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Trustees Question Aim Of Technical Education

York County Board of Education is attempting to determine the aims and objectives of technical education in county schools, but trustees are finding it is not an easy task.

At a meeting on November 16, two representatives of the Department of Education's Technological Studies Branch, members of the board's advisory vocational committee, and technical directors of the county's 14 secondary schools gave their opinions of past and present technical and commercial courses and attempted to indicate the route it should follow in the future.

Opening the discussion, Education Director Sam Chapman outlined the history of technical education in the public school system of Ontario from the 1920's to the present.

Although many famous technical schools were built in the '20's, said Mr. Chapman, technical education was never really accepted. It was aimed at the blue collar worker, at students teachers considered not suited for university.

The second spurt in emphasis on technical education, he continued, came after World War II and the launching of Sputnik II, but only a small percentage of graduates from technical courses found employment in the work they were trained for.

"The Department of Labor and the Department of Education were not pulling on the same team," the automotive industry, said Mr. Chapman, was one of the few that gave credit to apprentices for training in school. "Why are we teaching technical and commercial education?" he asked. "Is it a general education, an experience in which students have the opportunity to discover order and form, design and pride in a job well done? Is it pre-vocational training for a saleable skill? Is it the old industrial arts approach, learning about design, materials and machines, but at not much more than a hobby's kind of level?"

MORE STAY IN SCHOOL
As a result of rapid changes in education and in technology generally, many educators are in a state of confusion about these questions Mr. Chapman continued.

The colleges of applied arts and technology have done much to change the direction of technical education, reported George Isford of the Department of Education's Technological Studies Branch. Whereas 75 percent of graduates of technical courses went into technical pursuits in the past, now about 75 percent of them go on to community colleges.

In 1951 about 41 percent of young people age 15 to 19 were in school. In 1969, 79 percent of this age group were in school.

The Roberts Plan for technical education introduced in Ontario about ten years ago was very narrow and direct, explained Mr. Isford, with students specializing in only one area. This approach is no longer suitable, and many students who would not formerly have gone beyond grade 9 or 10 are now staying in school, acquiring learning skills that cover a wider spectrum so that they can go on to further study.

Department of Education Program Consultant William Bergey suggested that the aim should be to provide "technical literacy" for students, and that all secondary school students should take a single or double credit in a technical area.

"There is a very necessary role for technical education, not only for boys, but for young ladies, too," declared Mr. Bergey. Some girls, he said, take an optional course in auto mechanics five periods a week, but they get no credit for it.

Through technical training other subjects could be made more meaningful, he explained. History and science could be tied into the study of the steam engine, the motor car, and students thus encouraged to proceed to community colleges.

The Board's Superintendent of Planning and Development Stephen Bacsalmasi agreed.

DEVELOP BASIC SKILLS
"We should think about tomorrow. There is a definite shift in the working force from manufacturing to servicing." The need, he suggested, is for a well rounded general education followed by intensive on-the-job experience.

It should be the aim of the school to develop basic skills — listening, speaking, writing, arithmetic, and the ability to find knowledge. Some technical knowledge, declared Mr. Bacsalmasi should be part of every person's education.

The technical directors generally favored broad aims for technical education.

Technical and commercial courses, said Don Frise, technical director at Bayview Secondary School, should be a

MUSSELMAN'S LAKE: A 21-year-old Owen Sound man last week in Newmarket Provincial Court was convicted of animal cruelty in the October 18 beating of an English Bulldog.

The beating took place during a wedding shower for Victor Showers' fiancée at the home of Mrs. Catherine Shaw, Mitchell Drive. The dog survived with one blind eye and partial vision in the other.

Showers admitted kicking the dog once after it barked and growled at him. A witness testified he saw Showers strike the animal repeatedly with a beer case.

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One speaker observed that there is too little liaison between those who are teaching and those who are hiring. Students have a lot to learn on their first job, about union membership and other problems they are going to meet in industry.

ACADEMIC VS. VOCATIONAL
"We tend to differentiate too much between the academic and the vocational," declared William Neal, a member of the advisory vocational committee. "The aims and objectives are the same. Each student should have the opportunity to advance to the limit of his potential."

A saleable skill, he declared could lead the student into employment, into a community college, or into university.

Some committee members disagreed, insisting that vocational education should equip a person to make a living.

"We should spend more time on getting rid of the things not related to making a living," said a committee member. "It is a waste of time to teach Shakespeare and the liberal arts. They want to earn a living as quickly as possible."

Board Vice-Chairman Arthur

Starr, trustee for Whitchurch-Stouffville, moved that the advisory committee be asked to prepare a report for the board setting out suggested aims and objectives of technical and commercial education in the county.

The motion was approved, and Committee Chairman Morley Kinnee, trustee from Vaughan Township, invited other trustees to put forward their ideas regarding a philosophy for vocational education.

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In The Spotlight

(Continued from Page 2)

story. He was most convincing and the children loved his awkwardness and excellent pratfalls.

The Calif of Bagdad was a compelling figure played by Tony Pierre. Compelling I say because he stood over six feet I'm sure, dressed in flowing white satin robes with beaded weskot and huge rings. His voice was soft but resonated command and everyone there knew he was boss. Sinbad, obviously the hero (Tom Lambrakos) was a true-to-life hero, befriending the orphan cabin boy, destroying all evil and marrying the heroine. Bing-Bang-Bong was Alan Aylward (Scrabble from the previous play). He was one of the villains and he was just evil enough to allow the children to distrust him but accept his fate at the end.

Barbara Garvin was our beautiful mermaid, turned woman to marry Sinbad. She did well. But Sharkel... Sharkel the nasty villain was superb. He was Snidely Whiplash, Oil-can Harry and all of Batman's enemies rolled into one. The children were just beside themselves when Shelly Dillman was playing this character. They loved him! He snarled and hissed and leapt around the stage and the audience bood and hissed back. (D'arcy was genuinely frightened at first). There was excellent communication between this actor and the children. The cabin boy, Ali Shabam was handled well by Brenda Harrison and she took some great spills and beatings in her role. Unfortunately the girls of the Calif's court seemed bored with the whole play.

In all, it was most entertaining. The costumes in Sinbad were colourful and well made, sets simple and believable, and it ran very smoothly.

Do try and take your children. If D'arcy (just turned four) can sit through two hours of Sinbad and still want more... it has to be good.

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