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County Council Accused Of Hasty Action

(Continued from Page 2)

schools is that the school is for the child, and each child is unique. This makes decentralization mandatory.

The classroom is the scene of action. The closer to the scene of action the administrative decisions are made (other things being equal), the more likely it is that the classroom will be creative and child-centred.

There is one good feature about the changes proposed in the county council (if second-hand reports are correct): the integration of school systems from kindergarten to grade 13. This will end the absurd Chinese Wall built between elementary and secondary.

But do you need to lump disparate and otherwise unconnected communities together to achieve this integration?

The Newmarket District High School Board, for example, already operates two schools which provide all the major streams of secondary education.

Add to these the elementary schools in Newmarket and Newmarket's own little hinterland — the schools that already feed these high schools — and you have a complete school system ready to be operated by what would become a Newmarket District Board of Education.

The town and the hinterland are mutually dependent, linked by history and contemporary common interest: a complete cultural, com-

community unit.

The voter would be choosing a school trustee who should be able to comprehend the school attended by the voter's child. The trustee could work closely to meet the needs of that school and that child.

But something changes if you lump in with the Newmarket district other cohesive areas such as Sutton and Aurora, with their high schools and the elementary schools feeding them.

A new dimension replaces the community basis of administration. Decisions start to come out differently. It is hard for the Sutton-elected trustee to grasp Aurora problems as closely as Sutton problems. The system is too big. The lowest common denominator becomes too low-down. Trustees find themselves more and more dependent on a hired director of education and a growing hierarchy of officials. A new empire has been born, interposing itself between the community and the teaching profession, between the parent and the classroom.

There is less and less education for the individual and more and more education for the mass — till crisis develops as it has been developing in administration-oriented school systems in many parts of the continent.

York County contains a large number of old-established, relatively stable communities. With their hinterlands, they provide the ideal

bases for complete school systems in harmony with shared community values.

At this point somebody is bound to ask: "But could a Newmarket District Board provide for the exceptional child — the retarded child, the disturbed child, the deaf child, or whatever?" Perhaps yes; perhaps no. Let us assume it could not. But surely this question proves the opposite point. You don't base your structure on the exceptional situation but on the general situation.

Consider the deaf children. They may be too few in number for a Newmarket District Board to be able to provide for them. But a dozen or a score of boards of education in this county could each appoint a trustee to administer together a county school for the deaf on a co-operative basis, with each board paying so much for each child it sent.

This would give the school for the deaf its own board of trustees able to give it the particular attention that such a particular kind of school requires, rather than have its needs lost sight of in the mass of questions before a board dealing with everything that is happening in a very large school system.

Every school board in this county is facing heavy financial problems. These problems cannot be solved within the county alone but at Queen's Park as well. Not long ago Premier John Robarts introduced a financial plan which he said guaranteed equality of educational

opportunity to every child in the province as far as could be devised. Well, did it or didn't it? If it did not, more redress must be won from Queen's Park. The real inequality in Ontario is not that within York County but that between the golden horseshoe and the rest of the province. But, in any case, financial problems are not an educational reason for change. New solutions must be found. That is a subject in itself.

There are unsound theories of school administration abroad in the land. The administrator's paradise can be the students' nightmare. The empires will grow while good teachers leave the profession.

To do in a closet what is proposed can result in three administrative monstrosities. To take time to consult can result in sound reform. There is a lot of wisdom in the towns, townships, villages, homes and schools. Can any county councillor really be afraid of open public consultation and dialogue (and of the studies in depth that can illuminate the discussion)? What is all the hurry? And why can't we get the report?

The public will be reassured if every candidate for reeve and deputy-reeve, for municipal office and school board will pledge himself against any fait accompli in favor of democratic consultation so that we can all together arrive at an informed consensus on how to contribute to excellent education, community by community and throughout the county.

Window On The Past

(Continued from Page 2)

the floor, or smoking in the room were strictly prohibited. Several volumes bought for this library in 1897 are still in circulation. Despite high hopes, the membership never very large, sometimes dropped to 15. There was not much money to spend on new books and only the loyalty of a few devoted volunteers kept it going for a long period.

In 1920 it was re-organized as an association library and fees were set at \$1.00 a year for adults, and 50 cents for children. Board members elected for the following year were: President Mrs. L. G. Langstaff, Vice-President Rev. R. S. Francis, Secretary J. E. Francis, Treasurer N. J. Smellie, Librarian, W. B. Oke and D. James, Rev. W. M. McDonald, F. Jackson, Mrs. A. R. Hall, Mrs. J. E. Francis.

Unable to pay more than \$50 to \$75 a year for rent the library was re-located several times: When Victoria Hall was converted to a two story building in 1913 the books and shelves were moved across Yonge Street to the Lindsay-Francis General Store. A few years later they were set up at the rear of a confectionary store in the remodelled hall. In 1934 the fees for adults and children totaled only \$12 and the premises were very dreary. President Mrs. Arthur Thompson, and the Rev. E. E. Pugsley, a board member, pressed for brighter quarters, and in 1935 arrangements were made to move to the second floor board room in Thornhill Public School. The school at that time had four classrooms, only three of which were in use. It stood in a field. Arnold Avenue had not been opened and there were no nearby gas stations, stores, or Farmers Market so it seemed rather isolated, especially at night.

We remember mounting the stairs one evening to the strains of classical music. Mr. Pugsley who was taking his turn as Librarian was playing the piano in an adjoining classroom while waiting for business. After this move the library took a permanent turn for the better. A canvass of the village by Miss Lucille Dean (Mrs. E. T. Herrill) brought in new members, and Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Otto James spent hours weeding out, and classifying the books, and initiating the Dewey decimal system of numbering and indexing. As membership and circulation increased so did the government grants. In 1949 there were 47 adult members and 66 juvenile, and a total circulation of 3,684 books. Receipts for the year amounted to \$277.32 and included the following grants - \$133.91 from the province, \$20 from Thornhill Village, \$10 from Vaughan Township and \$15 from Markham Township. In 1950, due to the post war influx of new families,

the school had become so crowded that even the board room was required for classes. The library also needed more space so in 1950 a large upstairs room in the new MacNeil-Anstey Building was obtained from Mr. MacNeil for \$45 a month. Even this reduced rental was more than the library could carry for long so, in 1952, it became a bona fide public library supported by taxes.

The Rev. S. A. R. Wood was the first chairman of the new board and Miss Jane McLaren, the present efficient and helpful librarian, was appointed at this time. In 1955, finding one room too cramped the library made a particularly happy move to the ground floor of a rented house on Centre St., where the children's room given in memory of the late Barton G. Edwards, was opened the following year. After this house was sold to Dr. Peter Morse, the library took over a vacant store in Victoria Hall (since demolished) and remained there until 1960, when with the assistance of Thornhill Lions Club it was at last established in a home of its own - an old, but conveniently situated house on Colborne Street. Plans are now being made to enlarge the library by joining up an existing building at the back.

Figures for 1966 are not yet available but Miss McLaren reports that in 1965 the library had a total membership of 1,265, about half children, and a circulation of 22,525. There are more than 7,000 books on the shelves, and for the past three summers there have been augmented by books from Thornhill Secondary School Library. The sum of \$850 was spent on new books during the year, and several volumes were donated. Miss McLaren now has one paid part-time assistant and eight enthusiastic volunteer helpers.

Members of the library board in 1966 are: Past President Gaither Zinkan, President Philip B. Whitehead, Secretary-Treasurer Mrs. Lionel Frost, who is completing the term of the late Mrs. Frank Tucker, and Mrs. J. T. Cosgrove, Mrs. R. M. Edwards, Dr. R. W. B. Jackson, P. N. Trant, R. J. Robinson.

On January 1, 1967 this library which has served the community for 70 years, and which has received several citations for general excellence, will be taken over by Markham Township, and become a branch of the new Centennial Library to be built in Unionville. This will not be happy news to those who remember that the library began, and existed for more than half a century on the Vaughan side of Thornhill. However it will solve one of the ticklish financial problems peculiar to villages situated in two townships.

After January 1, residents of Vaughan Township will have a choice of paying \$2 for a card at the Thornhill Library or 10 cents for a card at the branch of the Vaughan Township Centennial Library which is nearing completion at Pearson Avenue and Scott Drive in Rivale.

In closing we would like to extend good wishes to Thornhill Public Library as it enters a new era, and to pay tribute to the late J. E. Francis, secretary of the Thornhill Library Board for 40 years; to the late Mrs. J. Arthur Thompson, president for 14 years; to Miss Agnes Boyle and Miss Hazel Welsh, volunteer workers for more than 30 years, and to the many, many others who in the past and present have worked hard "to put good reading within the reach of all".

Rambling Around

(Continued from Page 2)

group of young men and women who are really working hard to make it a success. As each member joins, a fee of fifty cents is charged and members pay another seventy-five cents every Saturday night. A non-member pays a dollar. This money covers the entertainment and any other expenses. If they have a surplus they give it to the church as well as other defined projects.

Last year, they donated \$500. Some of it went to famine relief in India and to the United Church mission projects.

THEY GOVERN THEMSELVES

Associate Minister Rev. Norman Gibson keeps his weather eye on the activities of "The Hole Thing". The members have been evolving into self-governing bodies since last October. They now have a number of committees who see to it that everything runs smoothly.

The refreshment committee looks after the bar that dispenses coffee, soft drinks, potato chips and chocolate bars.

The setting-up committee comes a little earlier on Saturday to set up the bar and the tables in the roomy lower auditorium. The young people start arriving at about eight o'clock and remain until eleven-thirty. After the closing, the committee dismantles the room and tidies up.

The entertainment committee provides just that (entertainment) and plans the program. They occasionally have folk singers, but the craze for folk singing seems to be on the way out and the combo is definitely in.

Part of every program is what is known as the "serious content". This particular Saturday night they were having a film. Sometimes they have guest speakers or a debate.

Last year several members wrote two plays and produced them for their own entertainment.

The town police department have shown their interest by providing an off-duty policeman. On one occasion the coffee house was visited by a "streetwalker". Don't get any wrong ideas though! This "streetwalker" is an unattached YMCA worker whose job it is to circulate around coffee houses, restaurants and street corners mingling in a friendly fashion with the young.

Another feature of this coffee house is the creative room. If you don't wish to listen to combo, you can go to the creative room, look at TV, play cards or checkers or just simply talk.

IN INTERESTING INVOLVEMENT DURING CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Rev. Gibson said that there would be further involvement when twenty Indian youths from the Cape Croker Indian Reserve, north of Wiarton will be coming to Richmond Hill to spend three days in the homes of local young people. While the Indian youths are here, they will be entertained with a special welcoming party. They will visit the new city hall in Toronto and get a chance to skate on its open air rink. They will visit the museum and perhaps see a professional hockey game at Maple Leaf Gardens.

The purpose behind this involvement is to improve relationships between the Indian and white people.

"Next spring, our young people will make a return visit to their Indian friends," said Mr. Gibson.

IT'S ALL TOGETHER, SINK OR SWIM

The success or failure of "The Hole Thing" will be determined by the efforts of its members. At this point in their short history everything points to success. The young people want and need guidance while managing their own affairs. Their committees are working well together. The executive is deeply grateful to the members for their co-operation. The way I see it, "The Hole Thing" looks like a pretty good thing.

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