

Where Does Roberts' County Trustees Plan Show More "Muscle" In Setting Board Policy

Prime Duty Lie?

By JOHN ROBERTS MP, YORK SIMCOE

In my discussions of the tax reform proposals at various meetings in York Simcoe I am sometimes asked if I will support tax reform legislation if most of the citizens of York Simcoe are opposed to it. People are surprised—sometimes angry—when I say that the first duty of an MP is not necessarily to follow the wishes of his constituents but to work, speak and vote for what he believes to be the national interest.

The question of whether or not an MP is bound to follow the views of his constituents—whatever his personal opinions—is an old and thorny one. The voters, who know that they have put the MP there expect him to do what they want. The MPs, however, are reluctant to look upon their job simply as that of a messenger boy.

Members of Parliament usually refer to Edmund Burke's speech to the electors of Bristol in defence of their independence from the wishes of the voters:

"Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, even, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But, his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

"To deliver an opinion, is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But authoritative instructions; mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience—these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution."

"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole."

What Members of Parliament usually forget is that this speech was delivered after the election, not before it—and in the next election Burke was rejected by the Bristol electorate.

In the United States there has been a stronger tradition that the representative is more of a delegate. This is the reason for the short term of Congress—two years—and for various "recall" provisions which enable a certain number of voters through a petition to force an election.

But in the Canadian system the recourse the citizens have is not to "recall" their MP but simply vote against him at the next election. And that is certainly a very effective factor in guiding the MP.

Evidence that York County Board of Education is not getting through to the public as well as it hoped was demonstrated at the board's meeting on April 13. "I am deeply concerned at misconceptions of people in my area," declared Richmond Hill Trustee Deena Simpson.

"I resent the feeling (of the public) that this board is not functioning as it should, that the administration is dictating to the board. I resent it on behalf of the administration and on behalf of the trustees. It is a misconception that the trustees have to do as the administration says."

Mrs. Simpson's outburst came during discussion of a staff report concerning a study of the feasibility of establishing an experimental school in York County.

The board in general had shown considerable enthusiasm for the idea introduced in February of a school which would present a more formal teaching atmosphere than is the trend in most secondary schools in the county and has reached its highest peak at Thornlea Secondary School in Thornhill.

Trustees agreed with a staff suggestion that Rich-

mond Hill High School would be an appropriate starting place for the study of a "hard school" because of its proximity to Bayview Secondary School, which offers a vast panorama of options and programs, and it would make it easier for students to choose their school.

Mrs. Simpson pointed out that the trustees had made it very clear that it was only a study that in addressing meetings of students, parents and staff at Richmond Hill in March, they had gone to great pains to emphasize the point that no action would be taken before the study had been completed, that it would be 1971 before any action could be taken.

"But students and parents have taken it for granted that this (the 'hard' school) is going to happen, that we are being dictated to by our director, that we have no control over what happens in the schools."

"We have been pre-judged. It is an insult to the board, and this has brought it to a head."

"The people I have talked to are 40 to one against the experimental school," said Mrs. Simpson, who was present at meetings with both students and parents. "They

do not understand that this is a study, that the board will act on research. There has been so much antagonism, and a feeling that the community should be involved. The implication is that we are operating under a dictator, although he may be a benevolent dictator."

At all meetings, Education Director Sam Chapman and Superintendent of Planning and Development Stephen Bacsalmai made the major presentations and answered the majority of questions from the floor.

Vaughan Trustee Warren Baillie countered, "In my opinion, no defense is required. Everyone knows that I am not a rubber stamp, and as far as I am concerned, no one here is a rubber stamp of the director."

"The general attitude of the public is, 'don't tell me, show me,' and so far this board has shown considerable independence of thought," Mr. Baillie declared.

Newmarket Trustee Jack Hadfield suggested, "Perhaps the trustees should carry the ball more in the public forum, and not rely so much on the director."

Aurora Trustee Keith Nisbit agreed, "Too often we put the onus on the director to

speak for us. We should start to answer back."

Commenting on the emphatically negative reaction of students and parents at meetings in Richmond Hill High School, Mr. Chapman said,

"We cannot study in a vacuum, and we do not have the staff to make a study in three different communities. I do not think the good people of Richmond Hill realize we have to get involved to get the reaction of the people of a community." The board could conduct the study in a community other than Richmond Hill, he added.

"I have never changed from giving full support to the feasibility study," Mrs. Simpson declared, "but I am deeply concerned at the misconception of the people in the area."

In its report a week later on the study, the staff declared, "To educate individuals rather than 'masses' requires variety in type of school, in school programs, in teaching methods if these are to be matched to the individuals' learning styles... It is, therefore, necessary to examine and re-examine alternatives in the climate for our schools; the attitudes and values to strive for in

our students."

The principal objective of the study is to examine possible alternatives in school climate, attitudes, values and programs.

"Since we believe in the matching of program and teaching method with the learner (and since learning must include all learners), this study is to be directed toward the needs of those who appear to obtain less than optimum benefit from the presently accepted trends and innovations in education," the report states.

Markham Township Trustee Louise Aimore commented, "It should be reassuring to people to know that what we are going to look at is what is relevant, what is important in our schools."

The board agreed that the committee making the study should include teachers from both elementary and secondary schools, three trustees and at least three other persons representing parents along with two students who would serve as consultants.

A motion by Markham Township Trustee John Honsberger seconded by Roman Catholic Trustee Conrad Thompson of Richmond Hill that the study be made received unanimous approval of the board.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BOOKS

RICHMOND HILL PUBLIC LIBRARY

Board Seeks Owners Of Early Town Homes

The face of Richmond Hill has undergone many changes during the past few years with a gradual progression from the old to the new—many of the familiar and well loved landmarks have been torn down to make way for newer modern buildings and there is a sudden awareness that in order to preserve the history of our town for future generations we must make haste to record the names of former settlers and the dwellings they have occupied.

In preparation for the Centennial of the town in 1973, the Richmond Hill Public Library Board is appealing for assistance in the compilation of a directory of the older houses in the Richmond Hill postal area built in the period of the 1800's and early 1900. If you are the owner of such a property the board would be most grateful if you would supply them, through a review of the deeds, with the name of the builder or original owner of the house, and subsequent occupants. Pictures of the buildings would be most welcome, however a current photograph will be taken if necessary. In this way the Library hopes to be able to

compile a historical record that would be of immense value to students and residents wishing to delve into our local history, and would complement other historical materials safeguarded in the local public library.

Pictures of houses that were standing in 1872, but since demolished are also being sought to provide background material for students of local history wishing to erect scale models of our town in that era. It is hoped that, with the permission of the owners, plaques will be installed to mark the historical significance of the older homes. Such a project has already been undertaken in neighbouring Thornhill.

WILLOWDALE—Police said a man stopped for speeding on Finch Avenue April 29 attempted to bribe the radar operator, Constable William Henderson, with \$12.

Antonio Manichisi, 19, of Calcedonia Road, has been charged with attempting to bribe a police officer.

FOR BIG BARGAINS CONSULT THE LIBERAL CLASSIFIEDS

Parked Car Wrecked Entirely On Newkirk

A car stored about a month ago behind 254 Newkirk Road, Richmond Hill, was found last week to be completely destroyed by persons unknown, Morgan Davis of Morgan Davis Printing Ltd. told "The Liberal."

"I don't think there's a thing left that's any good. The tires are slashed, all the glass is smashed, the roof jumped on, the doors and trunk lid torn off."

"You wouldn't believe it."

There's literally nothing left," he said.

The 1960 Morris Minor had just been equipped with new tires and new brake drums. It was valued at more than \$150.

Mr. Davis said he also has had three flags stolen from his premises.

"We try to beautify Richmond Hill, but there's no point. Instead of a beautification prize, the town should give an award to the one who puts up with the most 'guff' all year," he said.

Former Aurora United Minister Died Friday

Rev. Bertram Newham, 82, former minister of Aurora United Church, died Friday in Willowdale after a short illness.

A clergyman since 1919, he was a pastor in Harriston, Southampton. He was also deputy district governor for the Lions Club.

He leaves a daughter, Mrs. Marianne Stone of Windsor, and a son, William, of Toronto.

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