

Bus improvements needed

Two way radios are being installed in all school buses operating in south Halton and will be installed in buses in the north, where they are really needed, eventually, Trustee Bert Hinton informed Halton Board of Education.

Two way radios for buses is one of several recommendations to the board from the Pineview school. Concerned Parents who studied busing in Halton after several students were dropped off a bus far from their homes and suffered frost-bite during a blizzard on January 28. Chairmen of the committee, Craig Kerr, presented a lengthy report to the trustees, Thursday.

Hinton noted a number of positive actions have been taken to improve busing and said he doubted anything would have been done if Pineview parents hadn't acted so responsibly and the January 28 incident hadn't happened.

He stated the radios will be in all buses operating in the south but it will take much longer for them to be installed in buses which run in the north.

Hinton said the emphasis on improving busing procedures should be in the north where road conditions in winter are worse and isolation poses problems.

Pineview principal Grant Hutchings presented Kerr to the board noting the parents' concerns are also his. He said the report was proof that good things can happen when parents get involved.

Kerr said he realized the board has set up a special committee to look at busing and hoped the committee would seriously consider the parents' suggestions for improvements.

He told the trustees the time for a study of busing was before the January 28 incident which showed there was considerable "ineptitude, negligence, confusion and incompetence" surrounding busing operations and procedures.

"The big issue the board committee should be looking at is safety and welfare of children," Kerr declared.

He said communications wasn't the only area which needs improvement but all aspects of bus operations should be sharpened up and the responsibility for this job rests with the board. A coordinating agency between drivers, the bus company, schools, Queen's Park and parents is badly needed and the board should do that job.

Kerr praised the chairman Garry Morton and administrators who have come up with and instituted a number of changes including ordering alternative routes and different drop off points in cases of emergencies.

He said there were other incidents of busing problems in Halton Hills besides the one involving Pineview School in January 28 but parents can't find out what action has been taken regarding those incidents. Kerr said he was afraid the Pineview driver who was fired was simply made the "scapegoat" for all the problems.

Kerr called for improvement of road signs by the province and region and said there is great concern among drivers about motorists who don't stop when school bus lights are flashing. He said more advertising of the laws are needed as well as improved police enforcement.

He urged the board cut back on the number of students on school buses, too. "But for the grace of God we are at a board meeting tonight instead of an inquest," Kerr declared.

Superintendent of Business and Finance Bruce Lindsey said while every child's life is very important when one looks at the fact 9,500 students ride the school buses in Halton every day the number of problems reported on January 28 were relatively few.

He said the problem of people not stopping for school buses isn't unique in Halton and is a concern throughout Ontario.

Lindley told the board plans call for all school buses to be equipped with two way radios in the 1977-78 school year.

Kerr said it was useless for bus drivers to report people who don't stop since they have to be able to identify the driver in court. Knowing a licence number wasn't sufficient for a conviction.

Trustee Bill Herd observed when the law saying knowing a licence number wasn't sufficient was enacted a few years ago the various trustee associations in Ontario protested vigorously. "I fear as one board speaking out on this we would be a cry in the wilderness," Lawson said.

Trustee Bill Herd observed a lot of action has been taken since January 28 and wondered if it was planned prior to the terrible incident in Halton Hills or was prompted by the incident.

Lindley said the bus company was going to progressively install radios in school buses so the incident

and climatic conditions encountered this winter was merely stepping this program up. He said the firm already has a good bus maintenance policy.

Hinton said the north is the most important area as far as needing improvements is concerned and expressed hope the board busing committee would look at the circumstances and conditions "the north has survived through". He added upgrading of driver's skills should be a board concern.

He urged Kerr be named as a member of the busing committee.

Saturday, Chairman Morton named Burlington Trustee Cam Jackson as chairman of the bus committee and also placed Trustees Len Auger, Oakville and Bill Lawson, Milton on the committee.

He also said the North Halton trustees would be asked to name a parent to represent the south parent to be named by the Halton Home and School Council.

Mr. and Mrs. Orth, presented with a gift from the members, as well as congratulations and good wishes. Two films were shown by John Calder. These were on old and new tractors and methods of harvesting. At the close lunch was served.

The April meeting of the Halton Farm Safety Council was held on Tuesday evening April 12 in the boardroom of the Dept. of Agriculture and Food, with 18 members

Omagh

Films on old, new tractors shown Steam Era meeting

The monthly meeting of the Ontario Antique and Steam Preservers was held in Boyne Centre on Thursday evening April 14 with 129 members and friends attending. Arrangements were made for the Steam Era and also for a bus trip to Ottawa; president Dennis Webb was in the chair.

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The April meeting of the Halton Farm Safety Council was held on Tuesday evening April 12 in the boardroom of the Dept. of Agriculture and Food, with 18 members

present. Mrs. C. Patterson, assisted by Norman Biggar, sec.-treas. It was decided that 100 "no rider" stickers for tractors be purchased and given out to farmers, to emphasize that children or others should not be permitted to ride on a tractor. For safety sake only the operator should be on the machine.

A short report of the Zone meeting at Harrison church, Peel County was given.

The guest speaker was Mr. Fred Hollidge of the St. John Ambulance and OPP. His talk and demonstration on resuscitation and heart was much appreciated by all. Mr. Biggar thanked the speaker

It was also discussed and voted to send a letter to the Ministry of Environment

opposing the opening of any new dumps in Halton County and asking that recycling and other methods be used. At the close donuts and coffee were served.

The usual bi-weekly euchre was held at Boyne Centre on Friday evening April 15, with 11 tables in play. The prizewinners were all laddies: Mrs. Harry Dunn, Mrs. Clara Price, Mrs. Ethel Webb, Mrs. G. Teneycke, Marie Murray, Mrs. A. Ford. Lunch was served and a social time enjoyed.

Get well wishes to Mrs. Kenneth Watson who is a patient in Milton District Hospital.

Birthday greetings and good wishes to Mrs. H. Rutherford, Janice Riebot, Paul Kubinec Jr., Ann Mahood, Clarence Peacock, Jane Ruhl, Mrs. W. E. Ford and Mrs. George Brownridge.

Correction

The Champion erred in a photo identification in last week's paper and published the wrong name under a photo of gymnasts performing at Milton District High School's open house.

Marion Cunningham was pictured, but the caption identified her as Michelle Callan. The two girls, with Oonagh Johnston and Mary

Jean Roberts, were the featured performers in that segment of the program. The newspaper regrets the error.

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