

Greatest Progress In Special Programs Reports County Board's Education Director

(Continued from Page 1)

7 and 8 students in senior schools and secondary schools, it has been possible to enrich programs by providing specialist teachers and enriched resource centres.

When the county board came into being library facilities were scanty in many schools, so a determined effort has been made to improve these. Library additions have been built on two Richmond Hill Schools.

As teachers have come to recognize the value of field trips, more money has been available for this part of the program.

"But," says Mr. Chapman, "it is probably in special education that the greatest progress has been made. Don Head Secondary School has accepted students from as far north as practical considerations of transportation have allowed. (Don Head provides vocational training for students who are not academically inclined.)"

"One pilot class for children with specific learning disabilities was started in the Walter Scott School, Richmond Hill and the number of other special classes, mainly primary diagnostic and remedial, has been increased from 46 to 57 with new classes being established in Newmarket, Sutton, King, Stouffville and Vaughan."

Quality of programs has been improved through professional development of teachers, redistribution of staff — moving some of the best teachers to schools which they would not previously have chosen, seeking out and assigning teachers where they are most

needed, appointment of supervisory officers and improvement of facilities. For example, Elm Grove and Armitage Schools were remodelled after classes were moved to larger schools and are now used as schools for trainable retarded children. Vivian School was refurbished, and Lake Wilcox and Schomberg Schools are undergoing extensive repairs.

When the county board came into being there were just three open plan schools — two in Vaughan and one in Newmarket. Since then schools wholly or mainly open plan have been opened in Whitechurch, Unionville, King and the Town of Markham, and similar schools are on the drawing board for Markham Township, Aurora and Newmarket.

"The programs in these schools can be more individualized and students are encouraged to accept a greater responsibility for their own progress," Mr. Chapman explains. "Teachers work in teams and so are able to contribute to those areas where they have the greatest skill and depth of background. Moreover they learn from each other. The teacher's role is more demanding in these schools, and workshops for such teachers were conducted in June 1969 and August 1970.

At the secondary level, the most significant change in a decade has been the shift to individualized programs. Thornlea Secondary in Thornhill, which has been experimental since its opening in 1968, has always had subjects taught at varying degrees of difficulty, individual timetables, subject promo-

tion and a system whereby graduation is earned by accumulating credits.

"As of September 1, 1970, the Department of Education authorized all secondary schools in the province to adopt this same approach," reports Mr. Chapman. "All of our schools have made large strides in this direction, with Bayview Secondary and Thornhill Secondary completely committed to it. With one exception the secondary schools are now on a plan which will see them completely converted within the next two or three years."

Many York County teachers were involved in curriculum development during 1969-70, and 66 area curriculum committees were established.

During the same school year, 22 research projects were carried out with the assistance of the board's research officer. These projects involved both board staff and outside staff — mainly from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and York University.

In the field of special education in the public schools the emphasis has been on special programs. In the last school year there were six primary educational diagnostic classes, five primary opportunity classes, 19 junior opportunity classes, 11 intermediate opportunity classes, three senior opportunity classes and one for emotionally disturbed children with a total enrolment of 541 — 1.8 percent of the total enrolment compared with a provincial special education enrolment of 2.1 percent.

There were 16 remedial teachers

employed, and the number is likely to increase as the six speech teachers had excessive case loads last year. The emphasis is placed on speech therapy in the primary grades where this service is more effective.

Don Head Secondary in Richmond Hill opened a year ago to serve the southern part of the county, providing vocational and academic training for 401 students who were not inclined toward the programs offered in other secondary schools. Occupations classes for grades 9 and 10 at Sutton, Huron Heights, Dr. G. W. Williams and King Secondary Schools served 128 students in the remainder of the county.

Several secondary school principals have expressed a need for a new arrangement for students whose abilities are below the average occupations students, but superior to the trainable retarded adolescent, and specific proposals for serving this group are being developed.

Special education consultants have been conducting surveys to determine need, organizing special classes, placing pupils in special classes, encouraging re-integration of pupils in special classes with "main stream education", providing in-service aid to principals and teachers, co-ordinating the work of remedial teachers and speech therapists, acting as resource persons to other staff, and performing a variety of other duties.

Guidance services and psychological services provide special testing and counselling for teachers and students and are shared

with the York County Roman Catholic School Board.

The board's attendance counselors differ from the old style "truant officer" in doing preventative work with pupils with problems. They are also involved with the homes, the courts, family allowances and other community agencies.

Master teachers are the board's main development arm, teaching about 40 percent of the time and instructing on in-service courses. On the average, each master teacher made 295 visits to schools to consult with groups of teachers, a principal or a teacher, and each master teacher had an average of 37 visits to his classes, mostly by teachers.

An unusual feature of staff development was the introduction in September, 1969, of a three man organizational development team. During the year, the OD team worked with many groups, such as administrative committee, an area office team, business officers, etc. In addition they conducted two highly successful laboratories and programmed the principals' conference last August.

The audio-visual centre in Maple, staffed by a technical supervisor, three technicians and a secretary, serves all schools by means of a courier service. There are also 11 AV school aides to assist teachers, and a master teacher who helps teachers learn to use audio-visual materials and methods more effectively.

The center is equipped with tape television programs and radio programs which it circulates in addition to films and some film strips.

Slides, film strips and transparencies for use with an overhead projector are prepared in the centre, and teachers are encouraged to go to the centre to use materials and equipment there.

Audio-visual equipment in York County schools is valued at \$724,000 and materials at \$338,000, but all requests for service could be met by the centre. Of 31,638 requests for media, materials and equipment, just 18,548 could be filled.

From the beginning, Mr. Chapman declares, the board has worked to establish two-way communications with the community, visiting municipal council and York County Council and submitting general and budget reports.

To make school facilities available to the public, an elaborate "Use of Schools" policy was drawn up, and in order to keep people informed, a communications officer was appointed.

Five public meetings were arranged, innumerable press releases prepared, and four issues of "Contact" were printed in over 40,000 copies and distributed through the schools reporting on developments in education in York County.

No request to appear before the board was refused, and 16 delegations were heard.

A summer study committee including students and parents as well as teachers and trustees was set up to consider the pros and cons of establishing a range of schools — conventional, open space, and in between. The board is waiting for a report from the committee.

Parents have been involved in

school councils and as volunteer workers in some schools. Whitechurch Highlands, Roselawn, Pleasantville and Schomberg Schools and Thornlea Secondary have all been very successful in involving parents in the school program.

The board is also cooperating with King Township Library Board, making books from school libraries available for summer loan to any local public library asking for such service.

The board has prepared briefs to be presented to provincial ministers. A brief pointing out the need for a dwelling unit fee to help finance school construction in new developments was presented to the Ministers of Education and Municipal Affairs. When this brief was circulated to other boards, it drew active support from about 30 of them.

A brief on taxation has been prepared, and a brief on the impact of the proposed change in the southern boundary of York County is to be submitted to the same ministers.

County taxpayers benefited when provincial education grants were increased following a board protest in 1969.

Concluding his 27-page report, Mr. Chapman reports expenditures of \$30,660,735, for 1969, with 51.7 percent from local taxation, 46 percent from the province and 2.2 percent from "other sources". Of this 65.3 percent went for instruction, 10.2 percent for plant operation and maintenance, 11.7 percent for debt charges, and the remainder for business administration, educational services, transportation and other costs.

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Handcrafted Christmas Gifts At St. Mary's Anglican

Young John Wynn, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Wynn of Gentry Crescent, Richmond Hill found a friend at a preview of articles which will be on sale at the annual St. Mary's Anglican Church ACW Bazaar. The event will be open at 2 pm this Saturday in Wrixon Hall.

Featured will be Christmas Decorations and candles, hand made articles for the home, baking and preserves, hand knitted articles, aprons, children's clothing, dolls and toys — something for everyone on your gift list. You may also join your friends in chatting over a cup of tea and delicious refreshments in the tea room.

Appeals To Planning Board

Steel Owner Hit With Complaints Over Noise, He Wants To Get Out

Continuous harassment from angry residents including pregnant mothers complaining about the noise on their nerves has Bond Structural Steel owner Leonard Prusky at the end of his rope.

Mr. Prusky appeared before Richmond Hill Planning Board Tuesday night last week requesting a rezoning change to enable residential development on his land which is zoned strictly industrial both now and in the town's new Official Plan.

The land contains the steel structural plant which due to the nature of its business creates a great deal of noise arousing area residents unable to sleep.

Mr. Prusky is proposing a high-rise apartment complex consisting of three 19-storey buildings each containing 228 dwelling units. The proposal would involve a development phasing program divided into three stages. He first proposed the project over a year ago but planning board termed it premature at the time.

He was back Tuesday night with a "have it one way or another" proposal regarding the property located on the north side of Markham Road, west of the CNR tracks.

"I receive nothing but complaints," he said, "I've had three pregnant housewives call me up telling me that they're on the verge of a mental breakdown due to me. I try to tell them I can't do anything about the noise because it's the nature of my business."

Mr. Prusky told the board he was at a stage where if he wasn't allowed to erect apartments he would have to stay with his present industry and expand which would compound the problem even more. He said he couldn't afford to relocate unless he could achieve some desirable use for his present property.

He stated his expansion would involve going into the warehousing business which would see at least two shifts and probably three operating around the clock.

"This will mean a steady run of trucks along Markham Road and further aggravation for residents," he said.

He warned the board

that if he was forced to expand on his present site "you will be stuck with me for the next 30 or 40 years because economically I wouldn't be able to afford to move. And I have to make this decision whether to expand almost immediately."

Mr. Prusky pointed to the Cedar Avenue apartment development stating a decision by the board to rezone his property from industrial to residential would be more in keeping with the area.

He stated he would be willing to go along with anything the board wanted "within reason but time is of the essence."

Mr. Prusky said he is currently investigating other areas of the municipality to relocate

his business if his rezoning application is approved.

Ward 2 Councillor David Schiller said he had always felt that it was "inconsistent having the industrial area coming down to Markham Road. It's not the best place in the world for industry."

It was decided to submit Mr. Prusky's rezoning application to the various municipal departments and school boards for comment. It was indicated that the board will look on the application with a degree of favorableness.

In other business, the members approved subject to a site plan agreement an application by Gulf Oil to establish a fully automatic car wash on its property on Yonge Street, directly north of Wilson-Niblett Motors Ltd.

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Town of Richmond Hill

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Applications will be received by the Fire Chief for the position of permanent fire fighters up to 5:00 p.m. November 27th, 1970.

Application forms and further information may be obtained from Chief A. Stong at 12 Wright Street, Richmond Hill or by telephoning 884-8101.

Applications must be clearly marked "Application for position of Fire Fighter".

A. Stong, Chief.