



By Lynda Nykor

# Don't enlarge our RC board

It is a mistake to increase York Region Roman Catholic separate school board membership from 14 to 16 seats.

The trustees acted hastily last week. With little study or debate, they suddenly passed a motion asking the region's municipal clerks to determine a redistribution of seats for a larger board.

They took the easy and lazy wrong way. They should take the hard, right way.

The separate school board is now as large as it can be and still work well. If more seats are added, the board will start to be the same kind of inefficient mob the 20-seat public school board is.

The last public school board had to go to management consultants in an attempt to solve its problems.

When a local government body exceeds 14 members it must adopt a cabinet and opposition party system if it is to work satisfactorily. So the public board's consultants indicated.

It would be a very serious and

doubtful move to create another level of party politics.

In past years there has been difficulty finding enough people to fill the 14 seats on the separate board. Apathetic members last year failed to attend meetings and were expelled.

Enlarging the board would only make it more difficult to find and keep good trustees.

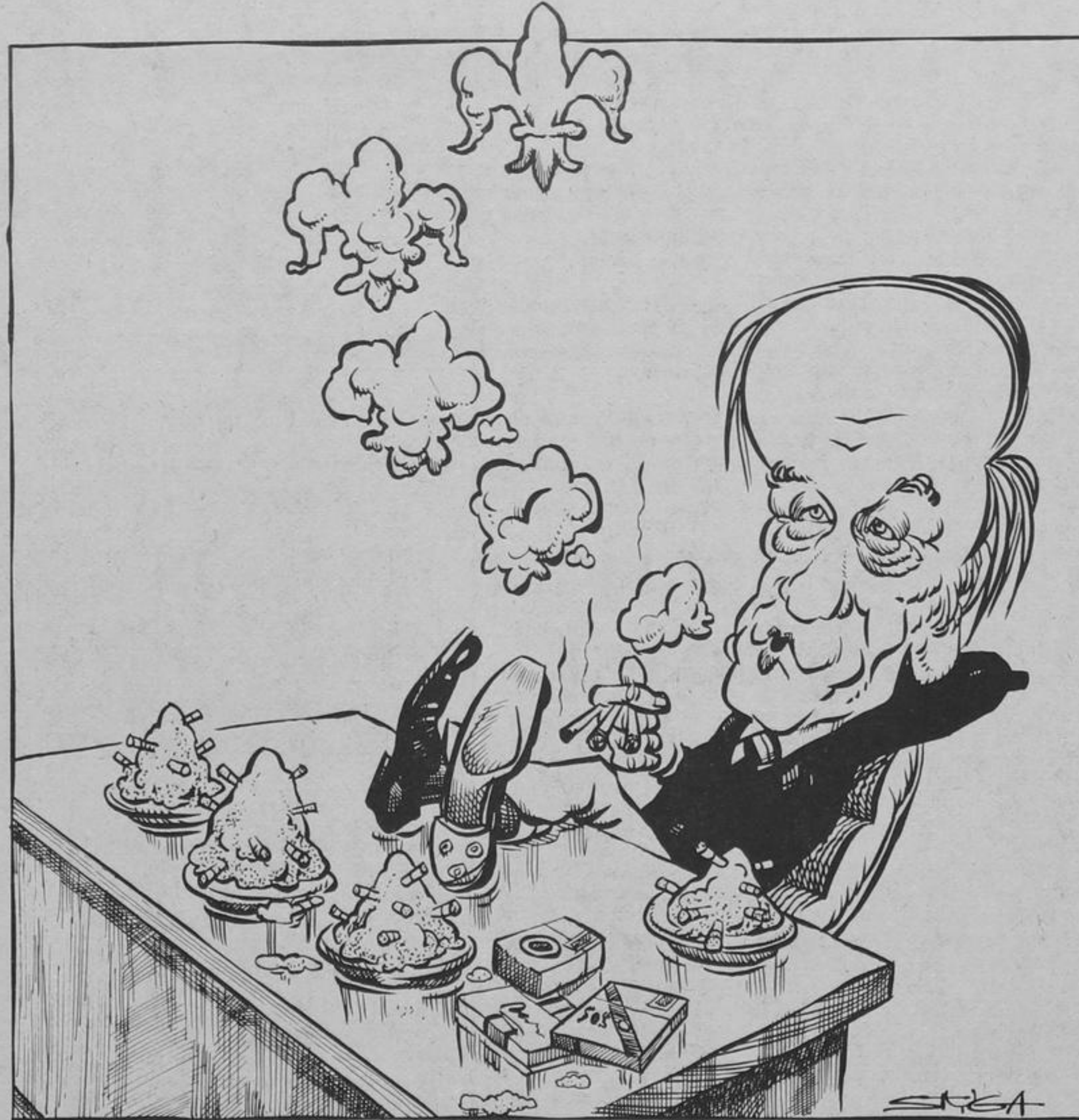
This problem of boards and councils growing to unworkable size is just starting here in our new region.

Much growth in region population is certain. Every local government body is going to be under pressure to grow and grow.

The number of seats on these bodies shouldn't be determined by the number of people represented. Such councils or boards should be kept to a workable size. Keep them between five and 14 members.

The separate school board should reconsider.

One good idea would be to establish region wards. This idea was pioneered by the public board in the last election.



Just from my own experience, I'd have to say I believe in pre-kindergarten schooling.

My two older children went to a nursery school in the city because they needed it.

When we moved up here nearly nine years ago I couldn't find one for my youngest son.

At the ripe old age of three and three-quarters he was too old for Montessori school. Others were too far away or too expensive for a budget that included a new mortgage.

We could always see he'd missed an advantage the older two benefited from.

### Boredom problem

Mind you, there were problems even for the older kids.

Getting into a kindergarten class with children to whom the learning experience was brand new made it pretty boring for them.

My older son in particular, whose birthday falls early in the year, was ready for more stimulation than kindergarten offered.

He'd done it all before. The public school kindergarten program didn't, and couldn't gibe with a private nursery school program.

Those are just a couple of the reasons why I, along with Diana Lofsky and her group of concerned parents, feel a junior kindergarten should be an integral part of the educational system.

### Her experience

Mrs. Lofsky got involved in trying to get the York County board of education to see this. She is working out of her personal experience.

She believes children at four years of age need learning and socializing experiences which staying at home with Mommy can't provide.

But she found the first nursery school she enrolled her daughter in was nothing more than a glorified baby-sitting service.

It offered little of the stimulation she expected her child to get, or she was paying a high price for.

The next one was better. But she wondered about children whose parents couldn't afford to provide this kind of opportunity.

I have to agree with her assessment.

Cadillacs, trips to Mexico and fur coats may rightfully be the prerequisites of wealth. Should educational needs be in that category?

In any event, Mrs. Lofsky got involved with a group of like-minded parents.

### Worked hard

They did considerable research; talked to the director of early childhood education for North York, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the director of public education for Region, among others.

Then, last week, they met with the York County board of education and presented the brief they'd prepared.

The response from most of the trustees was non-committal.

Three trustees, Dorothy Zajac of King City, Bob Houghton of Richmond Hill, and Norman Weller of Aurora accorded Mrs. Lofsky, who acted as chief spokesman for the group, treatment that ranged from the highly patronizing to the downright rude.

### Got apology

All of this made Mrs. Lofsky angry enough to demand, and get, an apology, though not until the meeting had broken up and moved away from the room where it was held.

The real issue here doesn't altogether lie in whether or not York Region public schools get junior kindergartens.

The heart of the matter is the lack of responsiveness on the part of the trustees toward the very people who elected them and whose interests they're supposed to serve.

Mrs. Lofsky doesn't after all, claim to be a professional educator.

She and her group have put in enough thought and work to expect to have their views considered with, if not support, at least a little grace.

# Letters Need land plan now

Dear editor:

Last year, I wrote to your paper in reply to both William Hodgson, our local MPP, and the president of the York Region Real Estate Board.

The issue then was development and the loss of prime farmland. Nothing has been done by the present government to resolve this issue.

Recently, the Urban Development

Institute released a self-serving study which concludes, not surprisingly, that people have nothing to worry about and there should be no obstacles placed in the way of development on prime food-giving acreage.

Buried in this report, though, is the finding from a more or less scientific calculation that from 1951 to 1971 the amount of land being actively farmed declined at the rate of 28 acres per hour.

When the NDP maintained during the agricultural debates over the past two years that people should be concerned over farmland loss of 26 acres per hour, the full weight of the government's derision was brought to bear on this figure.

Now the developers tell us that it is actually 28 acres per hour.

The NDP maintains farmland must be protected. This would not be done by freezing every acre of agricultural land forever.

However, farmland should be protected unless development can justify itself, instead of the other way around.

It is time this province had a sound sensible land-use policy in conjunction with a farm income insurance plan.

This is an issue that affects every resident of this province. When is the government going to act?

IAN SCOTT,  
NDP Candidate  
York North  
190 Prospect St.  
Newmarket, Ont.



Ian Scott  
... farms need saving

# Should apply early for L. Wilcox loans

Dear editor:

I would like to say how pleased I was to see the prominent coverage given by The Liberal on recent developments in the Neighborhood Improvement and Residential Rehabilitation Programs (N.I.P. and RRAP) in the Lake Wilcox area.

The success of programs such as N.I.P. and RRAP is directly related to the involvement of the community in their operation.

The interest shown not only by the citizens of Lake Wilcox in developing the area's redevelopment plan, but also by the local news media, has been, to say the least, encouraging.

While the actual implementation of the projects will probably not start before this spring, I have to feel we are off to a good start.

For the past few weeks the site office in the Lake Wilcox Community Centre has been open Mondays and Wednesdays to give the local residents an opportunity to talk to myself about N.I.P. and RRAP and to fill out preliminary applications for the home rehabilitation loans.

Interest has been high. In light of that fact, I would like to stress to the citizens of Lake Wilcox, who are considering applying for these loans, to do so as soon as possible.

While the indication is that there should be enough money to meet the needs of the program this year, one can never be too sure.

It is difficult to make estimations of the demand for this sort of program and it is of course possible for funds to run out, especially considering the preliminary interest that has been shown.

A second point is that if a large number of applications are received at an early date the budget for the program could possibly be extended.

In any case, applications will be considered on the basis of first-come-first-serve if there is a problem with funding shortages.

Hopefully though, that is not a problem we will have to face.

BILL CORISTINE,  
Program administrator,  
N.I.P.-RRAP,  
10,266 Yonge St.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.



Bill Coristine  
... interest encouraging

# Crib death story hurt

Dear editor:

We are writing this letter in response to an article printed in your newspaper Dec. 15.

The article reported that York Regional Police were awaiting the results of an autopsy into the death of a Markham infant who "had stopped breathing".

Is your paper so destitute for something to print, that this is your choice?

I have waited these past weeks and scanned your paper for some follow-up or explanation.

In some cases where infants simply "stop breathing", the case is referred to as "crib death" or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Very little is known about this

syndrome, as you can see from the article I am enclosing, which I hope you will reprint.

If indeed this case is a SIDS, think of the doubts or guilt feelings you have raised for the parents, relatives, friends and neighbors by merely mentioning the police are involved.

My wife and I recently lost a 10-week old daughter to SIDS, and if we had seen an article such as this about it, the results would have been catastrophic.

After eight long months and even professional counselling, we found ourselves enraged by your article.

If your paper ever requires something to fill space, I plead with you to exercise some common decency and human emotion before selecting the article.

What could be better than to do an information article about SIDS and perhaps help make someone's loss more understandable.

A. J. and MRS. UNDERHILL,  
19 Lillooet Cres.,  
Richmond Hill, Ont.

(The autopsy was held. It could take months before the official report is received, according to police. No doubt reports of death can be sad and painful to read. On the other hand, public suspicion and rumors about unexplained deaths can be even more harmful if such deaths are kept secret or covered up by the press. Hopefully public knowledge of such events as crib deaths can also help in the effort toward solving this mystery. — Editor).

# School board visit unpleasant

Dear editor:

I have recently returned from attending my first meeting of the York County board of education.

It was a most unpleasant experience.

Diana Lofsky presented a brief on junior kindergarten. She spoke in a pleasant and intelligent manner.

Throughout her brief, many faces of the trustees showed contempt and disregard for her.

She was treated in an insulting manner and was verbally assaulted as being of no importance.

In particular Mrs. (Dorothy) Zajac and Messrs. (Robert) Houghton and (Norm) Weller were disgustingly rude.

I personally felt insulted just being a member of the audience who had attended the meeting to sympathize with the intent of the brief.

It seems hard to believe these are the

same trustees who worked so hard to get elected, promising us the earth if only we would vote for them.

I shudder to think of my children's education being in the hands of these men and women.

ESTELLE BIGUE,  
29 Laureleaf Rd.,  
Thornhill.

# Dog owners are irresponsible

Dear editor:

Regarding family pet shot in Schomberg.

I do sympathize with the dog, but I condemn the owners. They are very irresponsible.

Instead of blaming hunters or anybody else, you should be charged with cruelty to animals.

You broke the law. Do not go to the Toronto Humane Society for help, because this society has not many reasons to exist in the first place.

When I complained that in some riding stables the horses were eating their own manure and they were without hay shelter, the society not only did not answer me, but this situation was never corrected.

Thanks, as you say to the odd runs,

# Rude trustees shock delegate

Dear editor:

On Jan. 24 I attended the York County board of education meeting as part of a delegation which presented a brief requesting junior kindergarten in York County.

I was shocked and appalled at the way our spokesman was treated by some of the board members.

The snickering, facial expressions and general rudeness were totally uncalled for.

The members of the delegation presenting the brief spent many long hours in research and preparation and did not deserve to be treated in such a disgraceful manner.

How ironic it seemed. If those same members had had the benefits of junior kindergarten, perhaps they would have known how to conduct themselves in a respectable fashion.

REISA GULA,  
82 Dawn Hill Trail,  
Thornhill

my daughter lost a beautiful pet rabbit on Jan. 24, at 11:30 p.m. Two dogs took him from wire cage and hurt him so badly he died at 2 a.m. in my arms.

These dogs were lucky and got away, but I hope to find the owners and take them to court.

I am also owner of a dog and I love animals and these are the reasons why my dog is not going for these stupid "odd runs," or it should be steady runs.

M.S. HILLAR,  
225 Essex Ave.,  
Richmond Hill

# Jr. kindergartens pay?

By John Stephens

The chaplain of the old Cook County jail approached a young man soon to die on the gallows for murder.

"Is there anything I can do for you, son?" he asked.

The youth, in an anguished voice, exclaimed, "Why do they wait until there is a rope around my neck before they try to do something for me?"

Father Shiel, later to become the Bishop of Chicago, never forgot that moment as he went on to found the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) to prevent the youth of his time from becoming juvenile delinquents, and to promote goodness among the young.

The CYO became noted for its fine athletic programs, notably boxing and the Golden Gloves tournaments in the United States, and hockey leagues in Canada. Few however realized the social impact of such a preventive program.

### Little prevention

Just think of the billions spent in North America for curative and punishment measures, from hospitals to prisons, from social problems to losing weight.

Yet so little is done by way of prevention.

Preventive medicine for example is hardly recognized in a hospital insurance system dedicated to make sick people well, rather than trying to keep them well in the first place.

Smoking and alcohol abuses contribute greatly to soaring health costs.

Yet the amount of anti-smoking or anti-drinking advertising is nowhere near the amount of advertising promoting smoking or drinking.



The guest spot

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

All of this is rather a long-winded way of raising the impertinent question: why do we need so many remedial courses in reading and arithmetic, instead of spending more time and money on the early stages of our children's education?

And another: why the ministry of education's stress now on core curriculum subjects and "the basics" at the secondary school level instead of refining the elementary school system in the initial years of schooling?

### Junior kindergartens

All of this is brought to mind by the stiff resistance with which a group of parents was met when they raised the subject of junior kindergartens at a recent meeting of the York County board of education.

Some trustees said simply (a) there was no room in present schools; (b) there wasn't enough money, and (c) there's some doubt about its worth — no babysitting for the board!

It's been commonly accepted that the formal education of a child should begin

at age six.

Yet more studies today show the best time for many kinds of learning and for the stimulation of basic learning abilities in a child is already largely past before the child reaches age six.

### Earlier learning

Specialists in the field of early learning are concluding that what children under the age of six can and should be learning has been greatly under-estimated.

Parents have a great responsibility during a child's early years to stimulate them through learning experiences — but parents can stand some assistance during that age four to six period.

By extending the school system to include junior kindergartens, there is opportunity for better guidance.

There is more time to spot learning difficulties before they become entrenched and lead to possible behavioral problems.

If money and space problems are too great to overcome, then surely the board should release its information so the public can fully appreciate the problems facing the board.

### Time to look

Faced with the growing numbers of personnel engaged in remedial work now, perhaps it is time the York County board of education undertook a good look at the educational programs offered children.

A cost-analysis, as has been suggested by one trustee, will only show junior kindergartens have a cost to them.

A cost-benefit analysis would make more sense if it means possible savings in subsequent remedial activity.