

Students the ones hurt in lock out: union head

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offer to at least delay the lockout.

In its announcement of the lockout, the board said: "it is not prepared to have its secondary school students continue to be subjected to the very punitive effects of the work-to-rule sanctions imposed by the union throughout this whole first semester."

Earlier Tuesday, Mr. Pece said the term "partial sanctions" was being used to mislead people into thinking teachers are — or will — engage in rotating strikes. Nothing is further from the truth, he said.

He explained union members are still teaching the seven of eight classes as imposed by the board. Their sanctions consist of simply refusing to do what is essentially volunteer work after class.

Mr. Pece said if teachers are locked out, it will be the students who suffer. At minimum they will lose at least two or three weeks as back-to-work legislation is tabled and discussed, prior to the teachers finally being forced back to class.

The entire scenario, said Mr. Pece, plays into his longstanding suspicion the board has wanted to lock teachers out (or force them to strike) so that back-to-work legislation could be enacted.

Mr. Sherlock — who has denied this all along — said Tuesday he was willing to resume mediation talks as soon as possible. On the other hand, he is not about to allow students to be subjected to the "very punitive effects" of the teachers' sanctions.

Mr. Sherlock said pupils have been denied access to all academic assistance outside regular classes as well as all extra-curricular activities such as sports.

Mr. Sherlock also hopes to put an end to the teachers' "pink-listing" of the board, meaning actively discouraging teachers from seeking employment within the Halton Catholic Board.



Photo by RON KUZYK

Teachers picket outside the Halton Catholic District School Board building after being locked out earlier this week.

Earlier Tuesday, before the board's ultimatum, Mr. Pece said Monday's overwhelming rejection sent an unequivocal message to both sides in the dispute.

"It was a pleasant surprise for the bargaining team and the union executive to get that kind of support," said Mr. Pece. "This rejection vividly indicates the fact Catholic teachers in Halton are not willing to settle for a workload that is inferior to Halton public, Hamilton-Wentworth public and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic (boards)."

The teachers voted to reject the offer by 99.4 per cent. There were 353 ballots cast out of a possible 365. A total of 351 teachers voted against the offer, only two in favour of it.

Neither side was optimistic about a settlement going into Monday's vote, which was supervised by the Ontario Labour Relations Board at the request of the Halton Catholic District School Board.

Under Ministry of Labour legislation, the board is allowed only once to circumvent the

union's executive and negotiating committee and take an offer directly to the teachers.

Mr. Pece said Monday's vote also told the board to stop stalling in their negotiations with teachers. He maintained that by getting the province involved, all the board did was put talks on hold for two weeks.

The board's latest offer included a wage increase of 1 per cent effective September 1, 1999, 1 per cent in February, 2000 and 1 per cent in February, 2001.

The offer features a teacher workload of 19 full classes over the three years of the proposed contract, or 6.33 classes per eight periods of the school year.

During the five semesters teachers aren't teaching a fourth class, preparation time would be a minimum 200 minutes per week.

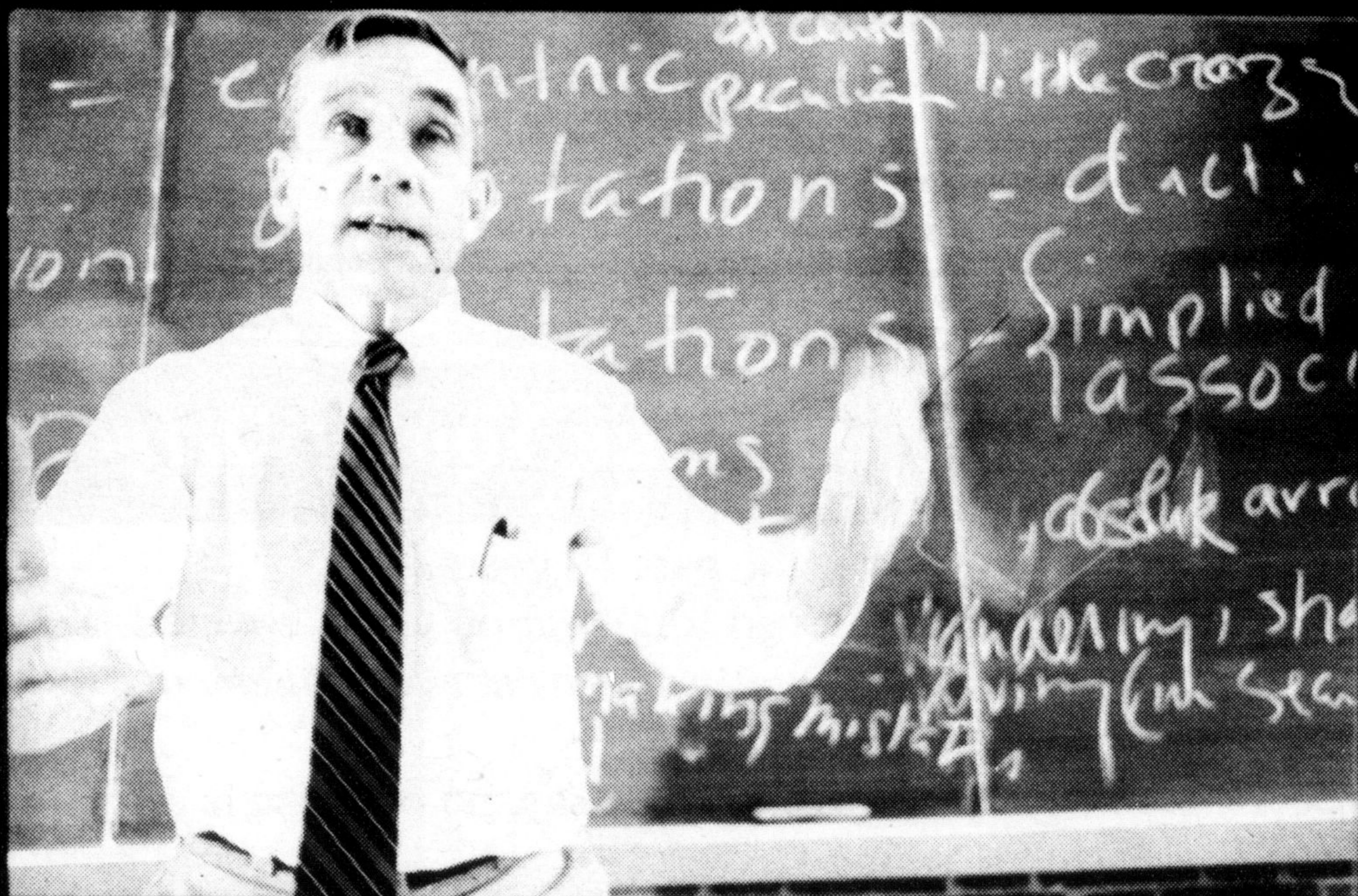
The number of "on-calls," or times when teachers cover for absenteeism and other contingencies will be a maximum of twice per week. Department heads' on-call periods would drop from two to one.

The number of department heads per school would be reduced from 11 to nine effective September 1, 1999. Assistant department heads would be eliminated effective September 1, 1999.

Mr. Pece said he is uncertain what the future now holds but said teachers are not planning a full withdrawal of their services — an option they have had since the start of school. The board also has the legal right to lock teachers out.

The labour dispute started with the requirement under Bill 160 that teachers' workloads be increased to 1,250 minutes per week. The board interpreted this by telling secondary school teachers they must teach seven out of eight classes, instead of the current six of eight as in past years.

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your children

Your Catholic district school board has locked us out.

We know you share our frustration.

We just want to get back to providing your children with the quality education they deserve.

Call your Catholic School board trustee to unlock the classrooms and put children first.

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