

# Rowe: school funding low

by Earl Rowe  
MPP Simcoe Centre  
At a time when our public schools should be receiving a greater share of our growing economy, provincial liberal spending on our elementary and high schools is the lowest in sixteen years.

Last year provincial grants to the public school system equalled 46.6 per cent of total spending on the system. The 1986-87 spending estimates show provincial support has slid to 44.9 per cent of the total.

Although in the last election they promised to radically increase support to public education, the liberals have actually reduced the provincial share.

Since 1980 school boards have been stretching meagre resources, because of the ravages of inflation and scarcity of tax revenues. As a result a larger share of the burden of supporting our schools has fallen on the shoulders of the local ratepayer.

Prior to the recession of the early 'eighties', education made up 15.5 per cent of the provincial budget in 1980-82.

In their first budget the liberal government allowed provincial support for education to drop 11.3 per cent, or 46.6 per cent of total spending on the

system. The spending forecasts for 1986-87 show a further erosion of support to 44.9 per cent.

Ontario deserves a first class public education system. Schools in every community don't have enough computers, up-to-date books or updated facilities they need to do their job effectively. Our young people deserve better.

I believe we should see an increase in provincial support for public education. We should see a return of significant provincial support for education, such as sixty per cent of total expenditures.

This will give our school boards the resources they need to do their job effectively, as well as give an opportunity for local government to reduce the burden of taxation on local ratepayers.

With our growing economy, the work should begin now to boost the provincial share of support for public education. But the government has not provided that leadership. All they have given our public school system is reductions.

We are fighting for a return to the kind of quali-

ty education Ontario has come to expect and deserve from their public schools.

We are fighting for improved special education needs, such as language training for the different cultures that make up our neighbourhoods, as well as access to the new technologies that our young people must master if they are to succeed in the workplace.

Cutbacks will not do it. We need increased provincial funding to our public school system. We need it today.



## Busy spot

The Huronia Airport in Perkinsfield is a busy spot these days with the government giving the facility per-

manent customs and work beginning on the final design plans for a 1,000 foot runway extension.



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## Agreement discussed

The reciprocal fire agreement among Midland, Penetanguishene, Tiny Township and Tay Township, was discussed recently by Midland's public safety committee.

All Simcoe County fire departments but one cooperate in mutual aid. Under mutual aid, a fire department if requested will send to a fire in a neighbouring municipality a piece of firefighting equipment equivalent to a piece of firefighting equipment owned by the neighbour.

The local reciprocal agreements mean that, for example, Midland would send its aerial ladder truck to a fire in Tiny Township. Tiny doesn't have an aerial ladder truck. Similarly Tiny would lend Midland a water tank truck, a piece of equipment Midland lacks.

Midland Fire Chief Hal Belfry says that the county frowns on reciprocal agreements, but because of local circumstances, "reciprocal agreements are favourable for us."

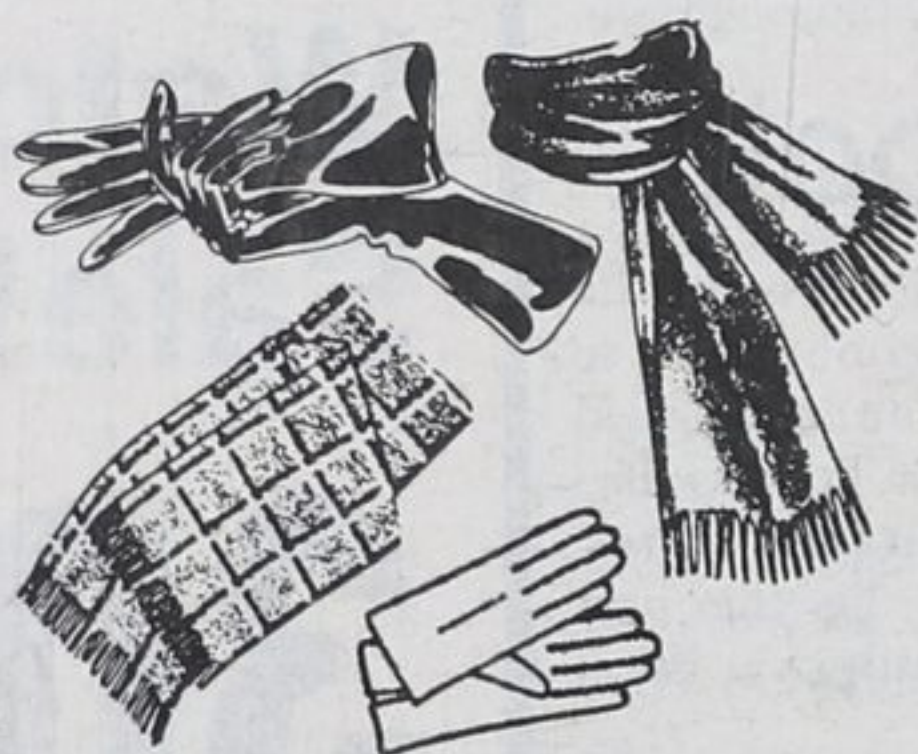
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