

The Liberal

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Teachers' federation to be congratulated

In a recent news release the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation announced it is launching a \$75,000 program to look into Ontario's secondary school standards and the role of the secondary school in the province.

In announcing the year-long program OSSTF President Jim Forester told a press conference at Queen's Park September 26 the 34,000 member federation is planning a series of five community forums to give the public an opportunity to air its views. The forums begin October 8 in Sudbury, proceeding to Windsor, London, Thunder Bay, and finally Ottawa.

After a decade of listening to other debates, said Forester, the federation has hired a full-time research specialist who has already begun to probe teacher and public thinking about issues ranging from religious education to what subjects should or should not be made compulsory.

The general public has been confused and demoralized by frequent changes in the philosophy and direction of secondary education since the early 1960s, Forester charged. Teachers have been accused of escalating costs through salary campaigns, but at least 22 factors totally outside the control of teachers have significantly raised education spending, he said. Among these he lists regional school boards, introduction of costly community colleges, expansion of adult education programs and the explosion of optional courses.

The teachers are to be commended for their concern regarding escalating education costs. Are they a sound investment? In the period from 1958 to 1973 the number of secondary school teachers in Ontario has increased 250 percent while the pupil enrolment has increased over the same period by slightly over 50 percent.

On choosing candidates for local government

Recently Former Aurora Councillor Illyd Harris listed his personal comments as to the requirements of a good councillor, as:

- An intense desire to do and have things done which are best for the municipality;
- Integrity, which includes refusal to accept free liquor, means and the like from developers;
- A fair education;
- Willingness to work hard;
- Common sense.
- Fight for fair play;
- Independence of thought.
- Additional requirements for the

office of mayor should be:

- Leadership which should include full use of the abilities of the rest of council;
- Diplomacy;
- Emotional control.

These qualifications are of course the ideal — and others will have other qualifications which they would like to add to the list. But the list provides a good measuring stick for prospective candidates and for the voters.

But don't forget the old maxim about the road to perdition being paved with good intentions!

RC board doesn't endorse student overseas trips

York Region Roman Catholic School Board does not endorse any overseas excursions or their promotion or the dissemination of information on them in the classrooms, was the decision of the trustees at their October 1 meeting.

The subject was raised when Superintendent John Zupanic reported pupils of a grade 8 class at St. Mary Immaculate School in Richmond Hill had done an in-depth study by the Enterprise Method of Learning on Italy and had become so enthused they had made plans to visit Rome during Holy Week, 1975, a holy year. With this in mind 150 seats on an Air Italia plane were reserved through a travel agency. Cost of the flight was given as \$395 with another \$100 necessary for food and accommodation.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE
 It was claimed this would be a very valuable learning experience for the children involved.
 Trustees expressed concern about the youth of the pupils involved and whether they would benefit

to any great extent. Concern was also felt that only a select few, whose parents could afford the cost, would be involved and also about the possible "brain washing" of the pupils, who were pressuring their parents to be included.

"The trip would not be on school time and therefore the board has nothing to do with it," said Vice-Chairman Leo Wigglesworth. He also said the "Catholic Record" is full of trips to Rome by groups for that week.

CHILDREN GET IDEAS
 Word of the trip has spread through the system, it was learned, and five trustees indicated their children brought home information and wanted to join the group.

On display in the board room were models of the Roman Colosseum, a street scene in Florence and a temple, home and chariot race course built by the grade 8 pupils at St. Mary Immaculate during their studies. One person commented the model of the Colosseum gave him a better view of that building

than he had had when he visited Rome recently.

Region adds to family life centre funds

York Regional Council recently agreed to a recommendation of its health and social services committee to transfer \$41,410 from its contingency fund to its family life centres in order to bring about an extension of its counselling services.

As a result, the region will now go "halfers" with the province to see such services are provided for a family whose net income is not greater than \$11,409 annually, and for a single person earning no more than a yearly stipend of \$5,710.

The province will provide 50 percent of the amount if the services are purchased from the family life centres. The \$41,410 will be distributed as follows: Richmond Hill, \$13,200; Markham, \$11,370; Georgina Township, \$8,670; and Aurora-Newmarket, \$8,170.

Letters to the Editors

THE JAIL FARM

Dear Mr. Editor:
 I was stunned to read in the daily newspapers recently of the Langstaff Jail Farm proposal.
 I was flummoxed by the proposal itself, but by the fact Richmond Hill had already accepted the proposal in principle last June.

As a member of the Ward 3 Ratepayers' Group, I am very concerned with the farmland which lies within our boundaries. Everyone in the ratepayers' group has expressed views that at least the larger proportion of that land be retained as parkland. In this we have the support of Barney Danson, MP, and Don Deacon, MLA.

When John Burchall, our hard-working president, heard via a reliable source last June a developer was in fact making a proposal regarding the jail farm, we wondered daily as to the outcome. In spite of the fact Mr. Burchall and other members attend council meetings regularly, nothing concrete could be discovered due to the innumerable "in camera" meetings held by this present council from which the public is excluded.

During the summer months, various planning meetings were held throughout Richmond Hill, to inform the public of changes proposed for our town. Even though the meetings were held at a time when most of the public were on vacation, I was still naive enough to believe council was acting in good faith in wanting dialogue and input with the townspeople. During Ward 3's well attended planning meeting, not once did the planning staff mention the Langstaff proposal, even though the farm was the main topic of the evening.

Many expressed fears the Town of Richmond Hill would be swallowed up into the urban sprawl if industry or massive high-density housing were instituted at the entrance to Richmond Hill, i.e. the jail farm area. If council were not merely doing lip service to these "open" meetings, surely this was the time for us to be informed of this proposal, so at least we could suggest more than the proposed 82 acres of parkland be allotted.

This is surely just one more example of this council's total disregard for the public of Richmond Hill.
 MARION HOHENER,
 216 Duncan Road,
 Thornhill.

(Richmond Hill Town Council approved the proposal at its June 10 meeting, in open session, and its action was reported in a front page story in the June 12 issue of "The Liberal" under the heading "Whether Damed Stadium Or Not Jail Farm Proposal Proceeds". — Editor)

WANTS REFORM OF HILL COUNCIL AND STAFF

Dear Mr. Editor: When you wrote your editorial about Experience Essential in Local Government, I wonder if you gave any thought at all to the following:

- Are we satisfied with the progress made by our current council over the past two years?
- Do we have confidence in a council containing quite a few people with conflicts

of interest? (Declared or otherwise).
 ● Are we satisfied with the leadership of a mayor who declares he has only one vote, the same as all the other councillors?
 ● Do we approve of all the sign pollution (illegal but submissively allowed to the big companies) on our main thoroughfare?
 ● Do we like the way our council went about appointing a new councillor several months ago?
 ● Do we really want a council, four of whom form a clique, ready willing and able to squash any thoughtful proposals submitted by the other three councillors?
 Let's finish with these six questions, even though there are dozens more one could ask, and turn to the civic staff side you seemed so worried about. I wonder if you have ever heard any town taxpayer say we have too much deadwood on the town staff? I have. Or better still, have you ever heard anyone praise our town staff for their efficiency? I haven't.

Rather than being too general, perhaps I should point out I have personally had dealings with various members of the staff ranging from the very senior to the very junior. And quite frankly, as far as some of the senior people are concerned, it is my opinion the town would be very much better off if they did leave and take their "experience" with them.
 The junior people are generally a very pleasant group and try to be as helpful as they can. But occasionally, the boorish autocratic attitude of their superiors cannot help rubbing off on them.

Your editorial really seems to advocate that what was good enough for our fathers (population 5,000) is good enough for us (population 35,000) and let us keep the deadwood and dunderheads. I submit that what we most desperately need is a council consisting of people who:
 ● Understand and believe progress does not necessarily mean more and more stores while dozens and dozens are still empty.
 ● Can work together without rancour or pettiness and are able to respect the other person's opinion.
 ● Who have enough intelligence to be able to know when the department they are responsible for is not being administered properly or is inefficient.
 ● Have the intestinal fortitude to challenge and if necessary discipline — or even fire — some of our senior civic workers.
 ● Preferably do not have conflicts of interest, but if they do, are honest enough to declare them.
 ● Who will communicate openly and honestly (and regularly) with the people who voted for them.
 ● Who will work for the town and the taxpayers and not for their own self aggrandizement.
 ● Are not prepared to let the developers, real estate and big businesses get away with things that are forbidden to the ordinary Joe.
 If any of our councillors can meet the above desiderables, then by all means let us vote for them and get them back in (and in my opinion, at least three of the current council should be back). But if not, then get rid of them.

What this town needs is an honest hard-working council, but also an efficient hard-working civic staff. It is my sincere hope we will get a council who will provide leadership as well as "meddle in administration at the paper clip and elastic band level" as you so picturesquely put it. That's because it is in this area we spend quite a large amount of our taxpayer's money. And it is in this area the current lack of leadership has allowed the tail to wag the dog.

We would all do well to look at the complete picture when we cast our votes next December.
 GERRY CRACK,
 19 Leonard Street,
 Richmond Hill.

SIDEWALK ESTIMATE LEFT THINGS OUT

Dear Mr. Editor:
 This is a copy of a letter addressed to the works commissioner of the Town of Richmond Hill, Bernard Toporowski. It may be of some interest to your paper.
 Dear Sir:

Last night I attended the council meeting at which a works committee report about a sidewalk on North Taylor Mills was discussed. At that time it was pointed out the residents in the area petitioned for a local improvement that was later rejected when costs were estimated. There are a few facts that should be brought to your attention concerning this.

- The consultants report called for a storm sewer up to 24" in diameter. Considering North Taylor Mills exists as an isolated area for drainage purposes (i.e. the area is bounded on the north by a water course, on the east and west by Bayview and Neal Drive, both of which are storm-sewered, and on the south the ground slopes away), this size seems excessive and adds to costs.
- The estimate of cost included replacement of the existing sanitary sewer, which should be more reasonably a maintenance charge.
- Since this is a built-up area, with no vacant lots, there will be no storm sewer connections from the houses. Therefore, the pipe need not be so deep and will not have to run down the paved road. The sanitary sewer runs along the northerly side, so the storm sewer can run along the southerly side. All this will help lower costs.
- With no house connections, the storm sewer need only start about 250' east of Neal, for the first catch basins. With catch basins at approximately 250' intervals, there will be only four or five cuts across the pavement, saving more money.
- Otto Whalen, your predecessor, advised me there is already a stub connection in the manhole on Bayview, again a small saving.
- In most Ontario municipalities, local improvement charges are distributed 1-3 to the municipality and 2-3 to the abutting properties. The cost supplied the North Taylor Mills residents included the work requested, the sanitary sewer, a completely rebuilt road (even though any damage done to the road is the result of bus use and should be



70-year life of Vaughan Road

At the turn of the century Vaughan Road was strictly rural. It was bordered by snake rail fences and bush, with hills and valleys and zigs and zags along the narrow gravel thoroughfare. Today it is a modern four-lane highway crowded with gravel trucks, and cars of all shapes and sizes. The hills and valleys, zigs, zags, rail fences and most of the trees and bushes have disappeared. The four young lads on their way to fish in Boyle's Pond, just beyond York Central Hospital, certainly wouldn't recognize any landmarks today.



GOING FISHING — by Jerry Smith, courtesy Mrs. J. Koning. (Photo by Susan Samila)

charged to general revenue) rather than a new surface coat on the existing pavement, and was 100 percent of the total.

Naturally, such a charge was unacceptable, especially when no provision was made for Ministry of Transportation and Communications drainage subsidy, winter works subsidy, etc. I would

preprehensive curriculum guidelines for mathematics and music in all grades from kindergarten to grade 8, now being used in the schools. Guidelines for metrication are now being prepared.

RC school professional days

For this year York Region Roman Catholic School Board has set apart nine days for professional activity, designed to allow teachers to pursue more realistically and effectively some of their curriculum, program and professional development responsibilities.

Last year 12 days were set aside for this purpose and according to Superintendent John Zupanic and Assistant Superintendent Frank Bobesich these days were put to good use. They were not recreation or leisure days but rather intense and rigorous work days for the teaching staff. Four days were used as system-wide conference days with all teachers meeting in one location. They were organized to meet specific curriculum needs. The other eight days were organized by individual schools or groupings of schools.

IN TWO SECTIONS

This year four of the allotted nine professional activity days will be system planned, the other five will be planned by individual schools to meet their individual needs.
 Last year the activity days resulted in the development of com-

ERIC GEORGE,
 413 North Taylor Mills Drive,
 Richmond Hill.

The fall school term began September 3 and continues until December 20, the winter term runs from January 6 to March 20 and the spring term from April 1 to June 27.

PROFESSIONAL DAYS

They will also be closed for the nine professional activity days, the first of which was held September 13. The next comes October 11, followed by November 20, February 20 and 21, May 2 and June 2, 26 and 27.

The number of school days for the year is 194, less the nine professional activity days, bringing the number of instructional school days to 185.

Hearing, fair deal for teachers

"Some teachers perceive — rightly or wrongly — that not enough weight is given to their opinions, no proper opportunity for a hearing exists, some teachers do not get a 'fair deal', inadequate opportunities to make input to the Board are provided," etc., etc.

Those are some of the conclusions reached by York County Board of Education as a result of a recent seminar of trustees, teachers and administrators, and which were put out for discussion at a meeting of the board Monday night.

Not that it was just the teachers who "perceived" — rightly or wrongly — the trustees and the administrators also felt they weren't always getting through to the other side in matters of mutual concern.

The trustees, for a example, felt: there was a need for both trustees and teachers to communicate directly without any "ad-

ministrative interpretation or filter"; "trust requires an acceptance and understanding by all concerned of data on which decisions are based"; the role of the principal as a communication link among the three groups, needed to be reviewed.

MORALE LOW

On the other hand, morale seemed to be the big problem with the administrators, who were described as "the group with the lowest morale and the heaviest work load... (excluding the secretarial staff where morale is extremely low because of the long drawn out negotiations."

In order to see that future input (what word did the board ever use before someone stumbled on that refuge from a computer?) among teachers, staff, board and the two unions, York County Elementary Teachers Association of Federations (YCETAF) and District 11 of the Ontario

Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF), is received and given in an equitable manner, the board considered four proposals put forth by the staff.

The first would be to establish a list of formal staff and community organizations — including YCETAF and OSSTF, and two locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 1196 and 1734, which would have the right to ask the board to consider establishing policy on any matter of concern to it except in matters dealt with in direct negotiation.

The second proposal would allow YCETAF and OSSTF to appoint representatives to a data interpretation and verification group, which would comment on and verify data released by the group.
 Staff reasoning for such a group was that "the assumptions made in assembling or manipulating

data are frequently not clear and the reader draws false conclusions because of this."

IMPRACTICAL

Trustee Donald Sim of Markham, disagreed. Such a proposal was impractical, he said.

People should be free to interpret each other's data. This proposal, however, was tantamount to the old legal philosophy of not letting the facts stand in the way of a good argument.

He also felt the first proposal had been diluted by including the words "A list of formal staff associations and community organizations." This "watered down" the status of YCETAF and OSSTF.

Sam Chapman, director of education, said that hadn't been the purpose. "We saw it as a broadening, not a watering down," he said. The second proposal was meant to head off trouble; to draw some conclusions on the various data. "I'm very uncomfortable interpreting

other's data," he said.

Mr. Sim said he was completely in accord with proposals three and four. The third proposal, after two amendments, called for the board to provide time for YCETAF and OSSTF and other employee associations to make presentations on matters not normally negotiated.

\$400 BUDGET

The final proposal called for the director of education to explore ways of getting community reaction, with a budget of \$400 to carry it out. Mr. Chapman cited the kind of thing they should get public comment on.

"Some parents think they're a lot of nonsense," he said. A scientific sampling among York families was necessary to get a valid idea of what the majority felt.
 The meeting approved the four proposals.