

Renaissance meeting

Liberal Reed and NDPer Johnson attack education administrators



CONCERNED VOTERS last week took advantage of a question and answer session during an all-candidates meeting in Milton. Education was the topic at the Halton Renaissance Committee-sponsored event held at the Drury School.

Story and photos by Gerry Flaherty

Administrators of the Halton Board of Education were singled out for harsh criticism last week by both Liberal and NDP candidates during an all-candidates meeting in Milton.

Julian Reed, Liberal standard-bearer in Halton-Burlington riding, charged that educational problems today have been caused by "the interference of administrators."

And he said "we do not have school administration by the democratic process in Halton."

Reed said there is "nothing democratic" about the way administrators operate, and even an individual board member can be controlled by them.

At their mercy

"One member's area is too large and he's at the mercy of board of education administrators for his information."

New Democrat Bill Johnson told the meeting sponsored by the Halton Renaissance Committee that "the board of education needs humanizing for a start."

"But basically it's a very good system. There's nothing wrong with the teachers but the problem is with the administration."

Conservative candidate Gary Dawkins, himself a school principal, defended

Ontario school boards by saying that today they are "meeting the needs of individuals much better than ever before."

Referring to the Halton board, he said "they've tried to make regional equality and they've upgraded facilities."

Better here

Dawkins several times used Premier Bill Davis' statement that Ontario schools are better than anywhere else.

He called education one of the Liberals' "instant issues", and accused Reed and his party of "trying to undermine confidence in our educational system in order to make political gain."

About 125 persons attended the Tuesday night meeting, but for the most part they were party supporters who sported buttons and clapped and shouted every time their candidate finished a sentence.

Liberal Reed stressed the need for "standards at all levels of education," and criticized the Davis government for "drifting away from the core curriculum."

The core curriculum comprises subjects and course matter which must be taught by all schools.

Handled well here

Dawkins, the Conservative candidate, countered by saying the Halton board has done "an amazing job" of

handling core curriculum education.

He explained that the ministry of education establishes guide lines and the regional boards set up the core curriculums.

NDPer Johnson said his party plans to reduce the educational portion of the property tax by having 100 per cent of the educational bill paid from the province's general tax revenue.

He said increased corporate taxes would cover the difference to Ontario.

Tory Dawkins said his party would increase the province's share of the education bill as soon as Ontario could afford it.

He said the ministry of education at present pays 60 per cent of the total education bill.

Switch load

Liberal Reed said "we think there can be a more equitable distribution coming out of general revenue," and noted the Liberals also plan to switch the education tax load from the property owner.

Each of the candidates was asked what he thought of the Halton Renaissance Committee, and NDPer Johnson criticized the group "for appearing at times to be only concerned with sex education in school."

Johnson said sex education has a place in Halton schools.

Said Dawkins: "it's always beneficial when taxpayers want to speak out."

Liberal Reed added that Renaissance is "a valid statement to the school system that something is wrong, although there are things about Renaissance I don't agree with."

Issues statement

In response to Johnson's comments about sex education, Rev. Ken Campbell, chairman of Renaissance Ontario, issued a statement to the three candidates and the news media the next day.

The statement said "Renaissance has never advocated the removal of sex education from the schools."

"Renaissance has expressed the concern of many parents over the refusal of the public school system to teach the moral responsibilities of human sexuality."

"We agree with Mr. Johnson that human sexuality should be taught

like 'driver training' with the rules of the road spelled out, as well as an understanding of the way the 'equipment' functions.

Invasion of privacy

A Georgetown mother wearing an NDP button got a rise from the crowd during questioning from the floor.

Speaking with the aid of notes, she slammed subjects used by the board of education for English-class essays.

The woman said her children have been told to write essays on 'the last argument you had with your parents, their 'home life' and 'standard of living'.

Speaking directly to Tory Gary Dawkins, the woman said "our vulnerable and innocent children are being used to invade our privacy under the guise of progressive education."

"Why in God's name should I re-elect a Davis government that permits that kind of thing?"

Some persons applauded the statement, but a Milton resident leaped to his feet as soon as she finished and said "I'm not a Conservative, but in fairness I think Mr. Dawkins shouldn't have to

answer that speech."

The crowd roared its approval for his remarks.

Dawkins, because he was defending the Davis government's record, was the object of the questions.

He was answering one, and saying "tell me where there's a better education system than in Halton."

He was interrupted by a woman's voice from the audience: "Over in Peel!"

ELECTION COVERAGE

September 18, 1975

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1:00 p.m.—Official Ceremonies—Vince Mountford Master of Ceremonies

1:30 p.m.—Harness Races for \$700 in prizes. Musical Ride trained by Allan Cutts, Palermo.

2:00 p.m.—Official Opening by John E. Moles

4:00 p.m.—Livestock Parade

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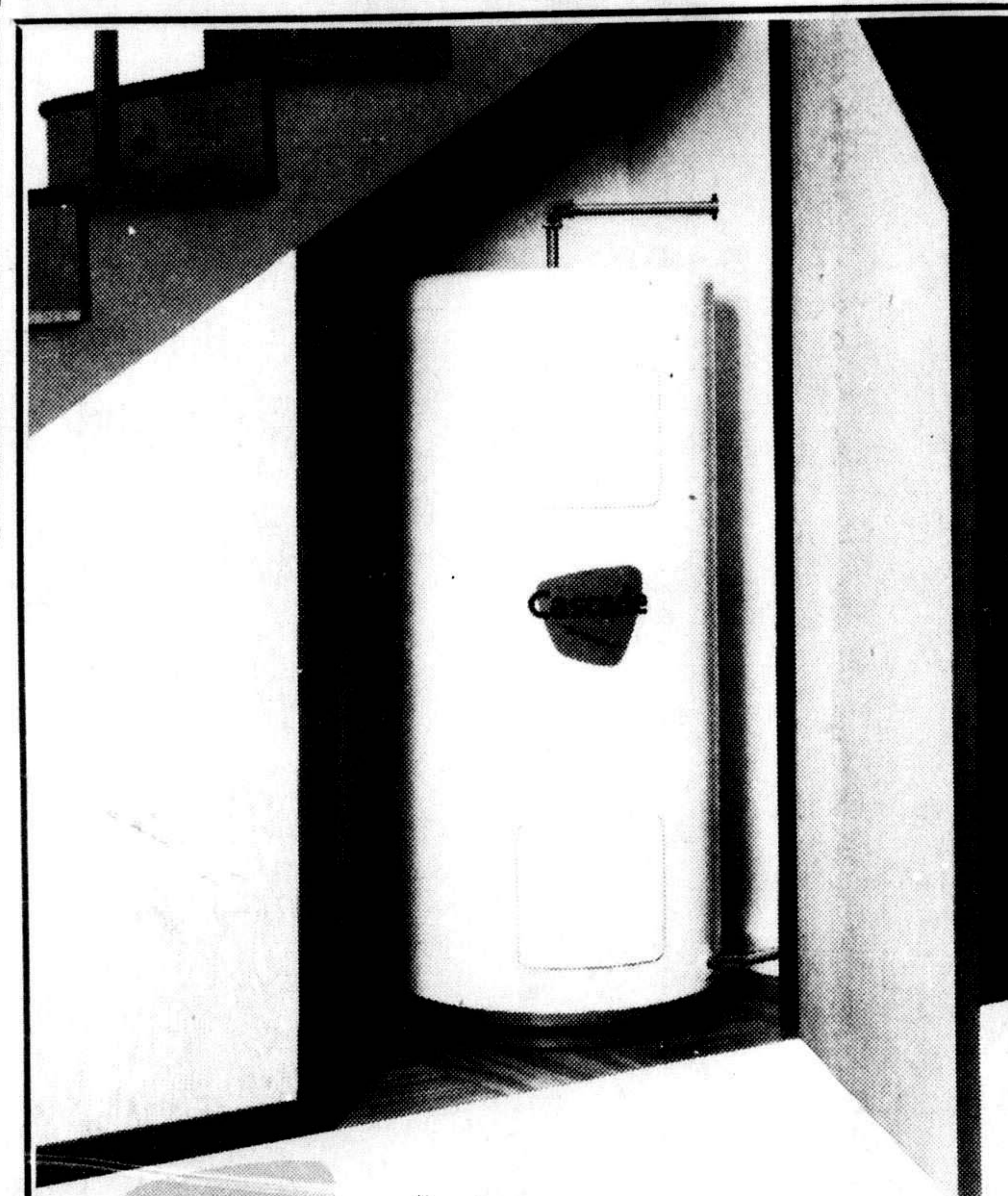
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is requested to contact the Service Officer whose name appears below, no later than September 20th.

HOWELL HOPKINS, Service Officer,
287 Thomas Street, Milton
878-6623