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GUEST SPEAKER - Lovell McGuire

Lovell is from Brantford, ON. He spent over 20 years as a salesman and later as a successful Pork Producer, operating four farms. He and his wife have raised seven children. In 1973 he had a special experience with Jesus Christ and since then he has never been the same.

For many years he served as a Field Representative for FGBMFI in southern Ontario. He has appeared on the Good News TV program as well as on 100 Huntley Street and at many conventions and rallies of FGBMFI.

His testimony will make you both laugh and cry. Be sure to attend and bring a friend to hear his story.

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Board hopes to pass budget tomorrow

MPPs, board officials ready for warfare

Yet another meeting of Halton Board of Education officials and local MPPs is shaping up as trench warfare.

Halton board chair Linda Glover called for what she said will be the fourth get-together in the last year with area MPPs. This time it's over the budget crisis facing the board—it doesn't have a 1997 budget established.

The Halton board, which has been given an extension until May 9, attempts to pass its '97 budget at a meeting tomorrow (Thursday) at 8 p.m. School closure issues are also expected to be on the agenda.

The one-hour, private gathering of trustees, board administrators, and possibly all Halton MPPs—Ted Chudleigh, Terence Young, Cam Jackson, and Gary Carr—will take place at 8 a.m. at the board office today (Wednesday).

However, preliminary comments by one of the elected representatives indicates he feels the board has made its own fiscal mess and must clean it up on its own.

"School boards have known since 1994 that there was going to be a three-year phase-in of (education grants) equalization assessment," said Halton Centre MPP Terence Young, a consistent critic of the way many of Ontario's boards do business.

The Halton board had its provincial grants reduced by \$12.9 million in '97, a 33.5-per-cent cut. But Young insists the key figure is that the reduction represents only about 5 per cent of the board's total budget.

He continues to suggest all boards should be looking at ways to save money. His ideas include contracting out custodial and maintenance work, reducing administration and monitoring how much they spend on staff overtime and retirement gratuities.

Glover said Halton trustees and administrators are looking for direction and increased funding from the province in the aftermath of a meeting last week that failed to produce a budget.

Young perceives the latest call

for government help as crying wolf.

"I've never listened too much to what this board has to say. They handed out 500 pink slips (to teachers in 1996) and almost all of them were recalled. The director of education (Bob Williams) quit and then he was rehired as a superintendent at \$90,000 a year. One week they have a (budget) deficit and the next week they're \$6 million in the black (due to an unexpected supplementary tax windfall).

"We have a lot of trustees who are very competent and know what needs to be done, but the director and board chair are not listening to their own people," said Young.

Glover, naturally, doesn't agree with the MPPs' assessment.

"I do whatever the board directs me to do. The board operates as a corporate body, not as individuals. Are they (politicians) ready to support us in the area of staffing changes we may need to make?" Glover wondered.

—By Tim Whitnell, special



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