

Opinion

Schools no scapegoat

We're perturbed about statements attributed to the new chair of the Halton Board of Education, Milton trustee Bill Harrison at a meeting last week. In his acceptance speech he declared he'll make sure public education doesn't become a "scapegoat" for separate school funding in Ontario.

We're concerned because:

(a) It suggests the Province has been depriving the public school board of funding so they can fund the Catholic school system, or intends to.

(b) If it's just an assumption, as we believe it is, then he has created a climate of unnecessary suspicion by suggesting the Catholic board might benefit at the public school board's expense.

Since every child in Ontario educated in either the public or the separate school systems is entitled to the benefit of full funding, the suggestion that one system may benefit over the other has serious connotations. If the public school board is being penalized then there is something definitely wrong with the system, and Mr. Harrison's statement has a legitimate base.

If, on the other hand, the separate school board is trying to catch up and provide the same facilities and advantages as the public school board has already provided then they are only fulfilling their mandate. They want the children in their care to have the same advantages as already enjoyed in the public school system.

We suspect the fact that they are no longer the only game in town bothers some of the public school trustees as well as public school supporters. We also suspect that some of the separate school trustees and taxpayers also would like to wreak some kind of fiscal revenge for the years they were denied full public support as laid out in the British North America Act. But provocative statements such as Mr. Harrison's do nothing but stoke the fires of intolerance on both sides.

We wouldn't like it any better if the chair of the Catholic school board declared he would make sure that separate school education doesn't become a "scapegoat" for public education in Ontario.

To be fair, Mr. Harrison is concerned about a decline in funding from the Province which is perceived as dumping the cost of education into the laps of local taxpayers. And it is. But to suggest that the problem lies in unequal support to the separate schools is only clouding the issue.

Taxpayers who support either system pay about the same tax rate and we have seen no evidence that the public school system is suffering. In fact the public perception is that school boards are fiscally irresponsible, a resolution which neighboring Milton Council endorsed last week.

Consequently we would suggest that instead of jealously guarding their prerogatives both boards of education, public and separate, would be better occupied in coming up with some solutions to the ever escalating cost of education. It has consistently been higher than the inflation rate and becoming an increasing burden for taxpayers of both systems. —H.C.

Shopping locally pays

There's only a few days left to shop for Christmas - eight to be exact - and local stores may just have the gift you are looking for.

The advantages of shopping locally are often lost because our merchants are there 365 days of the year and we take them for granted. But often they have the best buys and you know they'll be there to help should you have any problems with your purchases.

The big malls and plazas out of town are attractive but high overhead and central situation don't always translate into bargains plus there's the time and money consumed getting there.

Remember our local merchants pay taxes here and must pay for a licence so they can be available the year around. And they also hire our friends and neighbors to serve you in their businesses.



"...THESE ARTIFICIAL TREES ARE SO LIFE LIKE, THEY EVEN START DROPPING THEIR NEEDLES TWO WEEKS AFTER THEY'RE PUT UP!!"

Our readers write

Business, workers could benefit by cooperating on new housing

Dear editor,

I am thinking of two very bad situations that are happening. People want affordable renting houses and need them so badly and construction workers, electric, plumbing, etc. all out of work. This is not going to end for some time.

I am not a business woman, I am a senior, but I feel these two problems could be put together with workers back to work and families happy knowing there is an end to this helpless feeling.

I feel we do have some people who could talk this over and really get things going right away. I am sure big business, banks, etc. could put in money for the building supplies, a suggestion in construction to have a ? per cent less in wages for the electric, plumbing, construction workers.

I am sure the workers would agree to a little less in wages for a very badly needed thing that on its own won't go away. This has been the problem for many years but things were booming to build houses selling at high prices so why bother to waste time putting up rentable homes.

We have many car dealers here in Georgetown. Maybe they could send along the word to their companies. I am sure when they think of the meaning of it many would not mind putting money in for all building supplies needed. Of course, a plan has to be made but this shouldn't be hard for people in the know, who know how to get things together.

This, I feel, is the last chance for families to start living again. My late husband and our daughters and son lived in a 5 room veterans house we rent-

ed for years. Then we were able to buy it, which we did. We had no basement when we bought, of course, wanted to put a furnace in for better warmth.

My husband got a worker to break the wall down. He put forms up from the basement to carry the wheelbarrow with the dirt. I did the picket work to loosen the stones (many of them) fork, etc. My husband shovelled. We started in May and finished in September. We did get a cement mixer to put the floor down. I would, of course, suggest basements in all houses.

These houses would have a landlord. The companies etc. who put monies in could decide that. It could become a big business. It isn't giving people houses, it's putting money in to buy the bricks etc. that will be needed. Rents would come in and they would be getting money back. The town maybe could make some suggestions and put in little money.

I have already heard it would spoil Georgetown. It would change Georgetown but for me it would be just what Georgetown needs - happy families living in houses they could rent.

Maybe you think I am an older lady with dreams that can't come true. It's not a dream. It's a feeling I have when I see empty fields doing nothing. They could look so nice with houses with families in them, flower gardens in front, vegetable gardens in the back, (just a small one).

I don't dream any more, I think of facts.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Kathleen Crowhurst

Halton Hills

WEEKEND

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