

Restraint justified: Bird

Halton board of education

The Halton board of education was called a "babe in arms" compared with negotiators for teachers' groups.

Not intimidated by the number of elementary school teachers packing the board's board room Thursday night, a Burlington businessman presented a brief opposing teacher salary increases.

Current negotiations with elementary teachers are stalling over the staffing issue. Both HETA and the board have agreed to the provincial guidelines of nine and five for wage increases.

"How can the Halton board justify a teachers' salary increase of nine per cent plus increment in light of the dire straits of the economy?" Rod Bird demanded.

He called the board's economic performance over the past four years "pitiful", pointing out a 70 per cent increase in expenditures with an eight per cent decrease in enrol-

ment during the same time period.

A severe restraint program is dictated by the economy, in light of the closing of businesses and massive layoffs at Ford, Stelco, Dofasco and International Harvester, and the move to three or four-day work weeks or salary pay cuts at other Halton companies, Mr. Bird said.

"With rampant unemployment, staggering welfare payments and people losing their homes, governments must cut spending and the board is no exception," warned Mr. Bird.

He challenged the statistics of factfinder Doug Belch, a Kingston lawyer who prepared a report for the teachers' contract negotiations this past fall.

"The board is easily influenced by incorrect data," he said and asked why the board didn't challenge Mr. Belch's claim that Halton appears to be well insulated with higher than average incomes and cheaper costs per student.

"Where did he get his information from?"

Requests for paternity leave and athletic leave with pay were called "a lot of silliness" by Mr. Bird who said such requests were made by the teachers' unions with the hope that a few of them would pass by.

"The negotiating committee of the board has shown its ineptitude by not proposing equally ridiculous things as a tradeoff," Mr. Bird said.

The board's defense of increasing salaries to keep up with other provincial boards isn't justified, Mr. Bird said.

"What other regions or municipalities are doing has no bearing on the current economics at home or what we should offer our teachers," he said. "With high unemployment, the board is in the driver's seat with teachers."

Trustees shouldn't therefore fear losing their good teachers to other boards, Mr. Bird said.



Judy Luker cares about the children in her Grades 2 and 3 class. The George Kennedy Public School teacher objects to having large classes and she was out Thursday night to voice her view politely, along with 500 other elementary school teachers. A busload of teachers from Halton Hills attended the demonstration organized by the Halton Elementary Teachers' Association (HETA). HETA is negotiating for 12 more teachers to reduce the current pupil-teacher ratio of 29.4:1.

(Herald photo by Ani Federman)

Proclamation

The Town of Halton Hills has officially proclaimed the week of February 6-12 as "French Week" in our community.

La semaine du 6 au 12 février été proclamée "La Semaine Française" par le Conseil Municipale de Halton Hills.

For their assistance in this endeavour, we would like to thank the Ontario Arts Council and the Secretariat of State.

Smaller classes

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turnout. "I don't know if it'll have any effect," he said. "Our staff feels that with smaller classes we can accomplish more and give more time to the kids in the classroom."

Smaller class sizes are important, Mr. Cosgrove said, explaining that young students haven't yet disciplined themselves to learning in the "lecture-style" popular at the university level.

The organizer of the turnout, HETA president Robert Filman said 750 buttons were handed out to teachers at the board

meeting, and that he was satisfied with the turnout.

"I think the courteous manner they displayed tonight showed the commitment teachers have to improving the situation," Mr. Filman said following the board meeting. "It's a professional issue and I think they displayed themselves in a professional manner."

Acknowledging that the extra 12 teachers HETA is fighting for won't make much of a difference to the board's roster of 1,268 elementary school teachers, Mr. Filman said it was a start.

"By going for 12, we're

trying to be responsible, agreeing you can't have the 'whole cake' in one year," he said.

Catholic Women's League

Holding a sale

By BRENDA AUCOTT
CWL publicist

The January meeting of the Catholic Women's League began with the celebration of Mass at Holy Cross Church by Father Dave Cole.

The meeting was chaired by first vice-president Siena Van Hoekelen. A new member, Mary Delguidice, was welcomed by all present and thank-you letters were read.

It was agreed to donate \$50 to the toy library run by the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded and donations of \$100 each were given to the Contact Centre, ActiVan and Halton Women's Place.

Left-over goods from the 1982 bazaar will be on sale in the church basement after the 10 a.m. and noon masses this Sunday (Feb. 6).

Mary Ellen Van Cleef requested signatures on a letter of protest to the upcoming Bill 158, sponsored by Planned Parenthood, to have compulsory sex education in kindergarten to Grade 8. Contents of the course are to be determined by the minister of health without parental consent.

4-H club news

The Ballinlad 4-H club starts next Saturday (Feb. 5) and is eagerly looking for young men and women between 12 and 26 years old. The project, Heritage Food, goes on through March, and is welcoming participants now. For information call Mrs. Schwartz at 877-7000.

Money issue non-negotiable

Non-monetary matters are the focus of negotiations between Halton regional police officers and the police commission.

Provincial legislation has limited pay raises to five per cent for 1983, making the usually controversial monetary issue non-negotiable.

"There's a very good feeling in the dialogue," commissioner Ric Morrow told colleagues Thursday afternoon. "The discussions have centered, on both sides, on the best interests of the force and citizens."

Police commissioners met with members of the police association Thurs-

day morning for their third meeting to settle a one-year contract.

Commissioners also met with the senior officers' association. With 12 members, they're also bound by the provincial legislation limiting salary increases to five per cent. Their one year contract negotiations are dealing with non-monetary matters now, Inspector Roy Wilkinson said.

Salary increases for the police chief and deputy chief, both of whom aren't members of either association, will be discussed at a future meeting of the police commission, Mr. Morrow said.

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