

Parent attacks teachers

By STEVE ARNOLD
News Editor
Wage restraints, not concern for their students, is the motivation behind the recently discovered concern for class sizes being voiced by the Halton Elementary Teachers Association.

That's the allegation a Milton parent delivered to board of education trustees last week, along with an attack on what he termed an "inexcusable breach" of board policy.

Gerry McAuliffe, whose three children are students in the local system, told trustees the teachers oft expressed concern over the size of the classes they must handle, is being pressed this year because they are limited in the salary increases they can negotiate with the Board.

"As long as the teachers were able to negotiate the sizable financial settlements they have obtained in the past, the pupil-teacher ratio became a disposable issue at the bargaining table. Once they got their money, it simply wasn't pushed," he said. "But this year, because their salary increase is restricted by the provincial guidelines they decided the route now is smaller classes and less work."

In addition to his concern over this alleged shift in the teacher's bargaining priorities, Mr. McAuliffe said he was also upset by the fact teachers were allowed to communicate with parents through the schools—a convenience denied a group of local parents fighting in 1977 for an improvement in school facilities in Milton.

According to Mr. McAuliffe, a group calling themselves The Milton Parents for Better School Facilities campaigned them to get the Ministry of Education to release \$1.5 million promised to upgrade some local facilities.

The parents eventually won their fight

"but we did it alone, without any help from HETA (Halton Elementary Teachers Association) or the local schools," he said.

"We did it alone because the school principals refused to allow us to distribute any material through the schools. Furthermore, we were told we could not even stand on school property and hand out letters. . . " he said.

Those incidents, he said, contrast to a recent item circulated to parents advertising a public meeting to be held at Robert Baldwin School inviting them to hear submissions on the PTR issue by both HETA president Robert Filman and Bill Harrison, trustee for the area.

"What is so serious about it (the letter to parents) is this—it was typed by a school board employee—on a school board typewriter—on school board time—copied on paper paid for by the taxpayer—and then camouflaged by attaching it to a school newsletter and using the children to deliver it to Milton homes," he said.

The Halton board is currently dead locked in contract talks with its elementary teachers over the PTR issue. A salary increase for 1983 has already been agreed to and the teachers have been working without a contract since September.

Parents concerned

The letter which is the focus of Mr. McAuliffe's anger was circulated as part of the regular newsletter issued by the Baldwin Benefactors, a parents group whose children attend Robert Baldwin School.

At the same meeting of the board, Carol Lonesberry, a spokesman for another group of concerned Milton parents, urged the trustees to amend their recently presented budget to include enough money to correct the class size problem in the region.

"We are interested in the quality of education," she said. "Our concern is for class sizes."

Trustees recently received the spending portion of their 1983 budget, calling for a spending increase of 7.6 per cent for the year.

"We commend you for your effort of restraint in difficult times," Mrs. Lonesberry told the trustees, "but as parents we are still concerned."

"Large class sizes have a negative effect on our children," she added.

Mrs. Lonesberry also said she felt without the hiring of more teachers for the Halton school system the class size problem will become worse as the full effects of Ontario's new special education bill are felt.

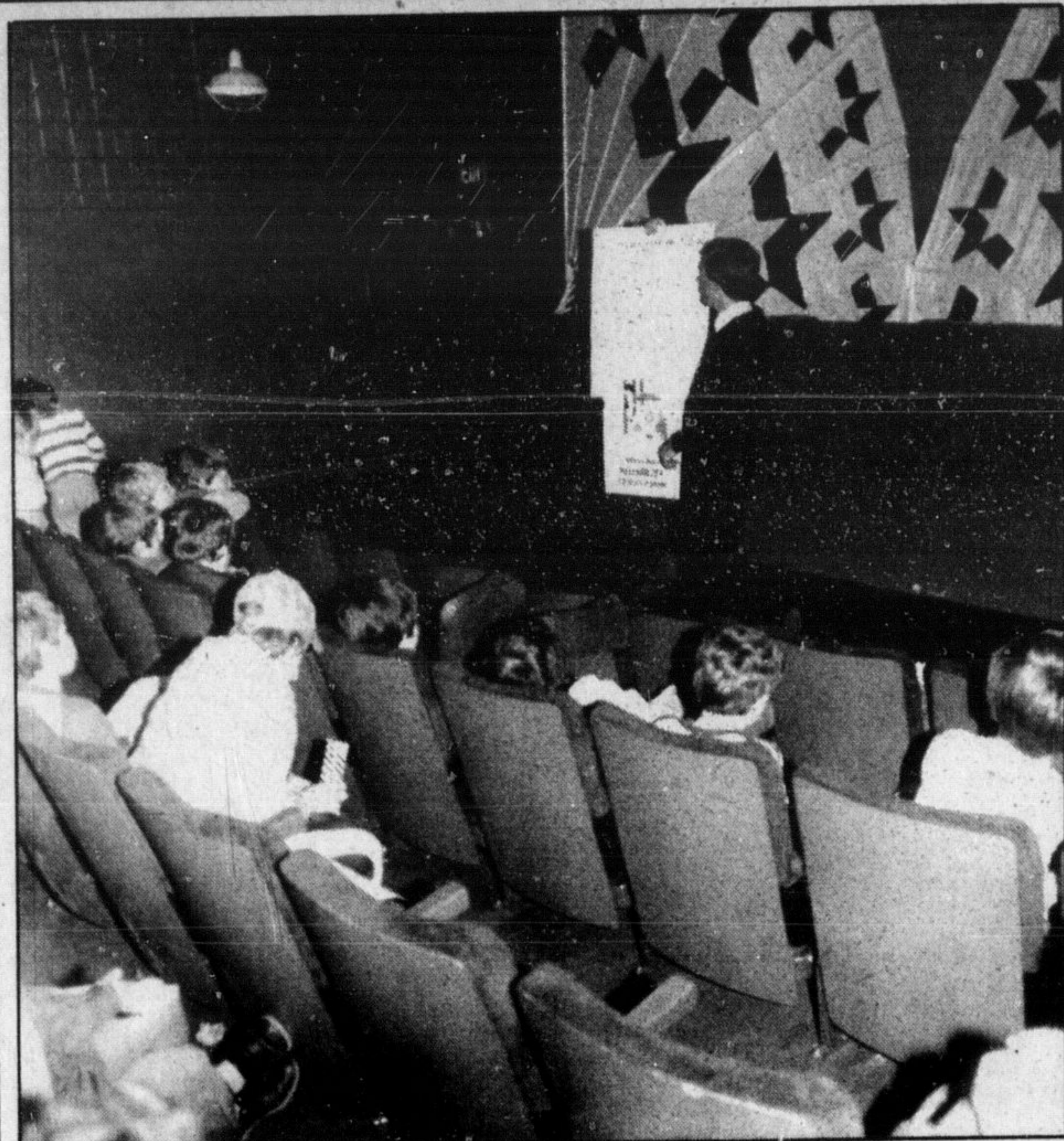
That law will require boards of education to provide an education meeting the needs of all its students, "but what concerns us as ratepayers. . . is the average child in the system who is not guaranteed an appropriate education," she said.

Robert Filman, president of the Halton Elementary Teachers Association, admitted the Baldwin letter was written by a school employee and produced with public resources but denied it was authored by HETA to further its goals.

He did admit, however, the teachers are actively seeking parent support for their fight "because the board says most parents are totally satisfied with the situation."

The Baldwin meeting, he said, was conceived when he was approached by Mrs. Lonesberry in the school and invited to speak to the parents group.

Mr. Filman said the teachers are pressing the PTR issue in these negotiations for several reasons.



The Canadian Champion Circulation Manager, Les Feero, is shown front and centre at the Premier Theatre on Saturday explaining to our carriers the new monthly extended reach section. This section, called About Town, will be delivered to every home in Milton whether they receive The Champion or not. It is designed to get more news and information of the community to the community. About Town will be running once per month.

Northern needs are still unmet

North Halton is a desert where social services, especially children's services, are concerned, reports from Halton's planning department reveal.

Highlights of the reports, compiled by the planning department and by Halton's Children's Services Steering Group, were presented at a public meeting last week attended by social service professionals and volunteers from Halton Hills and Milton.

Reports show the two northern municipalities are under-represented with regard to the location of children's services, agencies and programs for mentally and physically handicapped, disturbed, or learning disabled children living in Acton, Georgetown, Campbellville or Milton urban and rural areas.

The shortage of children's services in the immediate area is further complicated by the lack of public transportation needed to enable these children to take part in special programs offered in Oakville and Burlington, supposedly to serve the needs of all children in Halton, the reports indicate.

The one exception is the variety of programs offered for mentally retarded children by the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded, reports point out.

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