

Premier's council report offers no new insight

By LISA RUTLEDGE
The Herald

A Premier's Council report which warns that Ontario could face a skills crisis doesn't provide any new insight and comes "after the fact," says a Halton Hills school trustee.

Halton Board of Education trustee, Arlene Bruce, said Ontario Premier David Peterson's council report, People and Skills In The New Global Economy, provides recommendations which have been concerns for years at the board.

According to the report, the council is concerned the education system cannot produce enough skilled labor to meet the needs of a quickly modernizing technical industry. It also states the percentage of jobs classified as unskilled are rapidly decreasing in industries such as the auto industry.

More than half of the new jobs in Canada require a Grade 12 education or less but in 10 years only 37 per cent of those jobs will only require Grade 12 education, the report said.

The council also identified inadequate literacy skills as a disturbing escalator toward a skills crisis. "... many people entering or already in the work force are not able to read at set of simple instructions or understand a graph," the reports said.

The board already completed its own survey and research project on the attitudes toward math and science last year, said Mrs. Bruce. She continued to say that boards across the province are concerned and have been looking for ways to change attitudes about those subjects for years.

The council believes that

technology and careers must be made more attractive and viable for students. Industry, as well as the education system, must make an effort to sell the benefits of skilled labour, the report claims. "Not all opportunities will be in white-collar occupations," it stated. Industry can assist educating youth about labour by sponsoring career education days, providing updated information and co-operative education programs, the report concluded.

The Halton Board of Education has been offering co-op programs for students in several fields including finance positions, Mrs. Bruce insists. Milton schools have an extensive co-op program network with its surrounding industry, she said.

The public could be getting a report card on the performance of students all across Ontario if students are tested through independent evaluations if the council's recommendation comes into action. But, the report card, which would identify the progress of students, could cause problems if teachers only teach for the test, said Mrs. Bruce.

Excellence based on high marks ignores students who don't perform best academically but do well working with hands-on projects, said Mrs. Bruce. Students who would benefit from co-op programs lack the ability to do well enough on tests to qualify to enter into co-op programs, she said.

John Pettit, the school board's science co-ordinator, said the board is working to further promote math in junior and primary grades. He believes sparking interest in math in young students by using hands-on methods will make math and sciences more valued

skills. Math should not be taught straight out of a textbook but must involve work with materials and manipulating the environment because "kids learn by doing," Mr. Pettit said.

Society's value on the end product rather than the production process is to blame for students' lack of interest in technology, Mr. Pettit believes. He explained that students often take their purchases, even fast food, for granted without thinking about the sciences involved.

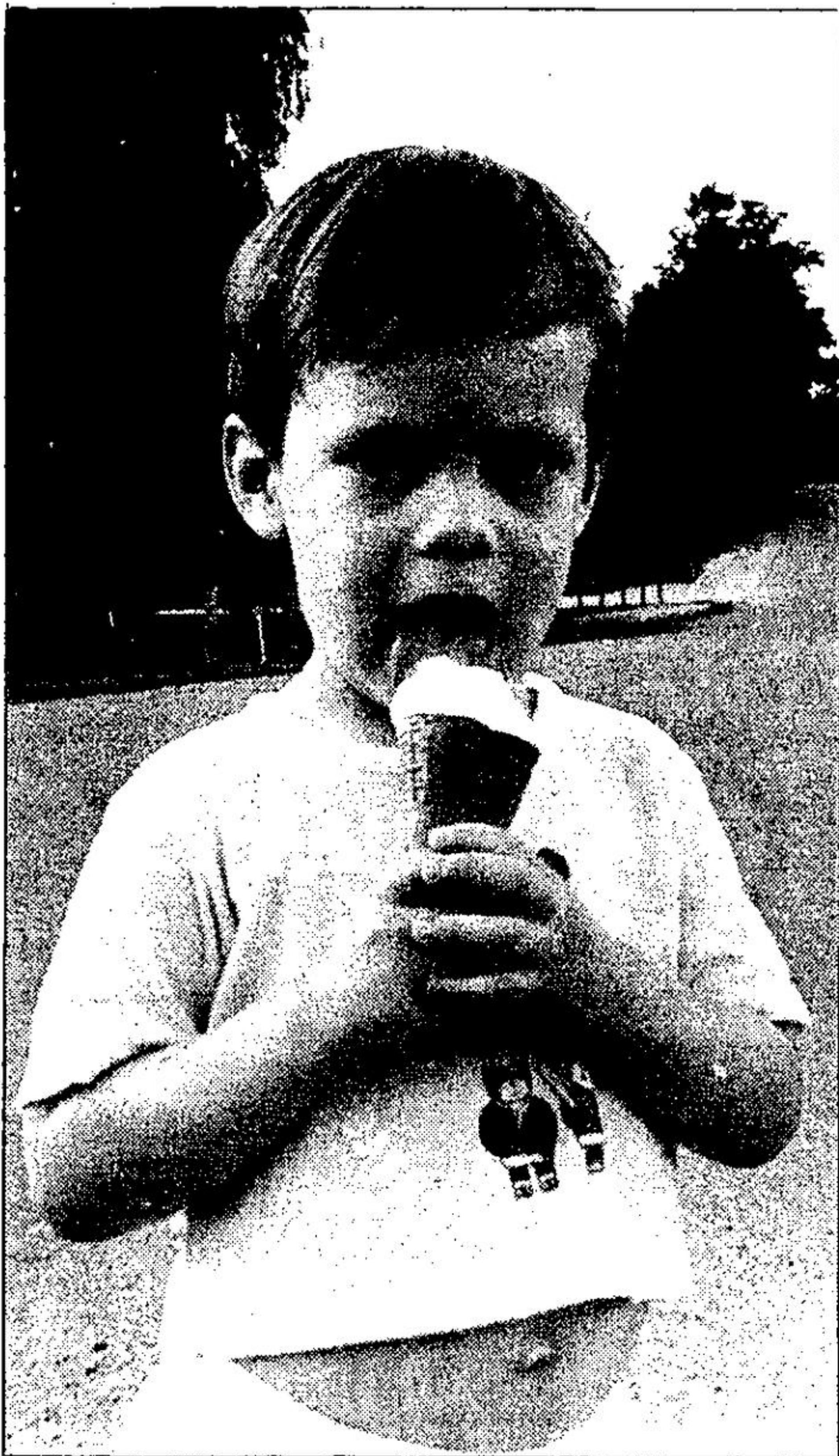
Without concern for the technology involved in creating end products, students will question why they should take a physics course everyone says is so tough, Mr. Pettit maintained.

The education system needs to be reassessed in order to give students the problem solving, flexibility and social skills to keep up with a "knowledge exploding" industry, Mr. Pettit recommends. The system needs to do a better job of showing kids they need problem-solving skills, he said.

Mr. Pettit blames ministry teaching guidelines for being too content-oriented, concentrating on details without emphasizing information accessing and solving skills which are transferable and apply to all aspects of daily life.

If students are tested through annual ministry evaluations to show the public the progress of education, the ministry should reevaluate tests questions, Mr. Pettit added.

As it is difficult to know what the future requirements of industry will be, students will need to have problem solving abilities to adapt to the 21st Century, believes Mr. Pettit.



Cooling off

Cooling off: Treating himself to an ice-cream cone, Jeremy Cole cools himself off from the hot weather that hit the region last week. Temperatures reached a high of 30° Celsius.

(Herald photo)

RECYCLING.
It only works if we all do our part!
Please Remember to Recycle This Newspaper

MY GENERATION
"Fashions For The Young At Heart"
115 MAIN ST. S., GEORGETOWN
Across From Knox Church 873-2851

Miller's BAKERY
British Bakers
CAKES for all occasions
British Breads & Pastries
877-0596 Sunday 10:00-5:00
Mon-Sat. 9:00-6:00
330 Guelph St. Georgetown
ACROSS FROM NEILSON'S

\$4,000⁰⁰
SHOPPING SPREE
VALUE STORE

SAVE \$100⁰⁰
Off the regular price on a Turbo™ Central Vacuum System for your home.
Values Effective Until Closing Aug. 11/90

SHOP THE LIGHTS *Fantastic*
LIVING LIGHTING
245 GUELPH STREET, Georgetown
873-2898

Walt Elliot
M.P.P.

is pleased to announce the location of re-election campaign offices in

Acton
25 Mill St. E.
853 - 2532

Campbellville
70B Main Street
854 - 0025

Georgetown
7 James Street
873 - 0116

Milton
133 Main St. E.
875 - 4220

Make sure your name gets on the Voters List.
To vote, you must be registered.

