

Mackay Report: recommendations

Many briefs both locally and across the province have been submitted to Boards of Education concerning the Mackay Report which deals with Religious Education in Public Schools in Ontario. The 120-page report, written by J. Keiller Mackay and his committee of six people make 12 basic recommendations. The

following is an outline of what is contained in the recommendations: The report urges the present course of study be abandoned in the elementary schools and its aims as set out in related legislation, programs of studies, regulations and guidebooks be abandoned.

It urges elementary schools to conduct opening exercises consisting of the National Anthem and a prayer, either of universal concern or the Lord's prayer, to be held in the home rooms each morning. The report suggested the same set of exercises be conducted in the Secondary schools but only before student assemblies and not in the home room on the daily basis.

The report suggests a program with its focus on character building, ethics, social attitudes, moral values and principles be encompassed in the public schools from grade 13 down to kindergarten.

Baha'is endorse Mackay report in brief to education board

"Upon us rests a particular responsibility to educate our children to be good citizens, not only of Canada, but of the world...to prepare them to enter a global society."

These remarks form part of a brief recently submitted on behalf of the Baha'is of Halton County to the Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Education of the Halton County Board of Education. The Committee has requested submissions from the residents of the County on the Mackay Report and its application to this area in particular.

setting up of a formal syllabus. The Mackay Report, Baha'is feel, mirrors an awareness of the need to educate our children to take their place in modern society as informed, unprejudiced and understanding individuals.

"Moral reasoning" but on what basis?

In her brief Mrs. James Reese, R. R. 6 Milton suggested if the program was instituted, some people would be forced to look to private schools where moral reasoning is taught from the solid foundation of stated moral absolutes.

Mrs. Reese objected to the implementation of the recommendations for moral reasoning.

While she commends the committee for their progressive views in setting up a proposed program that would integrate morality and education she offered the following criticisms:

"The report recommends that a comprehensive program of instruction in moral reasoning be implemented with the only 'absolute' being social justice.

"I maintain that social justice cannot be defined adequately to act as a foundation to the art of moral reasoning because, more often than not, social justice is only an excuse for self-interest.

"Therefore, in my view, there is no actual absolute moral value (or values) stated in the report.

"Since there are no absolute moral values suggested in the

report, we therefore have no guidelines for our proposed program of moral development. Such reasoning, based on no fixed values, cannot be considered moral reasoning.

"It is my conviction that such reasoning, without a proper basis, is, in fact, the forerunner of anarchy."

It recommends that the acquisition of information about and respect for all religions be recognized as an essential objective of the educational system from kindergarten to grade 13. "This should be achieved by a program of incidental teaching and study, not through a formal syllabus."

It also urges a formal course of study dealing with the principal religions of the world be offered as options in grade 11 and 12 and instructed through the history department.

The report urges the hiring of a program consultant for each regional Board of Education office and a program co-ordinator for the Department of Education to be responsible for the implementation and direction of the new program in religious education. The special interest of the general public in the area of this curriculum should be given continuous representation through an advisory council of education.

The report notes opportunities for communication between the teaching body generally and those engaged in educational research should be established and improved where they already exist.

Also advised in the report are workshops, summer courses and other in-service activities that would provide professional development for the present teaching body. The need in this regard will be greatest during the early years of the recommended program in religious information and moral development.

The committee asked that religion courses count as history courses under the English and History specialty and be recognized as a credit when seeking college entrance.

Ministers displeased with education report

The Milton and District Ministerial Association has released its findings on the recently released report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of Ontario, and they have expressed their displeasure with the report.

Their findings were contained in a brief to the Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Education established by the Halton County Board of Education.

The ministers took strong exception to the fact that no one on the committee looking into religious education in the schools had any first hand experience in classrooms and they wondered aloud in the report whether it was done by the committee "or by the officials from the department of education."

Only two members of the committee were from outside Toronto and the ministers said this was wrong since the study was to include all of Ontario. They also objected to the report because the consultants referred

to the "Christian Bible" when, in the ministers' words, "Is there not only One Bible with modern translations which would be acceptable to all citizens?"

Even the report's bibliography took a verbal swipe from the Milton ministers when they complained it contained 123 American sources while only 40 Canadian sources were quoted. The whole tone of the report, said the ministers, reflected 19th century thinking rather than present day thinking. They went on to claim the committee did not call in many experts in the fields of modern theology and education.

Suggesting better means for teaching religious knowledge in the schools, the ministers said the board should hire a qualified religious educational consultant to help develop a program to be taught by the teacher and to use the clergy for help with special assemblies.

Concluding their report, the Milton ministers reminded the board they were faced with just two choices, "Religious education taught or no religion."

Course is of value Knox brief claims

The Session of Knox Presbyterian Church in Milton does agree "A character building program should be fostered through the educational program. We feel that moral values and principles are of utmost importance and that understanding, acceptance and practice of these results in a proper code of ethics and social attitudes."

The session felt a course on religions could be of value but wondered if this is not covered adequately in the normal courses of language and history.

The report said, "However, we feel that making the teaching of Christianity an option is not intellectually honest in that it creates the impression such knowledge is not important. Christianity has made and is making a contribution to Canada, in that many Canadian institutions, moral codes and laws come from Christianity. A knowledge of God and his teachings is of greater importance than a knowledge of Ancient History, Latin, grammar and Mythology, to mention a few subjects being taught in

Milton District High School."

The Session concluded its report with a list of their main concerns and these are listed as follows:

"If Christianity is not to be taught and all indoctrination of it to be avoided, then no other form of religion or belief or agnosticism or atheism, nor their advantages or disadvantages must be taught or implied in any way, in the school system.

"That a rigid standard of selecting candidates for the teaching profession be established. One of the main qualifications must be that these candidates understand and practise proper moral values and preferably come from a home where they are practised.

"That proper moral values be obtained from the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible, and more particularly from the Ten Commandments, the 23rd Psalm, and the Sermon on the Mount.

"That a knowledge of God and His teachings be a subject in both Elementary and High Schools."

Don't accept Mackay report say Pentecostal Assemblies

A committee of Pentecostal Assemblies in Halton County says the Mackay report should not be adopted and insists the present system should not be abolished.

"If anyone were asked if there had ever been a plot to make the people of Ontario the most spiritually impoverished and consequently the dumbest, most culturally deprived, colorless, joyless and unprovocative people on earth, one could surely answer, 'Yes, the Mackay Report.'"

"The old course, the out-dated Protestant ethic, was at least based on the Bible, a book which is probably still the most widely translated and distributed of any in the world. If there was discrimination under the old course then the adoption of the new will bring it to an acute stage. How it will ever find its way into the Hall of Fame or endure as a lasting monument to the progress of religious instruction for the young is hard to imagine.

"The report is ambiguous. It states that indoctrination received at home is to be respected through the public school career of the child. Yet what it proposed in the interest of the public good amounts to a heartless and immoral attack upon the Christian conscience. Whether this is a misconception on the part of the committee or a deliberate camouflage, one cannot know."

The committee of the Pentecostal Assemblies was scheduled to present their brief to the religion committee of the Halton Board of Education last night (Tuesday).

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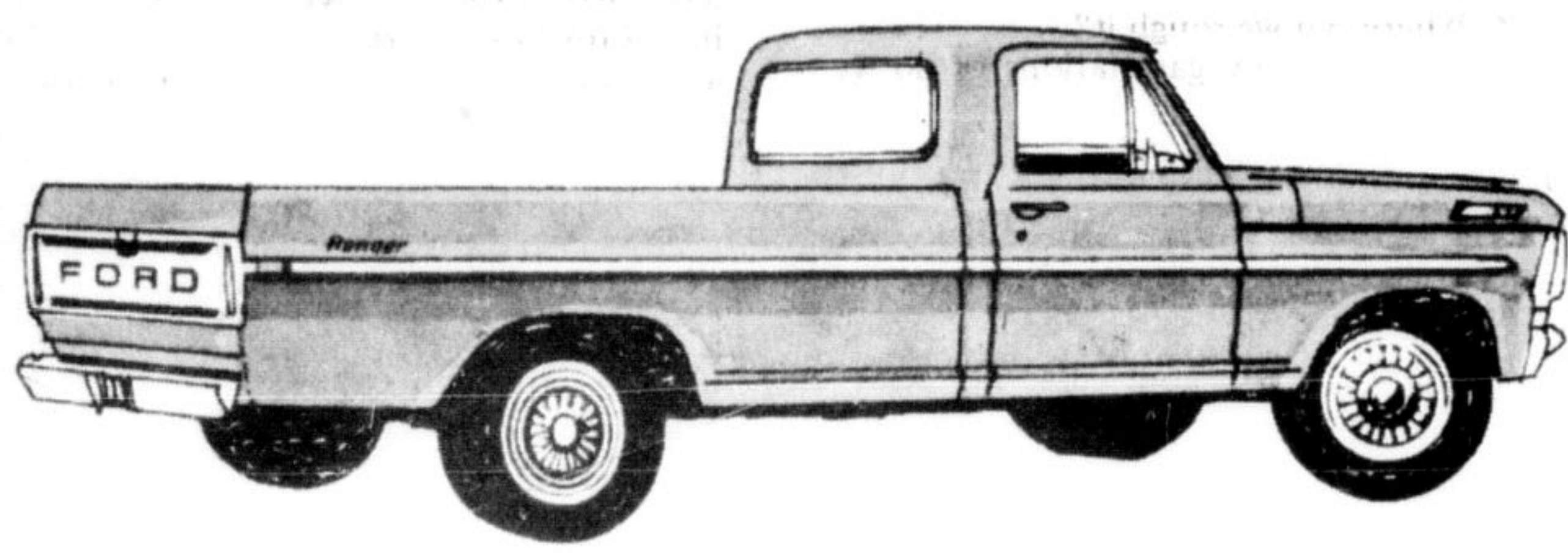
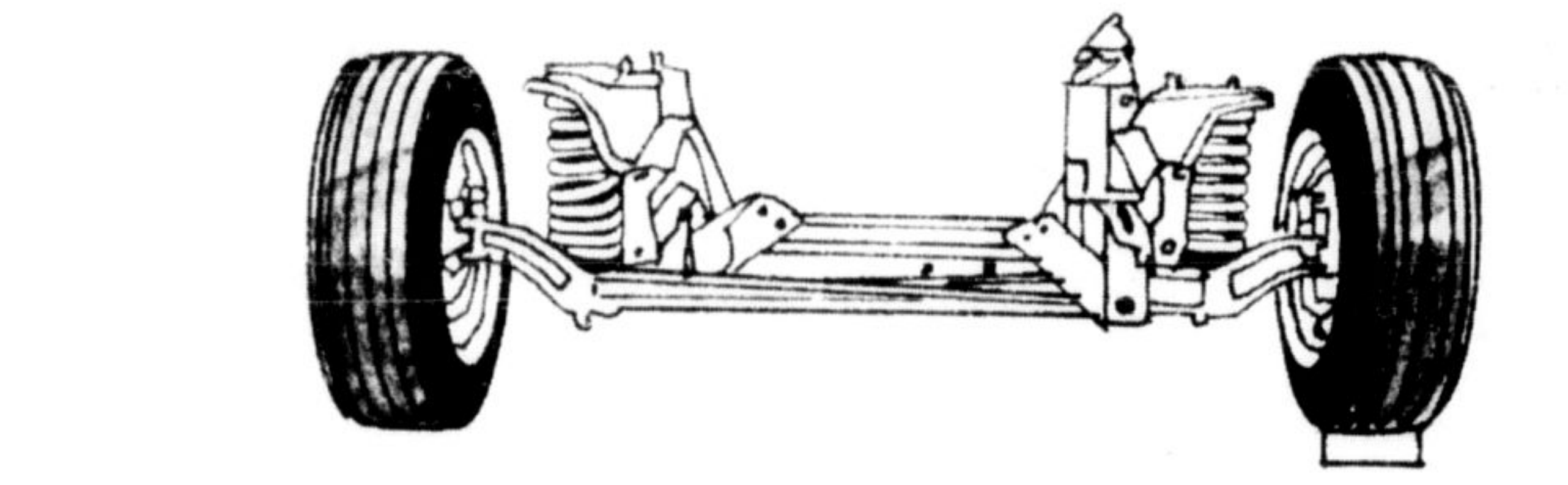
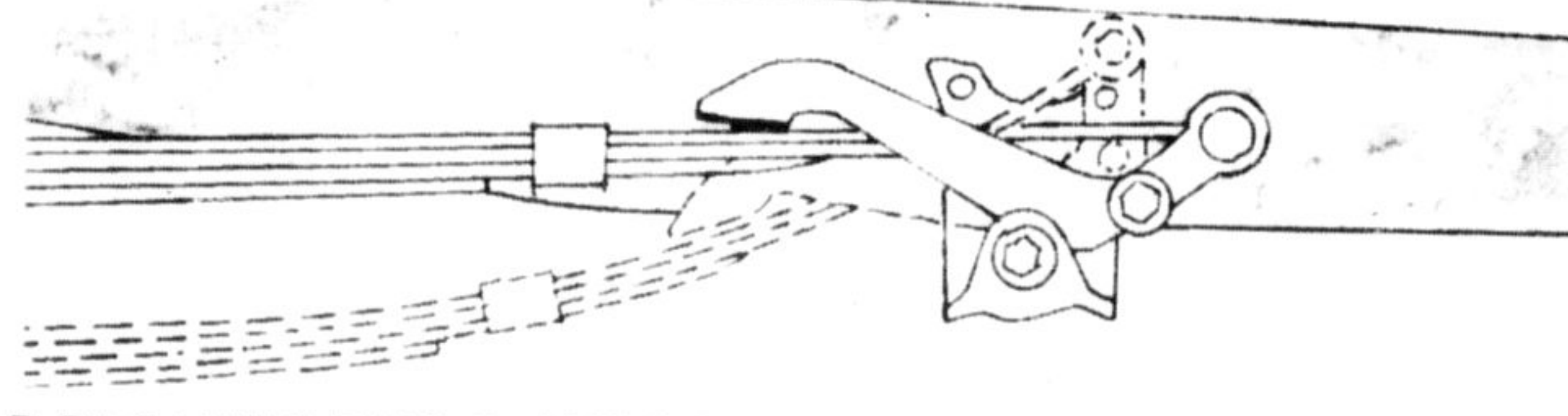
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Skis gone

Skiers attending Glen Eden Ski Area during the winter would be well advised to keep at least one eye on their skis during coffee or smoke breaks. Both spokesmen for the area and the OPP report about five incidents of ski theft this winter. The spokesman for Glen Eden noted a certain amount of theft had to be expected and the theft rate at Glen Eden was certainly not more than ski areas elsewhere.

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