

Letters

Board budget bind

Dear editor:
The York County Board of Education budget of \$60 million in 1975 will increase by more than 10 per cent in 1976. The following breakdown will explain why the budget will increase by more than 10 per cent and how this increase will affect the York Region mill rate.

Salaries represent approximately 70 per cent of the total board budget. Teacher salaries alone which account for over 80 per cent of the board's salaries, will increase by approximately \$6 million because of the salary agreements already signed.

The increase guaranteed to the teachers in existing agreements increases the budget by 10 per cent alone. Other staff salaries will also increase by at least the minimum level established by the federal government.

Debt service represents approximately 9 per cent of the total budget and should remain relatively constant in 1975, but this obligation cannot be reduced so no saving can be realized.

Contracted services account for approximately 5 per cent of the total budget. The cost of transportation and contract caretaking are not easily controllable if the same level of service is expected in 1976 as in 1975.

These costs will increase by up to 20 per cent since many of the increases in these functions have taken place prior to the introduction of wage and price controls and will be most felt in the 1976 budget.

Maintenance supplies and services represent 2.5 per cent of the total budget and although for a one-year period could be cut back, in the long run, poor maintenance of assets is false economy and results in greater expense in the future.

Supplies account for approximately 3 per cent of the total budget and as per maintenance supplies described above will increase by up to 20 per cent.

Over 70 per cent of the total supply expenditures are used in the schools by the students and a further 12 per cent is to maintain cleanliness in the schools in the form of caretaking supplies. Already significant economies are being realized by quantity purchases through centralized purchasing and the quality of supplies carefully monitored.

Employee benefits represent approximately 3 per cent of the total budget, but with the implementation of the cost sharing of the dental plan for teachers in the 1975 salary agreements, the full impact of this increase will not be felt until 1976.

Utilities represent approximately 2 per cent of the budget and with gas, fuel oil and hydro increasing by up to 25 per cent there is little possibility of reducing this function's cost. In 1974 the board instituted a conservation campaign aimed at reducing consumption of heat and light, so few additional economies can be made.

The above functions represent approximately 95 per cent of the YCBE budget in 1975 and the remaining 5 per cent covers a multitude of functions, such as books and periodicals, travel expense, personnel training, tuition fees, advertising, bank charges, rent etc.

One can visualize therefore something of the predicament the board is in, in trying to keep the budget from increasing by the magic figure of 10 per cent.

However, though the budget will increase by 17 per cent to 25 per cent in 1976, the board will be trying to keep the tax increase to not more than 10 per cent.

The budget is not necessarily tied into the mill rate by which the taxes are calculated, and it may well be possible to have a budget increase of the above proportions, but hold the tax increase to around 10 per cent.

There are a number of ways the board could keep the mill rate from increasing by up to 20 per cent.

reaching the absurd proportions that have been suggested.

First: practically all spending, except essential services, could be stopped for the remainder of 1975, to accumulate some surplus funds to apply to the 1976 requirements.

Second: the government may increase ceilings to enable the board to spend at certain high levels without penalties.

Third: some of the programs and functions such as, french and transportation are highly subsidized by the government, so that much of the increase is not a large burden on the York Region ratepayer.

Fourth: there will be increased assessment to apply to increased costs.

Fifth: the entire staff, of teachers, caretakers, secretaries, and administrators can be enlisted in a campaign to reduce spending to help in resolving this financial crisis. With their support, savings heretofore thought impossible may be realized.

Undoubtedly there are other ways to keep the mill rate down, and I hope we will find them. It is my intention to do everything possible to develop a budget that will not cost the taxpayer in York Region more than 10 per cent.

DONALD COUSENS, Public school trustee, 2 Southdale Dr., Markham, Ont.

New MLAs going back to school?

By Alf Stong
MLA York Centre



alf stong reports

It has been almost two months now since election day in September but I have advanced some distance in my experience at Queen's Park; especially from the day after the election when I attended for the first time and was handed by one of the veteran secretaries a guide to the Ontario Legislature designed for school children.

The shuffle at the Parliament Buildings has now been completed.

All of us are now in our own offices and even as late as today have been assigned our own phone numbers. I must admit I have over the last two months been more suc-

cessful with the Bell Telephone getting earlier installations for my constituents than I have for myself at Queen's Park.

Nevertheless my telephone has been installed and my number is 965-5806. If any of you has a problem for which I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact

me at that number.

I am also in the process of arranging to have an 887 number installed to serve my constituents.

I will advise you of this 887 number in a subsequent report to you upon the completion of installation.

The 30th Ontario Legislature opened Oct. 28 with a minimum of ceremony.

Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon read a brief, seven-page Throne Speech which promised action on a number of Conservative election campaign commitments and contained just one

new program — a change in taxation procedure for condominiums.

Assessed at present as apartment dwellings, condominiums will henceforth be assessed as single family dwellings.

The solicitor general has introduced legislation designed to force large retail stores to close on Sundays and defined holidays or face fines of up to \$10,000.00 beginning January 1976.

This legislation applies to stores of more than three employees and more than 2,400 square feet of retail space. Small grocery and milk stores,

news and tobacco stands together with small drugstores will be permitted to stay open and there are other specified exemptions as well.

Airport issue
I have been in personal contact with the Honorable James Snow, minister of transportation and communications concerning the extension of runway 15-33 at Buttonville Airport.

I have been advised by him the issue is before the provincial cabinet for consideration but the cabinet has not yet had time to devote to this matter.

I informed the minister that the elected representatives of the Towns of Markham and Richmond Hill had rejected the application

of Buttonville Airport to have the lands surrounding the airport re-zoned to allow the sought after expansion. He assured me he would meet with me further on this matter prior to the cabinet's deliberations.

I intend to meet with him and represent to him the views of my constituents effected most seriously in this situation.

I have been placed on the rostrum of freshmen MPPs in order to make my maiden speech in the Legislature. However, because of the time allocation I may not get my chance before the Christmas recess. I will inform you again from week to week of the most current events in your provincial Legislature.

Sears Record explosion!



Albums
3⁹⁹

8 Track Tapes
4⁹⁹

From Quality - Freddie Fender - Before the next tear drop falls
Van McCoy - Disco Baby
Pointer Sisters - Steppin
Sha-Na-Na - Now



Albums
4⁴⁹

8 Track Tapes
4⁹⁹

Eagles - One of these nights
Focus - Mother focus
Rod Stewart - Atlantic Crossing
Linda Ronstadt - Prisoner in disguise



Albums
3⁹⁹

8 Track Tapes
4⁹⁹

From Columbia
Pink Floyd - Wish you were here
Johnny Mathis - Greatest Hits
Roy Orbison - Greatest hits
Lynn Anderson - Rose Garden

Double 8 Track From Pickwick
3⁹⁹

Special "2" Album Sets
3⁹⁹
Golden Banjo Hits, Live at Sahara Tahoe, Live at Filmore and many more.

Deleted LP'S
2/3⁰⁰



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