Visiting from England.

educator Keith Grimshaw

joined Halton board of edu-

cation director Wally Beevor

and assistant director Bob

Williams at Friday's Acton

drop-in session and conclud-

ed that many of the problems

discussed that afternoon

afflict the British education-

Declining enrollment and

cutbacks in government

funding are having an equal-

ly detrimental affect on the

system he's most familiar

Christmas

Seals help out

all year round

al system as well.



"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 girts and four boys vied for the male and female first prizes. Already winners at their schools, the youngsters were competing to represent the Optimists (Jub Zone 5 in Vanier, where trophies will be won. First prize winners were (seated, left to right)

School problems same in UK

visiting educator points out

Natalie Whiting, 12, of Erin, and Danny Glover, 12, also of Erin. Giving them a tight squeeze for the top were (standing) Richard Sowery, 9, of George Kennedy Public School in Georgetown, Stephen' Porter, 12, of Orangeville, Dan Nolan, 12, of Mississauga, Melanie Piers, to, of George Kennedy Public School in Georgetown, Stacie Harper, 11, of Mississauga and Carolynn Beaton, 11, of Orangeville. The district finals at Vanier take place

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 sald, this year's increase in Halton's

mill rate would be about 13 per

with, Mr. Grimshaw noted,

and causes just as much

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 exclunge

"We have common problems," he said, "and we

want to see how you're

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concern among taxpayers.

because of declining enroll- -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

tackling them. We're going

to see what they have to

Meanwhile, drop-in organ-

to be visiting the local people

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 householders 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-

izers have announced that

Halton MP Otto Jelinek will

be at the centre, located in

the community services

offices, April 16.

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"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."

province is trying to back out of education," Mr. Beevor However, councillors noted that schools have limited said. "It's easy to be critical of "alternative" uses and don't the province, but one wonders how they can reduce their sell well. Asked whether last year's

often very bitter.

deficits, too." construction of a new gym at Although enrollment conti-Glen Williams School was nues to decline, Mr. Beevor necessary in view of the small said heating and maintenance student population of 142, Mr. costs continue to rise, whether the schools are filled or only Beevor said he supports "the concept of building gyms for students" and emphasized that partially used. He said that the process for closing and selling

it is intended they be used by schools is long, difficult and 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.

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"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 publi-

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



ed French core program,

implementing Bill 82

programs and providing lunch-

room supervision as required

by the province, Mr. Beever

said. He told the group that he

"There's no question that the

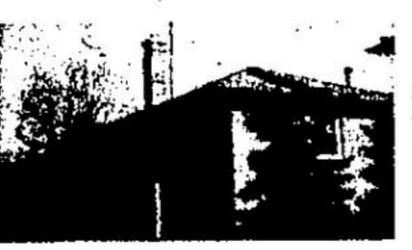
personally supports Bill 82.

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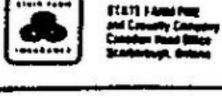
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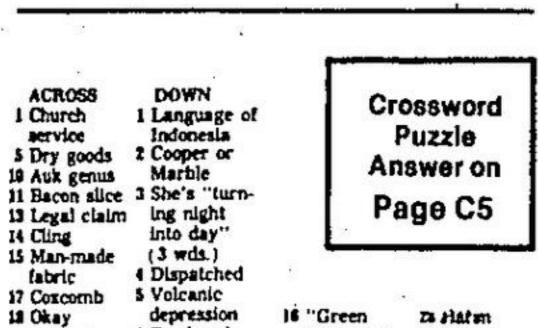


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