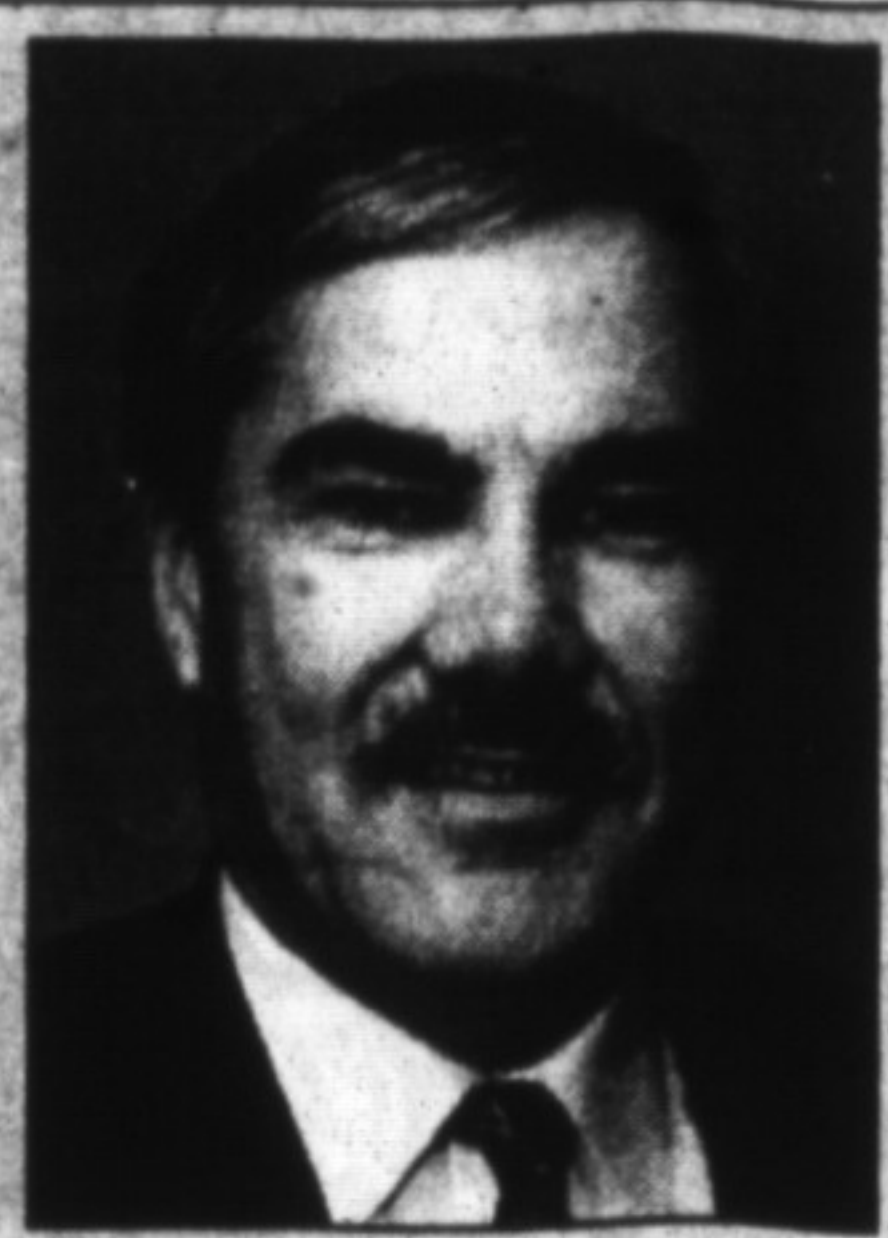


Catholic board says report could mean a cash infusion



Pooling education taxes "would be a Godsend for us."

— Fred Sweeney
director, Halton Roman Catholic School Board

The Golden report on the Greater Toronto area says little about education, but it could still mean big dividends for Halton's Roman Catholic School Board.

A key item is the recommendation that commercial and industrial education tax payments be pooled and shared across the GTA.

The GTA task force says Metro Toronto businesses currently pay a much greater share than their suburban counterparts.

Pooling education taxes would be a "gold mine" for Catholic school boards throughout the GTA, said Fred Sweeney, director of the local Catholic board.

Halton's Catholic board has traditionally been financed almost entirely by residential taxes. Business tax support is currently being phased in at five per cent a year.

"It would be a Godsend for us," said Mr. Sweeney. He added, however, Catholic boards outside the GTA would still have financing problems.

Mr. Sweeney said if Halton is included in the GTA and this financing is implemented, a provincial recommendation to amalgamate Catholic boards in Halton and Hamilton-Wentworth would be scrapped. Halton's Catholic board has staunchly opposed being amalgamated with other boards.

Catholic board Chair Alice Anne LeMay had not seen final details of the report, but agreed that pooling funding would be positive.

Ms LeMay said the Golden report should have little effect on school boards because its mandate covers local and regional governments, and not education.

Leach says changes coming soon in wake of task force's report

KEITH GILLIGAN

Special to The Champion

GTA reform task force members "came to the inescapable conclusion that Greater Toronto has reached the point where the status quo is no longer an option. Change is required," task force head and report author Anne Golden said Tuesday.

Her report makes 51 recommendations, including scrapping the five regional governments and replacing them with a Greater Toronto Council (GTC). It also recommends pooling the education portion of commercial and industrial property taxes across the GTA, introducing a form of market value assessment for properties, and giving municipal governments more power.

Municipal Affairs Minister Al Leach told the press conference, "Two things are clear — change is needed and it should be in place for the municipal elections in (November of) 1997. We'll make decisions in the next 90 days and have legislation for the House to consider in the spring."

When asked what the chances were of the report's recommendations being implemented, Mr. Leach said, "Pretty good. They're looking at smaller government and more power locally. The Greater Toronto Council would have fewer powers than the present Metro government, for example."

Scrapping the regions and setting up the GTC would "end the unhealthy competition and infighting among GTA municipalities," Ms Golden said. "It's time to end

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Williams sees no big educational spin in report

By CAROL BALDWIN

Special to The Champion

Will education in Halton be affected if the region becomes part of a revamped Greater Toronto?

No one seems to know the answer, but speculation runs the gamut in the wake of Anne Golden's report suggesting that course Tuesday.

"It could have an impact, it depends on the specific recommendations that they (the Golden task force) make," said Bob Williams, director of education for the Halton Board of Education. "It looks like there's not much that is going to have an impact on education."

Mr. Williams said the Halton board already has co-operative arrangements with Halton Region, its four member municipalities and the Roman Catholic school board; and those arrangements have enhanced the board's buying power.

Similarly, if the region expands to include all of the Greater Toronto Area, the buying power could be enhanced even more. "In theory there might even be some advantages," Mr. Williams speculates. "I don't see it being detrimental. It depends on how they implement it."

Oakville Trustee Penny Siebert, the vice-chair of the board, referred to the Golden report as one piece of a puzzle, which also

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