

School boards 'have to go' says councillor Day

Milton's fiery councillor says public education system is overseen by 'idiots'

By **ROB KELLY**
The Champion

Ward 1 municipal councillor Rick Day unleashed a barrage of criticism at the area public education system Monday night, saying it is overseen by "idiots" and is "just not working" financially.

Speaking at Milton's town council meeting, Mr. Day said he had been "horrified" to read the taxation increase figures in Milton's 1992 financial report, released last week.

Mr. Day slammed spending at various levels, but saved his biggest salvos for the boards of education, which, he said, should be abolished.

"They've got to go. The regional boards of education have to go. To save us. They're just out of control.

The unions, the staff, the giant buildings — it has to go."

Mr. Day advocated either going back to locally administered school systems, so Milton would run its own for example, or tossing the responsibility over to the provincial Ministry of Education, which would "supervise it through a local office."

Currently, "it's just not working," the councillor added.

Mr. Day painted a picture of a system in which property tax revenues and provincial grants climbed substantially over the last six years, but were far outstripped by the demands of local and regional government, and the boards of education.

Extrapolating percentages from Milton's annual financial report, Mr. Day said town expenditures have



Rick Day

climbed 40 per cent in the last six years, even though the assessed value of property for taxation has

jumped by 22 per cent, and provincial grants to municipal government have risen by 42 per cent.

Mr. Day also blasted the various mill rate increases involved in budgeting for all three of his targets (mill rates are figures depicting the amount of taxes payable for each \$1,000 of assessed property value).

Milton's mill rate has gone up 25 per cent in six years, but Halton Region's has doubled that pace at 50 per cent and the boards of education have skyrocketed by 70 per cent, the councillor said.

In terms of straight financial transfers, Halton is consuming 85 per cent more of Milton's property taxes than in 1987, while the boards of education are claiming about 105 per cent more.

In 1987, Milton devoted \$3,389,000 in transfers to Halton regional government, the annual report indicates.

In 1992, that figure was \$6,272,000. In 1987 the boards of education claimed \$12,640,000 in Milton property taxes. By 1992 that had soared to \$25,923,000.

Milton's own general expenses jumped from roughly \$10.6 million in 1987 to almost \$14.8 million in 1992, or roughly 39 per cent.

Both school board and regional government representatives have long argued the provincial government has saddled them with new responsibilities without providing the funding to support them, a tactic referred to as "downloading" programs onto the property tax base.

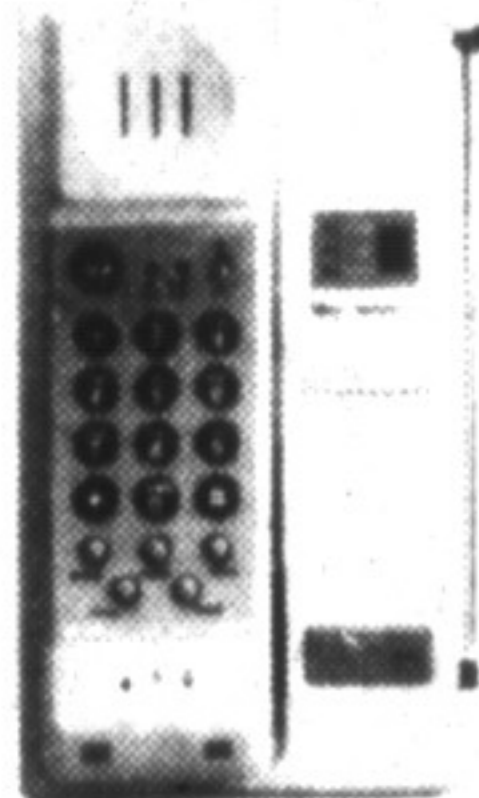
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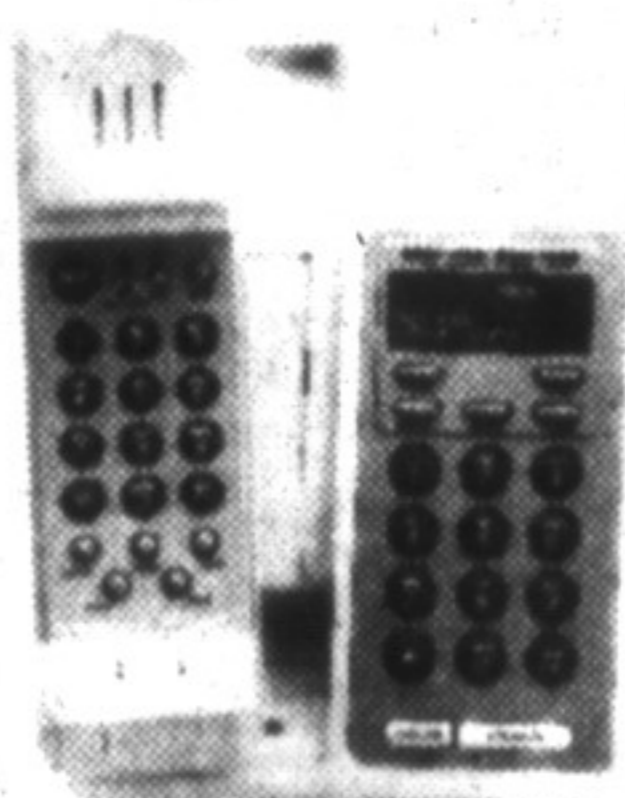
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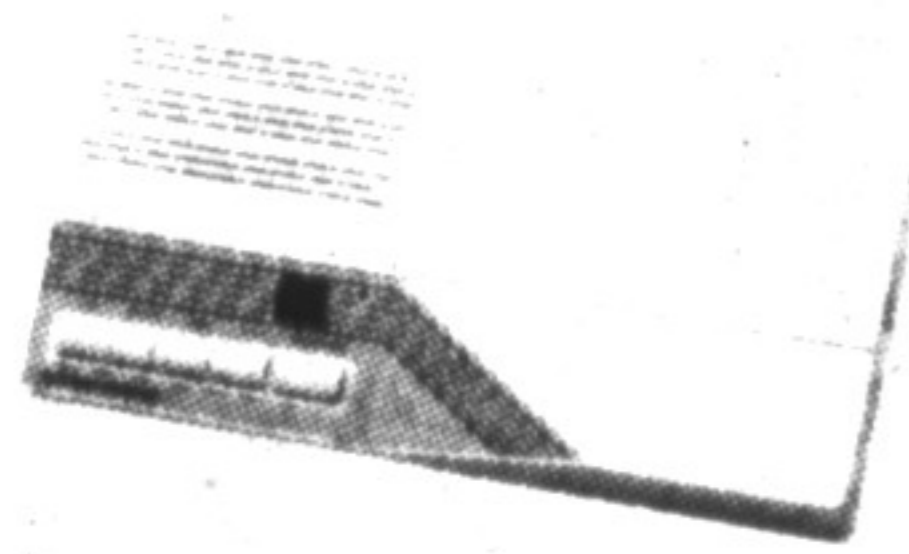
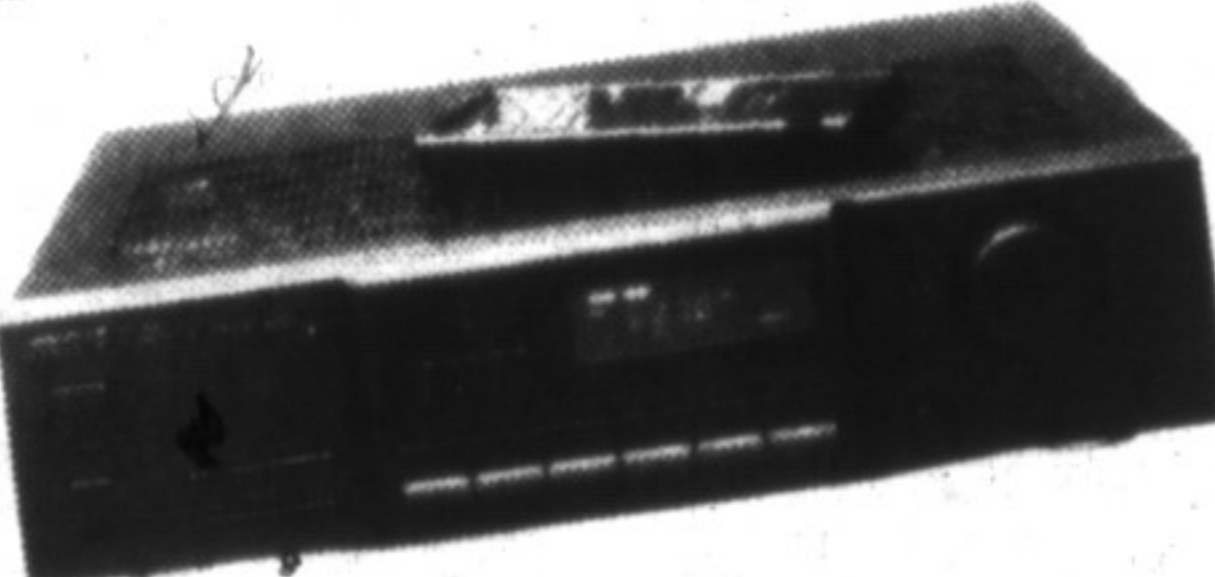
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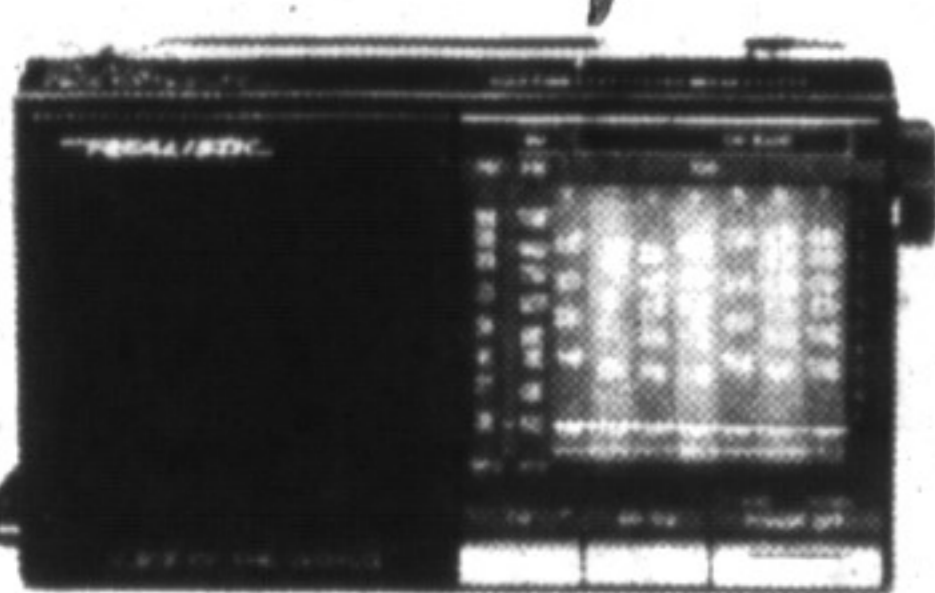
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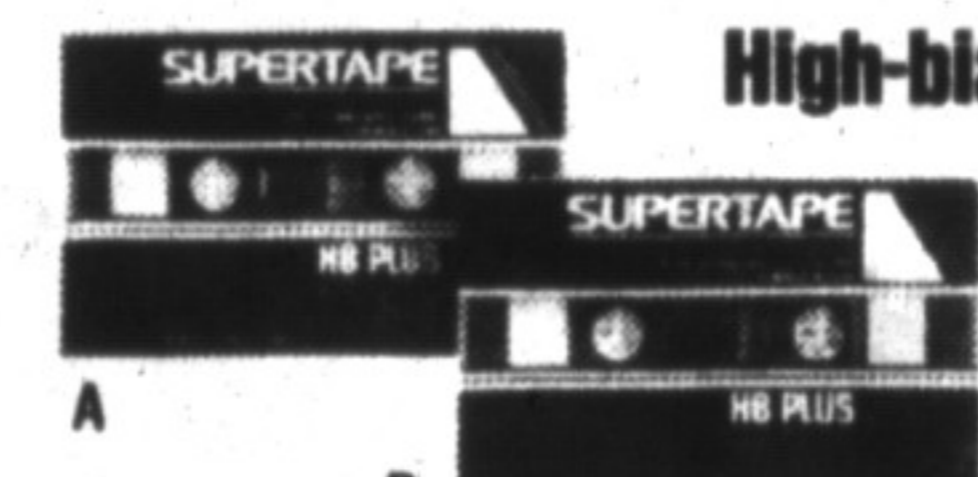
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Girls' choir performs Sunday

The Cantando Girls' Choir is celebrating spring with a concert this Sunday (April 25).

The community choir features 25 girls from the ages of 14-19. Under the direction of Mary Jane Corradetti and accompanist Claudine Lambert, the girls will sing three-part songs, ranging from classical to Canadian folk tunes. The concert entitled "Celebrate Spring", will take place at Knox Presbyterian Church, Main Street.

There also will be auditions in May for girls who would like to join. Ms Corradetti says that girls interested will "enjoy singing, working a little, and having fun."

Concert begins at 3 p.m. Tickets are available at Delacourt's for \$5, or at the door. Children under 12 are admitted free.

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