

## Town to aid board in its grant fight?

By CAROL STEWART-KIRKBY  
Special to The Champion

Believing there is strength in unity, Halton trustees have decided to ask the region's municipal councils for support in a campaign to convince the education ministry to review the 1982 grants allowed for the school board.

Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett and Milton Mayor Gordon Krantz are both in favor of helping the board. "Sure, we would support any kind of review. If there are inequities in the granting system as the trustees pointed out when we met with them, they should be brought into the open," Barrett said.

"I wish them more success in their appeal to the ministry than we had trying to get them to review their 1982 budget," added Mr. Barrett. Municipal representatives and businessmen met with the board last month because of the average 18.5 per cent hike in property taxes the school board budget caused.

Mr. Krantz vowed to wholeheartedly support the board in seeking a review. "I would be glad to pursue the matter very vigorously with the board. I understand the province referred to Halton as a richer board. I think that's hogwash, if that means a 22 per cent increase in taxes in this case for Milton," Mr. Krantz commented.

Burlington Mayor Roly Bird sees no need for the municipalities to support the board on this matter. "Everybody seems to be steering everybody else's ship these days and quite frankly, I'm not sure if that's so good," Mr. Bird said.

He suggested municipalities and boards mind their own business. "We take action by ourselves," Mr. Bird said, adding trustees are responsible, elected representatives who are taking a stand on this issue. "I don't understand why this needs a city resolution of support. The council might feel differently however."

Halton Hills Mayor Peter Pomeroy was unavailable for comment at press time.

Board finance committee chairman Bill Priestner said at Thursday's board meeting the board was "negatively affected" in this year's apportionment of ministry grants which help to pay for the school system.

The local councils who expressed concern because the lower grants reflected in a high property tax increase, suggested the board should appeal its case to the province. "They said, in fact, they would support such a motion," Mr. Priestner said.

Oakville trustee Jim Clelland supported the appeal to the ministry but said, "perhaps we could express it in a more vocal way, for instance, a delegation to Queen's Park to confront the minister with the problem."

"I think this has good intentions, but may get lost in the shuffle and I believe we should be heard well on this issue," Mr. Clelland said. Mr. Priestner had recommended to the board a written resolution be sent to education minister Bette Stephenson.

Milton trustee Bill Lawson said a delegation would not guarantee results and suggested each trustee lobby his or her provincial representative about the problem.

Mr. Priestner said the finance committee has formulated a long list of people who should receive a copy of the resolution, "even the leader of the opposition," he added.

## In one pocket out the other

The extra money the Ontario government rakes in as a result of its new sales tax on school supplies may be partially redistributed in Halton through increased per pupil grants.

At least, that's what the board of education has in mind. At last Thursday night's meeting, school board trustees voted to ask education minister Bette Stephenson to raise per pupil grants to help offset the extra \$356,000 the Halton school board will have to pay in sales tax due to the May 13 provincial budget.

"We are quite sure the minister was not aware of the problem when setting up the grant structure earlier this year," said finance committee chairman Bill Priestner.

The board is not asking for all the money to cover the \$356,000. It is requesting the minister increase the grant ceilings to allow the ministry to pay 45 per cent of the total which is the percentage of the board's total budget paid by the province.

"This is a defensible position," said Mr. Priestner. "We're not asking for a complete allowance."

In a letter to Stephenson board chairman, Len Auger, points out local mill rates have already been set for 1982 resulting in a deficit position for the board because of the new sales tax laws.

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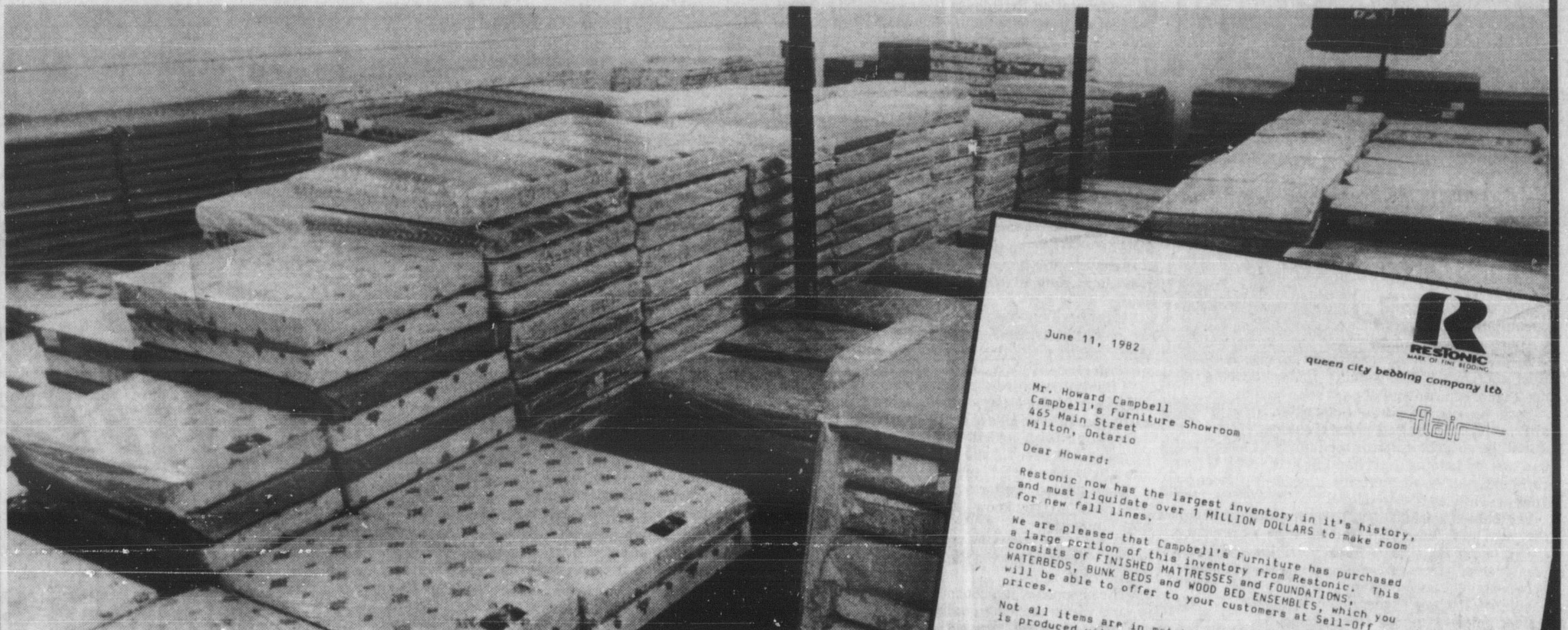
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