

The Liberal

10101 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill L4C 4Y6 Ontario
 PUBLISHER J.G. VAN KAMPEN
 ASST. PUBLISHER MURRAY SKINNER
 EDITOR HAROLD BLAINE

The Liberal is published every Wednesday by Metrosan Community Newspapers Limited — North Division, which also publishes The Banner in Aurora, Newmarket, The Woodbridge Vaughan News, and The Bolton Enterprise.
 WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 1976
 PAGE A-4

Opinion

Trustees led to slaughter

The majority 12 trustees of our public school board looked pretty foolish this week as they slammed the door on the big controversy over executive staff pay increases.

The trustees sneaked excessive increases past the Anti-Inflation Board deadline and weren't brave enough to go back and correct their mistake.

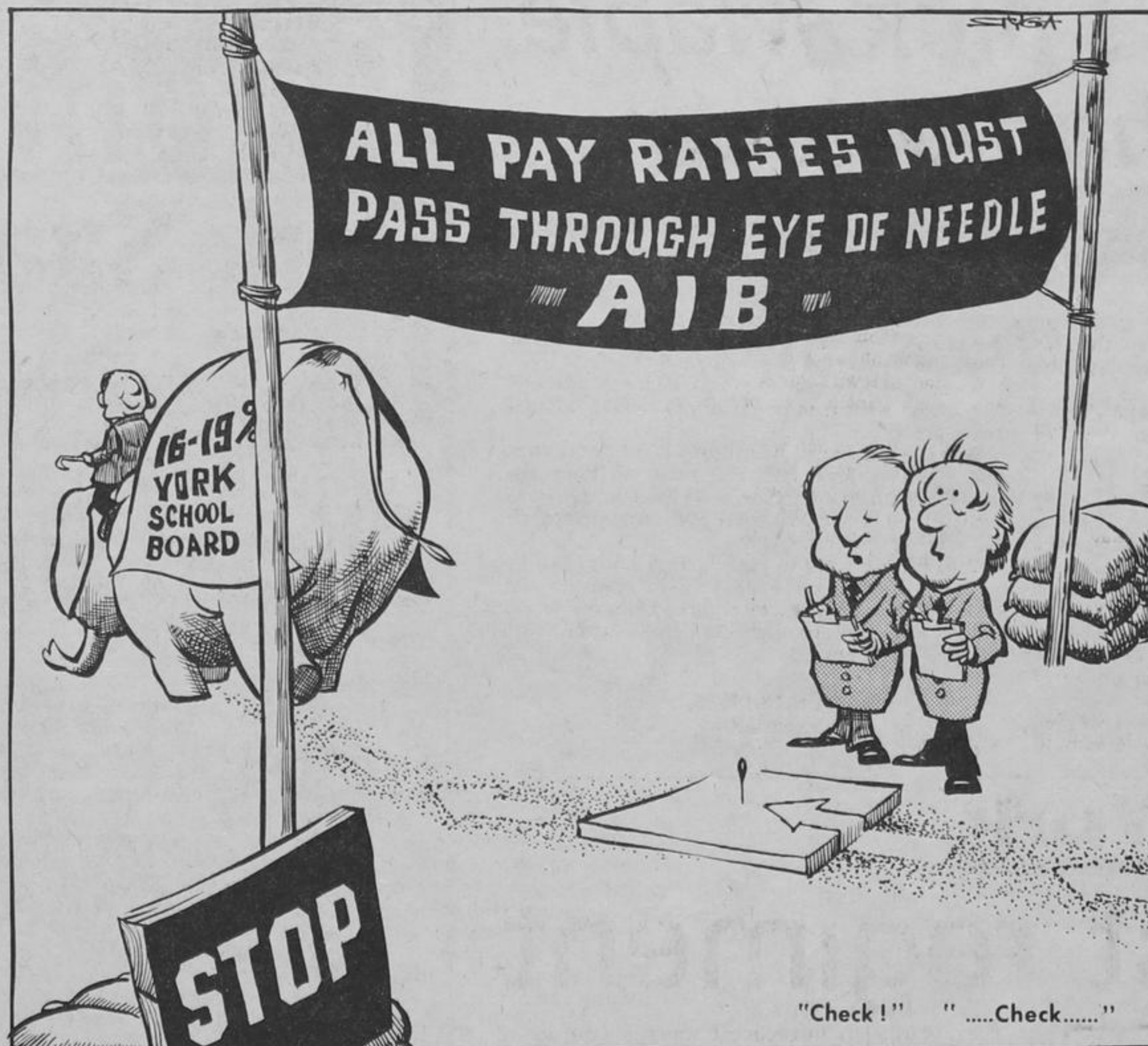
Now the taxpayers get hit in the pocket book and the inflation pot bubbles a little harder.

A tenderfoot, dream-world bunch of trustees paved a downhill road with their good intentions and were led along it to the slaughter.

It is hard to imagine a more obvious example of elected representatives working against the public interest.

Blood needed Thursday

Your blood is needed at the Red Cross clinic at St. Mary's Church, 10295 Yonge St., Thursday 1:30 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 8:30. Give!



GOP mad at Canada

By Sinclair Stevens
 PC — York Simcoe

KANSAS CITY, MO. — Canada's deteriorating relations with the United States were reflected in the tone of the Republican platform passed last week at the party's convention here, which I had an opportunity to attend.

One plank in the GOP's program bluntly states, "It is time for a series of new departures in our relations with Canada."

Faced with this reference to Canada, Governor Robert Ray of Iowa, chairman of the committee resolutions which presented the draft platform to the convention, said:

"We are tired of squabbling over matters in which there appears to be no reason for disagreement. Where it is in our mutual interest we want to do all we can to reach agreement without using a combative approach."

Then he added, "The paragraph arose I surmise from the frayed relations between us arising over an agreement for a pipe line through Canada."

Trudeau irritating

Obviously the Trudeau government confrontation tactics in dealing with the United States are not appreciated among Republican Americans. Spokesmen would not as a rule specify particular irritants.

Concern seemed to be a mixture of anxiety over Canada's role in NATO, the Saskatchewan partial takeover of the potash industry, federal acquiescence in the Canadian pirating of American TV programs, our change in attitude towards Time Magazine's tax position, and the Canadian approach to continental energy resources.

Congressman David Treen of Louisiana, co-chairman of the subcommittee on peace, security and foreign policy where the wording originated, said he did not know where the terminology came from.

"I presume it means there should be a change for the better in our relations with Canada," he stated.

Pressed to clarify where relations should be changed, the congressman declined to comment. He smiled and said, "Perhaps we would like more of your oil."

Congressman Treen said the wording was in the original material prepared by Richard Allen in Washington and then submitted to the subcommittee. "It is unfortunate wording," he said and continued, "It is an inarticulate way to express our position."

No price controls

So far the United States has been more successful in lowering their inflation level without controls than we have been with controls.

On abortion, the GOP says it supports "the efforts of those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children."

That's a relatively strong stand for a national party to take on this difficult but vital issue.

On gun control, Republicans have no doubt. They support "the right of citizens to keep and bear arms," they oppose federal registration of firearms.

Weak GOP team

All in all the Republicans have come out of their convention with a good platform but a weak team to sell it.

Earlier, the Democrats put forward and endorsed a flabby program but they chose a good image — Jimmy Carter — to deliver the goods.

As a result it is likely the Democrats will win and the Republicans will lose this year's presidential election. That will mean more spending and deficits in Washington, more inflation, and eventually we will inherit the consequences in Canada.

Viewpoint from the regional desk



Hard communication

BY JIM IRVING

Whenever a quick solution is offered on differences of opinion — no matter how varied those differences may be — it usually comes out that it's all a matter of communication. Or perhaps that should be, a lack of communication.

"It's obvious, eh, like we're not, uh, you know, like, communicating, right? people have a tendency of saying in the articulate fashion of the times.

It's usually the catch-all answer for those who can't communicate, or who can't take the trouble to find out why the things they're proposing or not proposing, are going awry.

Haven of Trustees

Our area school trustees are great this way and will spend hours trying to communicate with their fellow members on the need for better communication with the people around them.

Last fall, the school board felt it was so lacking in this respect that it even held a special meeting in Woodbridge High School to see if it could mingle with some of the area parents to see why Johnny was, like, well, you know — such a dope — like.

It's not known whether certificates

were presented at the end of the evening stating those in attendance had just completed a successful evening in the art of communicating.

But perhaps there were, because I don't recall any more such meetings for that purpose; although there did seem to be an increase of parents at board meetings, sometimes with their grievances now wrapped up in a neat, little petition.

Important business

The business then of communicating is an important one.

But is it just the simple expedient of

sitting down with someone and trying to explain what you mean, or is it offering a lot of public relations jargon and ploys in an effort to cover up your own inadequacy?

Whatever it is, two teachers — one in Toronto and the other in Thornhill — seem to have completely opposite views as to the necessity of it all, at least, on the surface they do.

Dig below the surface a bit, however, and it would appear they both have the same over-all feeling as to its true meaning. They just haven't communicated it to each other quite that way, as it were.

For and against

The Toronto teacher, for example, is against it, and the Thornhill teacher is for it.

"I felt I had to sell myself," Bill Maunder, principal of German Mills High School, was quoted in The Liberal as saying last week, recounting a meeting with disgruntled parents earlier in his career.

"I felt there were political problems and a poor attitude towards the school," he continued.

The problems had resulted from news children at the school would be housed in portables for another two months, meaning a continuance of busing and, worst of all, the mothers having to exercise their ingenuity in lunch making the night before.

To pacify or not?

Maunder apparently felt — or maybe he was told — he should attempt to pacify these people, even if the problem hadn't been of his making.

He still meets with parents several times during the year, letting them talk for the most part, while he listens.

Margaret Beckingham, on the other hand, thinks schools are for teachers and students, and not for anxious parents.

Beckingham, president of the Federation of Women Teachers Associations of Ontario, told 600 members of the federation at their annual meeting in Toronto last week, that it was up to the teachers and not the public or school trustees how students were taught.

Teachers the experts

Course content could be decided by the public and teachers, but the teachers were the experts in methods of instruction.

"Doctors do not consult with their patients as to how, nor do lawyers consult with their clients," she said. "Neither should teachers consult with their public. The how of education is their area of expertise."

While Mr. Maunder disagrees — more or less — feeling communication is literally just that: getting together and sharing and imparting views, he still seems to be communicating in quite the way it should be done.

As the interview goes on to show, one of his most gratifying experiences as a teacher was being able to help restore a young student's confidence, so she quite forgot her previous grasp of mathematics was nil and became an 'A' student in the subject.

That is it

He also believes in correct English and good manners, and so the answer is "Yes," not "Yeah," students replying in the affirmative are liable to be told.

And that, it would seem, is communicating. That way children will be literally talking the same language as their parents.

Those same parents felt they had to have direct communication with the teachers to have access to their children, when all the time they just had to talk to their kids.

Even Margaret Beckingham would probably agree with that kind of communication.

Letters

Charism is happy praise

Dear editor: I find myself taking issue with almost every statement made in the Aug. 11 issue of The Liberal by Dr. John Burns. I question to what extent and with what degree of open mindedness his research has extended. He certainly presents a false picture of charismatic renewal as I know it. We are all subject to human

weakness. The movement serves to make us even more aware of our personal failings and the infinite mercy of the Lord.

All through the prayer groups and various denominations there seems to be the theme of service — service to our fellow man.

The beautiful 'experience' one may or may not feel, is secondary to the gifts

of the Holy Spirit and the honor — all of it — goes to the Giver, our Lord Himself.

Dr. Burns failed to mention the various verses, particularly those in Acts and Corinthians, which give positive support to the movement.

While we realize a charismatic group and its joyful praise of the Lord may not be for all sincere and good Christians, I believe we respect their right to worship in a more conservative or staid manner, and believe our Lord has room in heaven for both types of praise. I have tried, and still observe both methods.

Having knowledge first hand of each, I feel I can be more objective. Praise the Lord!

CATHERINE ZIMMERMAN,
 Box 538, Oak Ridges,
 Ontario.

Excellent coverage

Dear editor: I would like to thank you for the excellent coverage your newspaper give to the Richmond Hill community schools project on April 21. The front page coverage given to this project's need for volunteers enabled us

to obtain the very active support of 22 citizens.

Without these people the survey might never have been completed.

BOB CROSBY,
 Community school co-ordinator,
 York County Board of Education.

Tax protest choked, gagged

By Sid Britton
 (Part One)

AURORA — The press statements from the Commission to Review Proposals for Property Tax Reform in Ontario, read as if there is to be genuine participatory democracy in the matter.

I hope this may be so, and that both greater equity and long-needed change may be brought about.

I must say, however, I have considerable doubts. I say this, not because I am by nature a cynic, but because of past experience — most unhappy experience — of new assessment and assessment administration in Ontario.

Holiday hearings

Firstly, as so often happens when the public purse is involved, why should dates chosen for assessment hearings and meetings in York region fall in that period when the public is trying to squeeze in holidays after a summer of miserable weather?

This is a time when people are busy preparing children for school, catching up with gardens, attending the CNE, and so on.



The guest spot

A topical column of opinion by our readers. Submissions should be no more than 800 words. Typed preferably.

The hearing dates, Aug. 24-25, surely couldn't have been selected for the purpose of getting maximum public input, but rather for the reverse.

Defy majority

I also express doubt because of experience in recent years with the federal government which, despite its grandstand show of participatory democracy, has governed in direct defiance of the wishes of the vast majority of the people of Canada. Examples of this are wage and price controls, crime and punishment, and bilingualism.

The last assessment overhaul commenced in 1968, I think.

It was allegedly to be at market value, provincially directed, and was called an 'assessment equalization program'.

The resulting shift of the tax load from commercial and industrial property to residential, was severe. It caused much hardship and distress to many home owners.

General revolt

The York region press at the time carried numerous headlines announcing that reeves, mayors, councillors and everyone else were in revolt against the whole disgraceful business. I have the clippings yet.

The reason for shifting the weight of taxes was the contention commerce and industry was previously assessed at a higher rate than residential properties, and that nothing more than justice was being done.

Whatever the justice, the result for me was to have my taxes increased by 140 per cent from 1968 to 1969, and by 250 per cent by 1972.

This was in Southampton town where I'd just purchased a small cottage.

I'm sure this kind of tax increase was experienced by many others. I hate to think of what has happened

since.

Unbearable situation

The tax change, along with other rising costs, made the situation ridiculous and even unbearable. Many sold out.

There were protest meetings and appeals to the provincial government by the cottagers' association.

The reply I had from Provincial Treasurer Darcy McKeough, dated July 30, 1969, concluded: "... to the extent the assessments don't reflect market values, you can be assured they will be improved under provincial assessment."

There was the hook, the term 'market value'.

My new assessment and most other people's both in Southampton and Aurora, I believe, was beyond doubt well below market value.

That was trick

That was the trick of it. On what grounds would any owner appeal with any hope of success?

Of course, by sleuthing (if he had the time and initiative) he might find other properties closely similar to his own, but assessed lower. That would be difficult and unlikely.

If one did appeal, as I did in Aurora, it seemed the circumstances were made as difficult

as possible.

The hearings started at 10 a.m. You attended at the designated time, only to find scores of others there, with standing room only.

Obstacles created

Depending on the time taken for each hearing, it was a long day. Hearing dates were sometimes changed at short notice.

This made it difficult for working people trying to arrange time away from business, not to mention the loss of income involved.

It might be a good way of processing cattle, but surely not people, in Canada, in the 20th century.

In my own case my appeal was dismissed summarily. I received a notice of this, dated Dec. 19. It said I had 10 days from that date to give notice of appeal.

That 10 days included Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, two Saturdays and two Sundays. Add the usual slow December mail situation and you get my point.

I appealed and secured an assessment reduction of \$900. Then I looked forward to a \$20 to \$30 tax reduction.

Justice denied

Bill 142 was drawn up to alleviate any hardship or distress caused by the new assessment, it was said. I heard at the time it served as a model for other municipalities. It was drawn up by the Aurora clerk and Queen's Park officials.

It certainly was effective in my own case, in denying any semblance of justice, however hard won.

In this and other ways the government gradually choked and quietened, disposed of and gagged, all protest.

Beyond belief

In Barrie during January 1976, Treasurer McKeough and other cabinet ministers met municipal and school board representatives. He there said property taxes rose only 17 per cent over the past five years.

That such a statement should be made by a responsible minister is almost beyond belief. Here in Aurora my taxes have risen about 35 per cent in the past two years.

(This is the first in a two-part series on the subject of property tax reform, written by Sid Britton of 84 Hillview Rd., Aurora, an outspoken citizen critic of local government affairs. — Editor)