

Hill fair site action needed

Millions of dollars in Wintario community purpose funds are going for the asking.

Yet Richmond Hill Town for five years is doing nothing about its 132 acres of newly-acquired land, including a new Spring Fair site.

Dave Hamilton, parks and recreation director, says the reason for this is an Ontario municipal board ban on recreation capital spending.

At the same time in Markham construction of a new fair grounds is going ahead. In Markham for the current year \$800,000 was obtained from Wintario. Much more will likely come in the future.

Richmond Hill shouldn't be giving up so easily. The town's Spring Fair is bursting the bounds of its site, according to last year's agricultural society president. And President Arnold Mortson says the same this year.

There surely are ways to get going on the new fair grounds. Preparation of plans is the first step and can hardly be prevented by the municipal board.

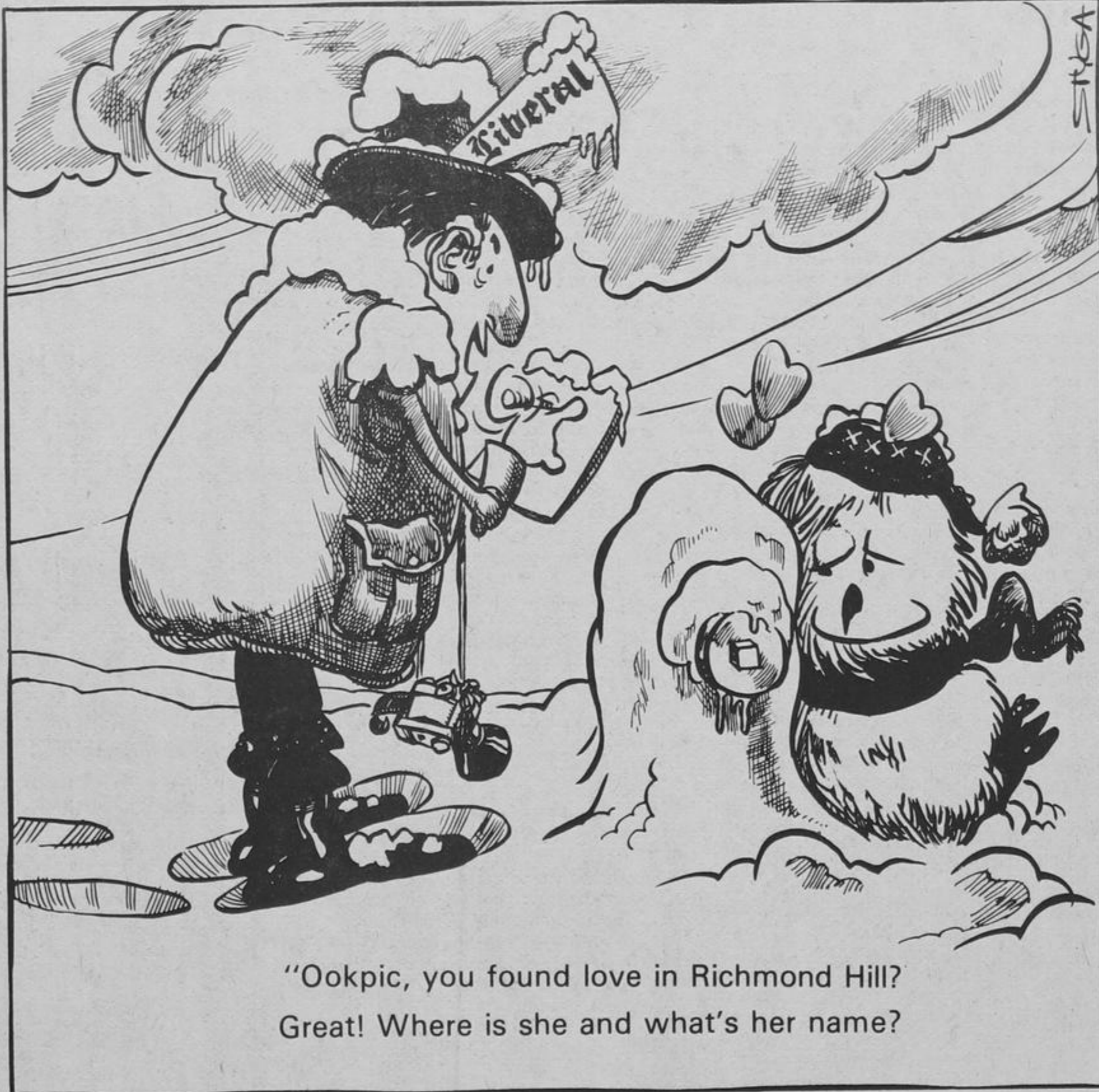
The agricultural society isn't controlled by the board. The society many years ago gave the town the present fair site.

If the town gave back to the society the needed land, say on a 49-year lease, the society would have the needed equity to set off and get Wintario money. A fair grandstand and show ring could double for use at baseball games. An exhibition hall could do for curling.

Where there's a will, there must be a way.

The town council and the agricultural society should at least be trying.

They shouldn't just be lying down and staving up.



"Ookpic, you found love in Richmond Hill? Great! Where is she and what's her name?"

Thornhill prejudiced on housing

By Lynda Nykor
In most parts of the far east, if you had \$600 of disposable income a year you could live like a king.
In Spain, if you had \$600 a month to spend you could still live like royalty.
In England, that amount is approximately what the average wage-earner takes home in a month, if he's lucky.
In most American cities you wouldn't dream of sinking that much money every month into putting a roof over your head.
In most parts of Canada, that's far more than most people would spend every month for a home.
In Thornhill, \$600 a month for housing gets you pilloried, insulted and patronized.
It costs more than that amount to live in Johnsville Village. Yet that's exactly the way people who have bought homes in the development are treated.

Talk began
The talk began even before it was built.
It's an OHAP project. This simply means government funds to the municipality have provided for services quickly and allowed people to buy a first home with a small down payment.
But right from its announcement there was talk of "depressed property values" by people who lived a mile or more away from it.
Some people seemed to feel an OHAP development would, in some kind of fashion, attract the "wrong nebulous" of people.
Purchasers of condominiums there had more trouble than other homeowners getting a deed to their property.

Council ignorance
Markham council showed an abysmal ignorance of the kind of housing it provided.
On many occasions the teachers and architects and civil servants who bought there, overheard the kind of suggestive, quasi-degradatory remarks that are hard to answer in concrete terms.

Nobody seemed willing to accept the place for what it was — a place where people bought homes and paid mortgages every month just like anybody else.
Johnsville children went to Bayview Fairways School. There was more talk about the kind of people who lived in "the project."
Things really started to boil when the school that had been promised to Johnsville families was finally approved.
Bayview Fairways school only goes to Grade 6. Johnsville's school will go to eight. So Bayview Fairways children were expected to take the final two elementary grades at Johnsville.

Silly fears
There were vociferous objections, some reasonably legitimate, but some an emotional reaction to irrational fears.
Johnsville parents started hearing how educational standards would be lowered in a school in an "Ontario housing," or "welfare" development.
Bayview Fairways children, it now appears, will go by bus to Woodland Senior Public School to complete their elementary education.
I think this whole situation has provided a kind of elementary education for all of us who live here in this trim, semi-pastoral suburb.
I can't wait till we get to the lesson about what happens when a genuine welfare recipient, a real live undeserving poor, moves into the neighborhood.
Wow!
Kind of makes you wonder what you ever saw in this nice, clean community, doesn't it?

Losing Grey bus jobs



queen's park

By Al Stong, MLA (Lib. - York Centre)

You will no doubt recall that in the early part of December, the Liberals raised in the legislature the question of the Ontario Highway Transport Board ruling to allow Greyhound Lines of Canada Ltd. to run buses on routes between Toronto and Buffalo and Toronto and Sudbury.

These routes are at present served by Gray Coach, a subsidiary of the Toronto Transit Commission.

The minister of transportation and communications told the legislature, initially, that he agreed with the board's reasons for giving this ruling — complaints of poor service by Gray Coach, and the need for competition on the routes in the public interest.

Leonard Moynehan, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union charged that telegrams of support for the Greyhound service, from local unions, which had been read in the house by the minister, were paid for by Greyhound.

Moynehan said that although more jobs might be provided, they would not be in Ontario. This was because

Greyhound would then have a cross-Canada service, with drivers from the United States or from Winnipeg driving through Ontario.

Leader concerned

Stuart Smith expressed concern because the bus service to many small Ontario communities was threatened by the transport board's decision to permit an American-controlled company to operate on the two main Ontario routes in question.

Smith considered this a "sell-out to American interests at the expense of a Canadian company owned by Ontario taxpayers". He said it was "equivalent to Ontario handing over a \$10 million public asset to a U.S. - controlled company".

Gray Coach officials expressed the view Greyhound would skim the profits from these two money-making routes. This would make it impossible for Gray Coach to continue to provide service on money-losing routes in the rest of the Province.

Review ordered

After some two weeks of continuing

pressure in the legislature, the Ontario cabinet told the Ontario Highway Transport Board to reconsider the decision to allow Greyhound Lines of Canada Ltd. to compete with the publicly-owned Gray Coach Lines Ltd.

The minister of transportation and communications asked the OHTB to re-examine the economic impact of the decision, and determine how this would affect bus service to smaller communities and Gray Coach finances.

The Toronto Transit Commission and union officials warned more than 200 Ontario jobs could be lost and the company put in the red by \$300,000.

The President of Greyhound, on the other hand, maintained the new routes to be granted his company would "increase employment in Ontario by at least 90 jobs — and perhaps as many as 130".

Holding hearing

The re-hearing before the Ontario Highway Transport Board is now in progress in Toronto. Division 113 of the Amalgamated Transit Union asked Stuart Smith to make a submission.

He appeared before the board Jan. 27 and stated the Liberal Party "is opposed to the original decision of your board which granted to Eastern Canada Greyhound, Greyhound Canada and Stock Bros., the rights to run a competitive service on those routes which are most profitable to Gray Coach. Our opposition to your decision, Mr. Chairman, is based on the following points:

(1) "Firstly, and most fundamentally, the decision to allow competition on certain routes appears to us to be in direct contravention of previously established and accepted policy which preserved exclusive carrier operating rights on major inter-urban routes.

"We do not believe that a decision to open up the bus routes across central Ontario to competitive licencing should be made by a regulatory agency without recourse to the Legislature.

"PCV licencing changes are being considered by a select committee of the legislature, and such a committee is the logical place for policy decisions on

basic alterations to this policy.

Loss of jobs

(2) "We are profoundly concerned a decision of your board might force a public carrier, based in this province, to restructure its operations in a manner that could, according to Gray Coach, result in the potential loss of 248 jobs in Ontario; that could result in reduction of service to some 62 rural communities in Ontario; that could result in the elimination of bus service to an additional 76 communities in Ontario; and that may force an enterprise indirectly owned by the people of Ontario to face an annual financial reversal of approximately one million dollars.

"We are concerned because of the effect this will have on the total value of an asset owned by the people of Ontario; an effect that is tantamount to giving away a ten million dollar public asset to a privately-owned corporation.

"We recognize that, in a legal sense, the franchises are privileges and not assets to be sold.

"Nonetheless, we believe that, if the policy is to replace publicly owned carriers by private ones on the lucrative routes, that policy should be stated generally, and should be implemented in a way that returns some consideration to the displaced carrier."

I feel that if the board feels Gray Coach has done a poor job of servicing the routes, clear directions should be given for improvements.

On the other hand, if the board feels the time has come to open good routes to competition, some direction should be requested from elected representatives.



parliament hill

By Sinclair Stevens, MP (PC — York Simcoe)

Ottawa may well be one of the coldest capitals on earth, but it is not — as some suggest — the dullest.

When Queen Victoria chose Bytown to be our main legislative centre, the town's harsh climate was already legendary.

Since then however, we have been warming up the place most afternoons with a parliamentary tradition so lively it has been known to thaw even those on the government's front benches on the coldest days.

Question Period, a custom we inherited from the British, is alive and well in Ottawa most afternoons at 2 o'clock. It has become a Canadian institution.

Our parliamentary forebearers, fed up with the god-like pretensions of their rulers, decreed that once a day the government should be required to sit and answer questions put to them by other members in the House of Commons.

Speaking terms

Neither side, of course, speaks directly to the other.

Centuries of parliamentary practice have found it prudent to have an impartial speaker. He decides who is to speak.

All questions and answers are addressed to him — a device which prevents the uncromely spectacle of two members throttling each other in the "bear pit" between the bleachers. "Some say it is Parliament at its best,

while others say it is Parliament at its worst.

Whichever view you share, you must agree it is Parliament. The word "Parliament" comes from the French "Parler" — to talk and that is certainly what they do on Parliament Hill.

Sometimes hot

The exchanges are usually between the cabinet ministers and those opposition members who would be cabinet members if their parties came to power.

The climate — the political climate that is — is ideal for animated afternoons.

Those of you who have visited Ottawa may have taken in this free-for-all. But those who haven't can, for \$3 a year, subscribe to Hansard the official publication of House proceedings painstakingly recorded for posterity.

It is one of the great bargains of our time, 40 or so closely printed pages of the activities in the House.

Missing, of course, is the House atmosphere of orderly mayhem. But it can be reconstructed with just a few pointers on how to read Hansard.

Peculiar code

Desk-thumping applause is referred to as "Some Honourable Members: Hear, Hear!"

Jeers too numerous to record appear as "Some Honourable Members: Oh! Oh!"

And an audible off the cuff rally is attributed to "An Honorable Member."

But you be the judge. Who can say Parliament does not live when you have

thrusts and counter thrusts like the following.

The Right Honorable member from Prince Albert, Mr. Diefenbaker is a master. It is difficult for the government to be overwhelmed by delusions of Divine Right as long as we have the lively thunderings of Mr. Diefenbaker, who on Oct. 29 had the following exchange:

Mr. Diefenbaker: "Mr. Speaker ....."

Some hon. Members: "Stick around, Pierre."

Mr. Diefenbaker: "I want to deal with him, Mr. Speaker."

Some hon. Members: "Don't go away, Pierre....."

Some hon. Members: "Shame."

Mr. Diefenbaker: "I have been here under three Prime Ministers, and I have never witnessed a more contemptuous attitude than the one he showed here today."

Some hon. Members: "Oh Oh"

Mr. Diefenbaker: "I hear a 'Moo' over there, Mr. Speaker. It just shows the degree to which he and others over there are being cowed today....."

Hot air removal

Similarly, any tendency to grandeur on the part of Alistair Gillespie might have been corrected by the following on Nov. 4.

Mr. Stanfield: "I would like to ask the minister a very simple question, I would like to believe he is an honest man."

Some hon. Members: "Oh Oh"

An hon. Member: "Certainly he is simple."

Some hon. Members: "Oh Oh"

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton) to a heckler across the aisle: "You are a wind tunnel."

A wind tunnel? Well, not really. It's all part of House procedure.

The question period may not be as well known as skating on the Rideau Canal, but it is certainly as entertaining.

Hot and cold Ottawa

Stop jr. kindergartens

By Sally MacDonald

There has been much discussion in The Liberal lately regarding the reception by the York County board of education of a parents' group advocating junior kindergartens.

Laying aside the question of whether the board was lacking in courtesy to the parents' group, surely the board showed a responsible attitude in resisting the establishment of junior kindergartens.

The enormous rise in school taxes during recent years has been a matter for concern. Any increase will prove burdensome for some families and may tend to create frictions in the community.

Hurting society

Moreover recent years have seen in our country an inflationary spiral. Such an inflationary spiral is damaging to the fabric of society. It creates destructive anxieties, inequities and instabilities.

There is general agreement that one inflationary pressure has been the rise in government spending.

With this background in mind the board surely has a duty to be wary of any new program which would enlarge in a substantial way the educational establishment and involve an appreciable increase in expenditure.

I do not recall voting for any trustee who promised me the earth; I tried to vote for candidates who stood for fiscal responsibility.

Not the time

Surely now, when the inflationary



The guest spot

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

spiral is finally slowing, is no time to fuel it with non-essential increases in government spending at the municipal or any other level.

Now is no time to demand from the government services that can be performed as well, and much more cheaply, by the taxpayers themselves.

I suggest that providing a stable economic climate for our families is of greater importance to our children's future than whether a four-year-old learns to cut and paste at his mother's knee, or at that of a junior kindergarten teacher.

The cost-benefit analysis of junior kindergarten suggested by John Stephens (The Liberal, Feb. 2) would be more appropriate when the economic climate improves.

Whether it might be undertaken, this analysis should definitely be compared with that of other possible programs for the improvement of

public education, such as smaller primary classes.

No improvement

My own experience has not made me opposed to junior kindergartens per se. I merely question whether they justify their considerable cost.

My children have been in school systems without junior kindergarten, and a school system with junior kindergarten.

I noticed no apparent difference between the general levels of achievement, nor in my children's relative standing as between the different systems.

Conceivably junior kindergarten might even have some negative aspects. It may seem like a good idea for a bright, lively four-year-old.

Endless school

What of the Grade 10 student who is struggling through a Slough of Despond in which he feels he has spent eternity in the public school system and has yet another eternity to spend there?

This is a very common feeling among high school students.

If 14 years of school education is good, is 15 necessarily even better?

I expect the board has many supporters in its resistance to the implementation of junior kindergartens.

(Mrs. MacDonald is a Thornhill resident at 85 Inverloch Blvd. — Editor)

Letters

Good on jr. kindergartens

Dear editor:

Events took a definite turn for the better at the York County board of education with the election of John Stephens as chairman of the program committee.

The program committee is a committee of the whole board this year and those trustees who elected Stephens can congratulate themselves on picking the best man for the job in this observer's opinion. Too often visitors to the board are

met by responses from trustees that are too quick to defend current policy or witticisms that are demeaning. They tend to forget their purpose in being. Not so Stephens.

He always weighs the situation carefully and when opportunity presents, comes forth with positive response.

His response to the Junior Kindergarten question is a case in point. As one can see, there is much more than meets the eye initially.