



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Talking a good fight

The Halton Regional Police Service union is sounding pretty cocky about winning the day if police staffing is taken up with the provincial board that rules on such things. That panel is called the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services (OCCOPS).

Perhaps this is political posturing but then again, the rank and file officers have good reason to be optimistic. Police won big time in their previous appearance there, during which it was decided Halton should hire dozens more officers.

But things have changed since that happened more than a decade ago. The public will no longer tolerate the massive deficits rung up during the 1980s by governments at all levels. A long and painful recovery is well underway from such spending sprees. Nobody is about to be given carte blanche to hire all sorts of new staff.

If some quasi-governmental body somewhere says they should, there will likely be serious pressure to re-think that from the people who really pull the strings in provincial government, the MPPs who must answer to their constituents.

Nobody is saying there shouldn't be enough cops to do the job effectively. But decisions about that should be made on the political level, not through union pressure or by some civilian policing board.

Most of the controversy surrounding money for policing in Halton can be traced back to the tug of war over purse strings between senior police management and Halton council.

Police management of the day was not particularly adroit in handling that situation in the 1980s. And the bottom line now should be, just as it should have been then, that deciding on police staff requirements is a job for elected officials, not officers of any level. Officers are there to propose. It is up to elected officials to dispose.

Heart in right place

Milton resident Cliff Bignell may not be proposing the most practical scheme in the world for dealing with disabled parking violators. But his heart is in the right place.

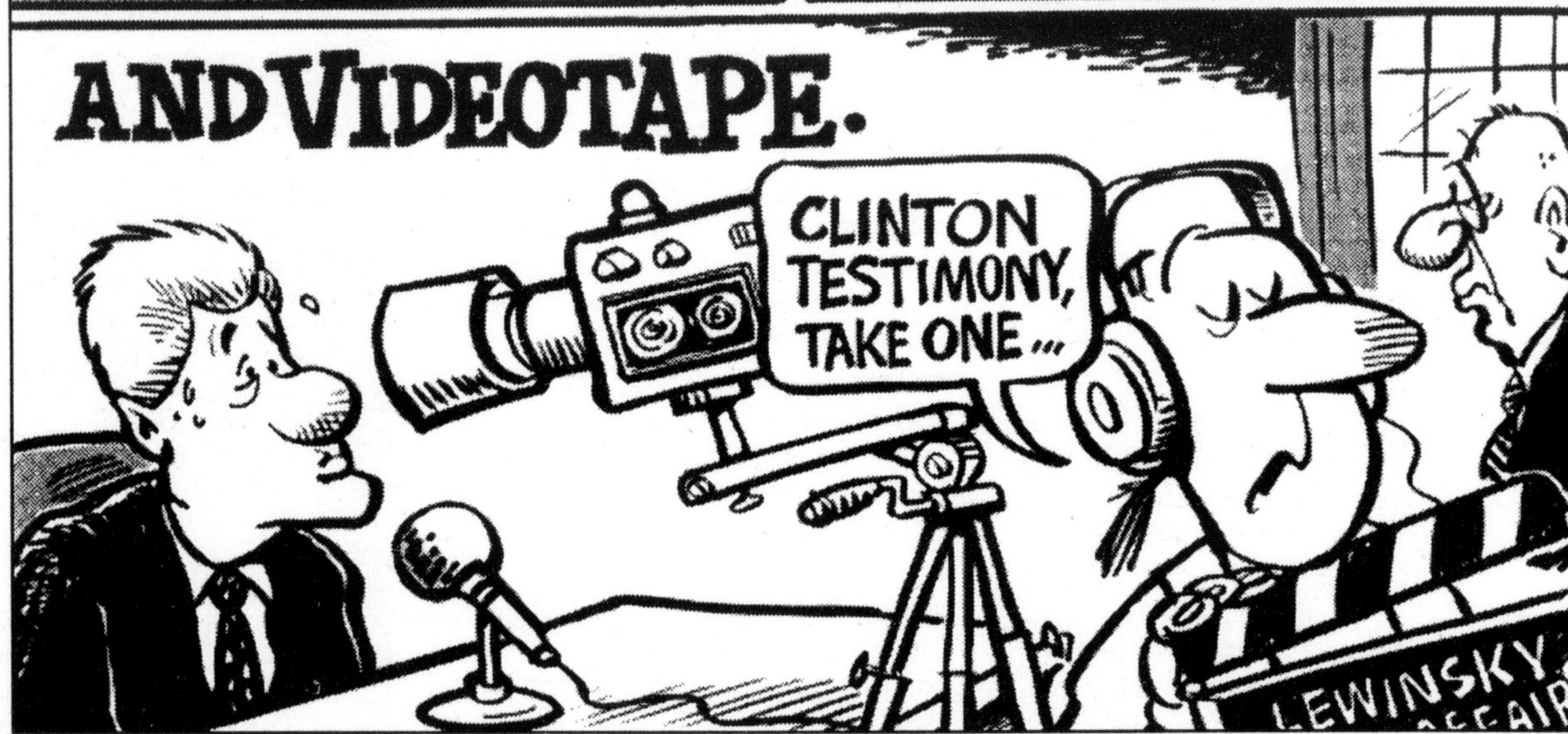
Some other people's hearts clearly are not.

What possesses someone who is fit to park in a disabled spot? We've heard numerous excuses advanced, the most common one being that the violator will only be a few minutes.

In order to see the sense behind any regulation one need only extrapolate — what if everyone advanced the same rationale? There would be a parade of people parking in disabled spots and sprinting to bank machines, or convenience stores.

People in general are more rushed these days, it's true, but that's an equally poor excuse. The fact is, able-bodied individuals who park in disabled spots are being extremely selfish, and the behaviour is nothing short of repugnant.

It's no more socially acceptable than kicking pigeons and puppies. Hopefully a few tickets are, though, if some of these individuals happen across a police officer. Given the recent publicity, that is probably a distinct possibility.



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

MPP Chudleigh needs a lot more common sense when it comes to teacher workloads

Dear Editor:

On Friday, July 24, North Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh asked, "I wonder how supportive the average teacher is" in reference to changes in the education system.

The changes brought about by Bill 160 plus changes added by the Halton District School Board will result in an increase in hours worked by teachers of at least 16 per cent as we move from teaching six to seven classes.

Since classes in secondary schools are 73 to 76 minutes in length, we can't just teach an extra 40-minute class per day.

In one semester teachers will see a 33-per-cent increase in their work load (four versus three classes), and in the other there will be an increase due to more supervision and coverage with only half as many teachers available to do these.

Where is this additional time going to come from? Sports, clubs, plays, music and other activities that occur outside of the classroom will have to be affected.

In order for teachers to be effective in the classroom they need to be well prepared.

This means daily marking of evaluation assignments and making modifications based on the actual needs of the students.

In addition, teachers need to be energized to deliver program effectively. Meeting the needs of a diverse group of students at the intellectual level required for success in the

secondary system is exhausting. To do this well for the current system of 3 to 76-minute periods per day is challenging.

Simple common sense will tell Mr. Chudleigh that adding another 76-minute period in one semester will not see an improvement in the quality of education.

Let us not pretend this is about the quality of education. It is about money. If each teacher works 16 per cent more, than the government can reduce the number of teachers.

We know that this is not just a theory, as this year we see many teachers laid off. How will this help the quality of education?

Does Mr. Chudleigh genuinely believe that any workers would not object to a 16 per cent increase in their workload?

Of course teachers support their union in its fight to keep the educational system appropriately staffed and of the highest quality.

We supported this stance in a two-week legal protest last year and we supported our union's stance by over 90 per cent in a vote held in June.

In contrast, the Conservative government received just over 40 per cent of the vote in the last election and yet they act as if they represent all Ontario citizens.

If Mr. Chudleigh believes that teachers don't support this fight about the true quality of education then he could do with a dose of common sense.

Brian Rennie
Science teacher
Moffat

Pud

by Steve Nease

