

Trustees get emergency tete a tete with four Halton MPPs

By TIM WHITNELL

Special to The Champion

Halton public school board trustees have agreed to an emergency meeting with the region's four members of provincial parliament.

Board Chair Linda Glover and Burlington South MPP Cam Jackson chose Dec. 2 at 8 a.m. at the board offices on Guelph Line for a face-to-face encounter with the region's four Tory representatives.

Ms Glover and Mr. Jackson spent most of Thursday trying to settle on an appropriate date.

The four MPPs, Milton's Ted Chudleigh, Mr. Jackson, Terence Young and Gary Carr had requested an immediate conference with trustees to discuss education issues, including areas of local restructuring and provincial policy review.

An open letter signed by all four Halton MPPs, dated Nov. 19 and addressed to Ms Glover, stated, "The last time we had meaningful dialogue with the board was more than a year ago. By contrast, we have been meeting frequently with the Halton Roman Catholic School Board, at their request, to discuss local and provincial education issues."

The MPPs' letter also noted Ms Glover had been quoted in the Nov. 17 edition of The Burlington Post as saying, "We have a plan and the provincial govern-

ment doesn't."

The Tory reps said in the letter they want to learn more about the board's Renewal plan for school closures and changes to programs and administration, which is expected to help offset some of the \$24 million deficit it faces.

"Your board's decision to override your policy and fast-track school closures has caused considerable concern and upset in the community. We would, therefore, ask that you brief the four of us on the long-range planning and community consultation process you have undertaken in this regard," the letter said.

One Burlington trustee said she is anxious to meet with the MPPs, though she wishes something like this had been done a lot earlier.

"From a personal perspective, we should have taken the initiative with them and met with them a lot more," said Diane Leblovic, the former board chair.

"I'd like to hear more from them on the Who Does What panel. These are the people who are making the decisions," Ms Leblovic said of the four Halton MPPs.

Ironically, just a few days earlier, Halton public board trustees had requested an emergency meeting with Education Minister John Snobelen, but were turned down.



Ted Chudleigh

Time for talking looks short

By BRAD REAUME

The Champion

Milton council will likely discuss its position on recent announcements from the Who Does What Panel at the council meeting slated for Monday, Dec. 2.

Recommendations from the provincially appointed panel are flowing fast and furious according to Milton chief administrative officer David Hipgrave, but the most significant, those on property taxation and governance, are yet to come.

At a recent meeting Councillor John Challinor asked for a comprehensive report from Mr. Hipgrave or Mayor Gord Krantz on where the province stands on some of these issues, so councillors can comment.

However, indications from the province suggest the time for talking is over. In the spring Ministry of Municipal Affairs officials suggested that municipalities should make substantial changes to their structures, including amalgamation, or provincial officials would do it.

Recently the province acted as broker in a deal to create a Greater Hamilton by amalgamating the City of Hamilton with a half a dozen suburbs, such as Dundas and Stoney Creek, and eliminating the lower

local tier of government. Provincial officials have also suggested the same thing will happen to Metro Toronto and given Toronto area mayors a week to produce a better plan.

Mr. Hipgrave outlined some of the changes already proposed: Council will appoint a majority of members to police services boards, provincial funding for water services will be phased out, business taxes are to be reformed, the funding of education is to come off the municipal tax base and reductions are coming in the number of school boards.

"Commenting on the Who Does What proposals is a bit like hitting a rapidly moving target," said Mr. Hipgrave. "However the province is not launching a massive municipal consultation. The debate is around the Who Does What table. Things are being decided that way."

The panel is making its recommendations to the provincial government and is expected to be finished by the end of November. The provincial government will likely bring forward legislation in early December for passage prior to the end of 1996, which will allow changes to be instituted for the next municipal election in November, 1997.

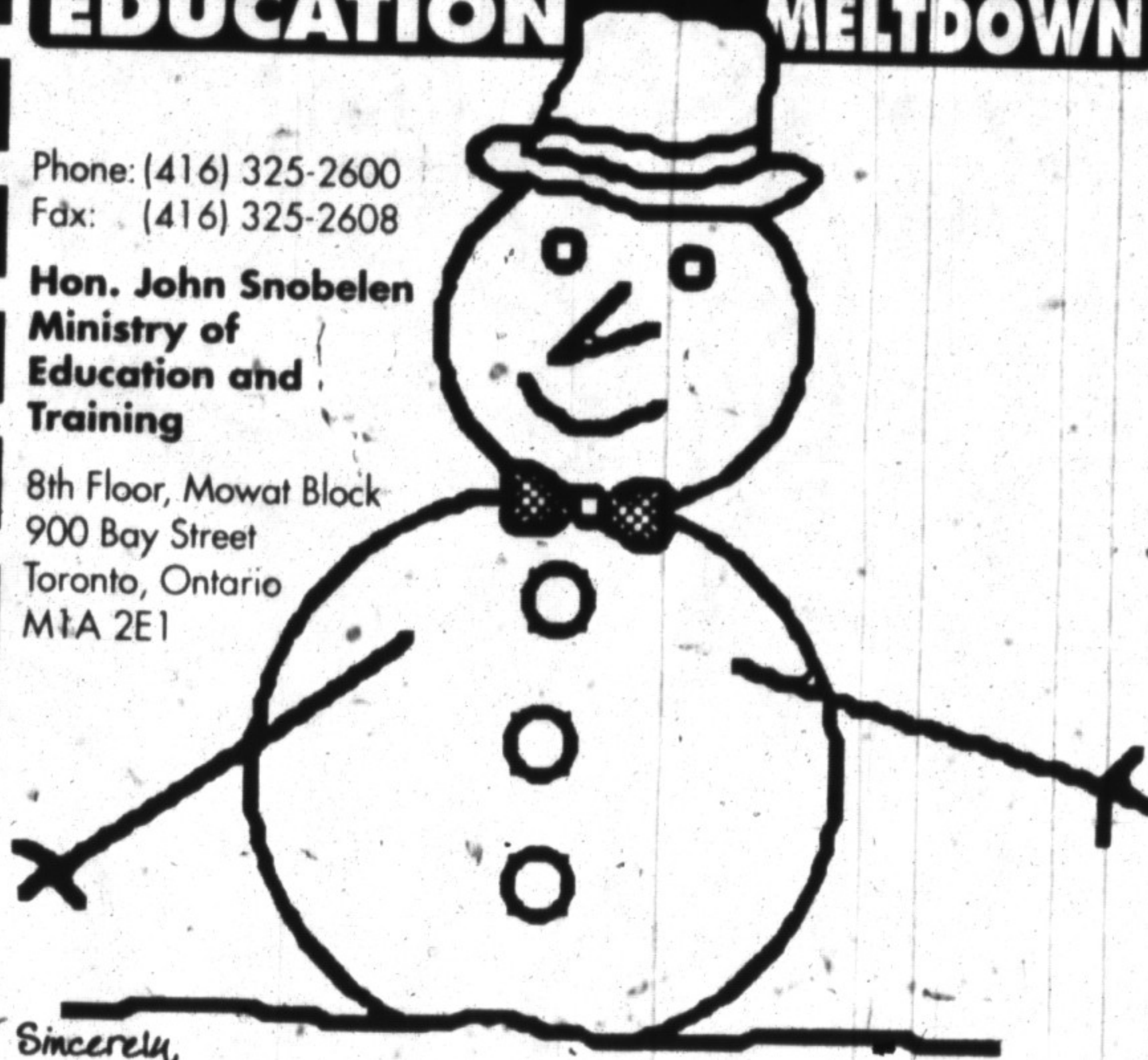
Dear Mr. Snobelen

PLEASE STOP THE EDUCATION MELTDOWN

Phone: (416) 325-2600
Fax: (416) 325-2608

Hon. John Snobelen
Ministry of
Education and
Training

8th Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
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Sincerely,

Parents stand up for education Province-wide protest November 27, 1996

Parents all over Ontario will be staging silent vigils, holding rallies and delivering letters of protest to their MPPs at 10:00 am on November 27th.

Parents know these changes are happening too fast and with too little planning. Parents know they have not been consulted. Parents know most of the changes in education are being made just to cut \$1 billion that the government needs to fund its tax cut. And parents know these cuts are affecting the classrooms of their children.

Many of the children across the province have already lost 50% of their special education funding. They've lost their librarians and their junior kindergartens. Many of them have no music programs left in their schools. Their class sizes have already increased enormously. They're having to walk long distances to catch their school buses.

What more is there to take away?

How much is this government willing to let children suffer?

Show your concern by mailing or faxing the accompanying Snowman to the numbers listed.

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