

School taxes up too much

Last week's York Region public school tax increase of 9½ per cent is unacceptable in a time when the national inflation rate is being held within six per cent.

This levy accounts for close to half the local property tax burden, so it's the one to watch most carefully.

The school trustees went through weeks of meetings without getting at the real issue, the question of teacher salaries.

This should have been the time when salary levels were thoroughly aired and the public given complete information. The salary question is now left to negotiation time, when all that happens is the mindless struggle and emotion of bargaining.

The other serious questions raised publicly in recent months

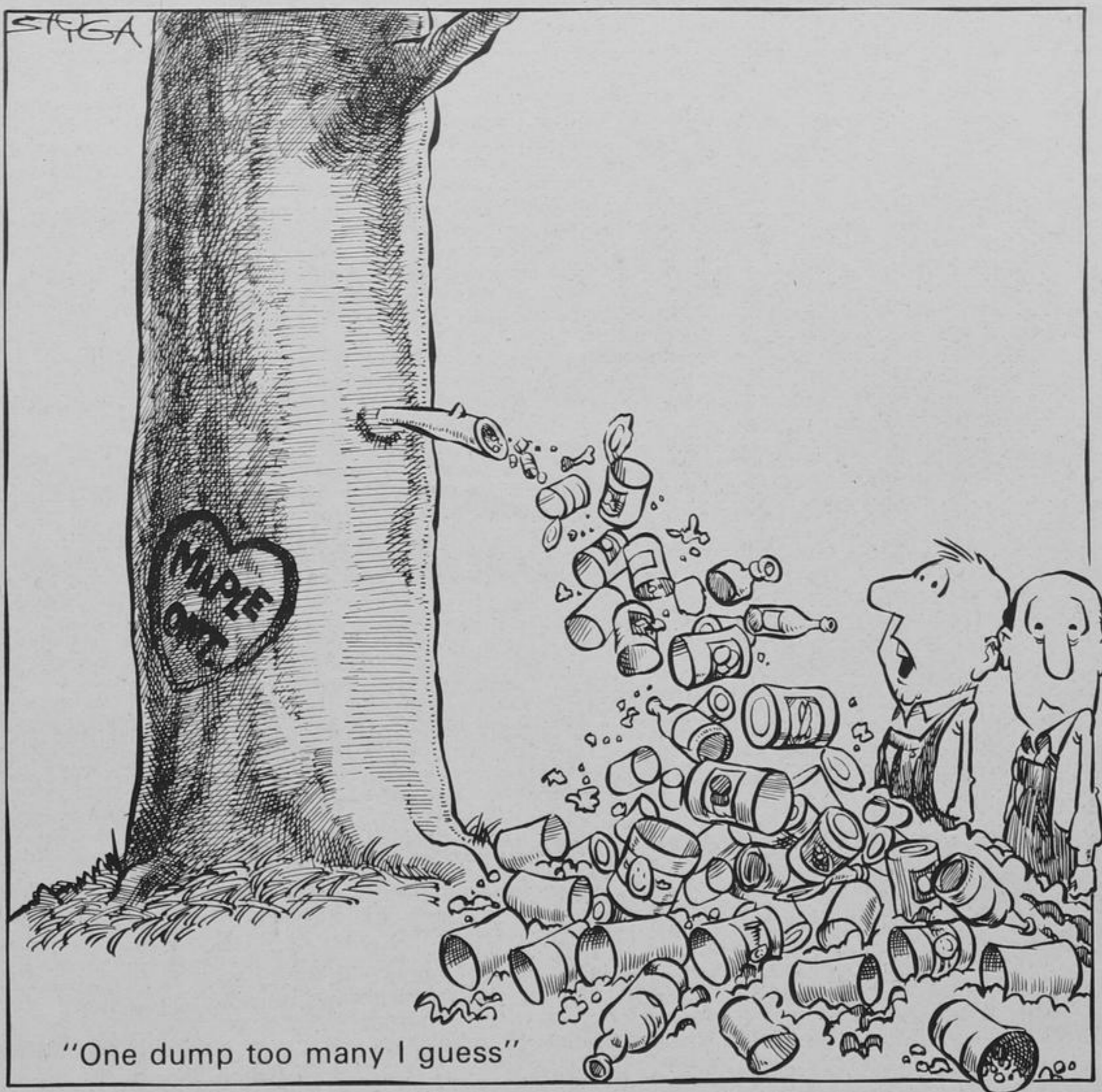
remain unanswered.

What about the citizen who recently charged on this page that education spending here is 40 per cent higher than in any other country in the world?

Then there is the widespread feeling that there is run-away spending on salaries of public employees, including teachers.

What are the real facts about the income of teachers in York Region in relation to the income of the tax paying citizens who support the schools? Are rosy dreams about the endless benefits of education expertise allowing the community to be "wagged" by the school system?

These are the hard issues crying for answers. These facts should be provided and aired before another budget is approved.



World women's day was

By Lynda Nykor

How many of you didn't know March 8 was International Women's Day? I have to admit I didn't know, either. The date was chosen as a commemoration of another March 8, several years ago.

This was the first time women marched for their rights in New York City. A fire the week before sparked off the demonstration. Three women were killed in that blaze, in the factory where they worked. They died because their boss considered it necessary to lock them in to make sure they kept their irresponsible female noses to the grindstone.

Girl dignity

So you see — the first time women marched it was for a little bit of dignity and trust.

After that, it snowballed, of course, and they decided they wanted as much dignity and trust as anyone else around.

And in a somewhat lighter vein: Starting April 3, house league hockey fever is going to hit Markham Town for the 4th consecutive year.

Billed as the largest hockey competition in the world, it's going to involve close to 2000 children, 400 volunteer workers, and 158 hockey games.

These Markham Hockey Week games are actually going to go on for a two-week period.

Games will be played every day, exclusive of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, till April 17.

Every child plays

Every child on every house league team in Unionville, Markham and Thornhill will get to play.

The Mayor's Cup, formerly presented to the winners, will from now on be awarded to the host community, this year, Markham.

Every one who competes will get a crest, and winners will get championship crests and a team trophy.

This year for the first time girls' teams will be taking part.

Now there are a lot of people involved, in one capacity or another, in putting this competition together.

They'd like to think they've got the support of the whole community behind them.

Admission to the games is free, in the arenas in all three communities.

Need spectators

So why not find time to take in a few games during the two weeks of the competition?

The youngsters who play would get a big kick out of packed arenas, too, instead of just having a handful of parents who attend regular season games.

Besides, most of them are so very cute, from the littlest 7-year-olds with rubber ankles all the way up to the teenagers and pre-teens who have their favorite NHL gestures down pat.

Really — it's a lot of fun.

You know, I wouldn't have thought of raspberries as harbingers of spring, especially.

But before there was a single bulb raising its leaves above the ground, or a single robin strutting its stuff, there were new green shoots on the raspberry canes in the back yard.

Growing crazy

With all the talk about ice ages, climatic changes, and mixed-up seasons, I'm beginning to wonder if things are coming up out of the ground in the wrong order.

Never mind, I tell myself. As long as there's something growing out there, I suppose there's hope we'll have some summer this year.

And I don't really care if we get August and then July as long as we get both of them.

Letters

School trustees need to listen

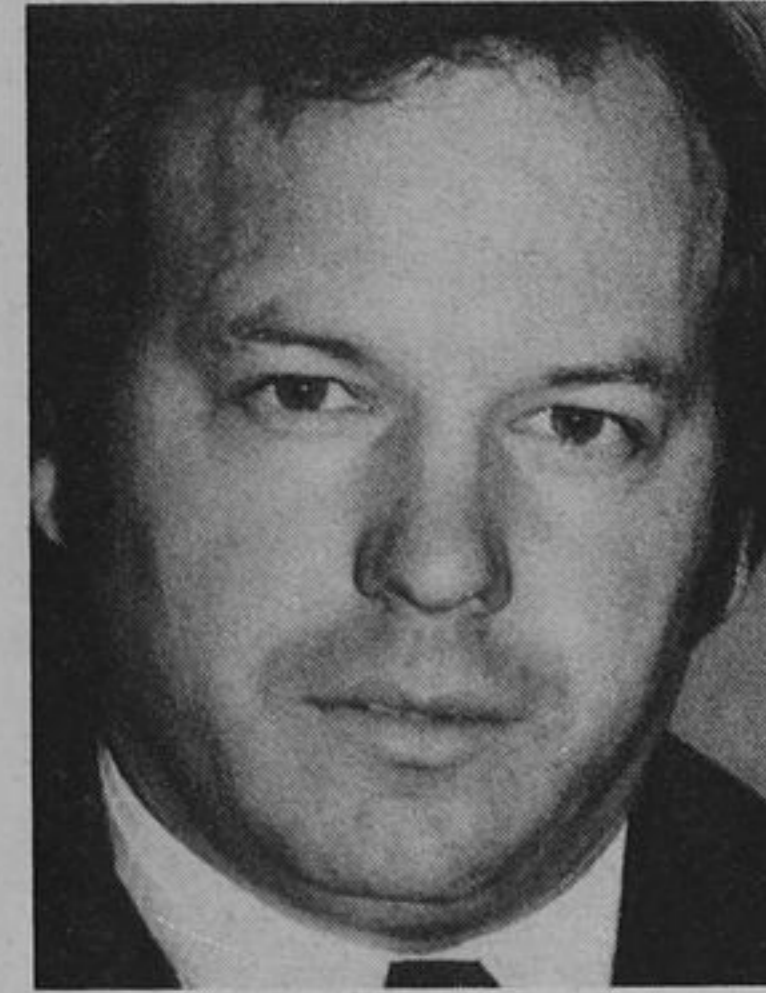
Dear editor:

On March 14, I along with two other parents, appeared before the York County board of education as a delegation opposing a board decision to change Walter Scott, Beverley Acres and Jefferson from K-6 schools to K-5, and Crosby Heights to a Grade 6 to 8 school.

Before we were given an opportunity to speak, the board dealt with a motion put forth to reserve parking spaces in the board parking lot for the chairman and director of education.

This motion received comment from the majority of trustees and was obviously a very contentious issue. It carried in the vote.

The next motion was an unimportant item. At least the chairman felt it was unimportant because he left the room after he'd the motion on the floor and opened it up for comment.



Councillor Duffy
.....got run-around

He later returned and held the vote. It carried.

It was quite common to see trustees wander in and out of the meeting during questions and debate, then return to vote.

We were next on the agenda and were given 15 minutes to speak and answer questions. There were only three questions.

Trustee Monroe then presented a motion suitable to our request. It was amended by Trustee Houghton.

This motion was then open to comment. There was only one. It came from Houghton.

During Houghton's comment, Trustee Corcoran had what was obviously a form of Big Mac attack, because when he returned he had a soft drink and a cookie.

Then, along with a majority of trustees, he voted for the amendment. This successfully changed Monroe's motion to one similar to the staff recommendation.

Thus was our proposal defeated.

The time spent on our motion, and on a similar motion dealing with the south Richmond Hill group from the Ross Doan school area, took in total less time and received less comment than the motion dealing with a parking spot for the chairman.

I and the other residents of Richmond Hill at the meeting were very disappointed to see our trustees treating the education and safety of our children so casually.

It's time our trustees started to meet on a regular basis with the ratepayers of the area they represent.

Then the trustees will have an understanding of the problems and needs of the community.

AL DUFFY, Councillor,
342 Centre St. E.,
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Dump plan alarming

Dear editor,

The dumping of garbage in this region is not a new problem, but the recent application by two companies for permission to foist Metro refuse on Maple residents is alarming.

At the evening hearings of the Environmental Assessment Board on Mar. 8, many concerns of people in the Maple area were expressed — noise pollution, ground water contamination, ecological change and the desire not to be known as "the largest garbage dump in Canada".

If permission is given to open the former gravel pits to waste disposal, the operation will be run by a large American-owned corporation, Waste Management Ltd., which already has virtually a monopoly on garbage disposal in this province.

William Hodgson, MPP for York North, the riding in which the proposed dump is located, when questioned on this issue at the meeting refused to take a definite stand, but did leave the impression he was not opposed to the operation.

Progress is burying Maple

Dear editor,

At last, the sleepy little town of Maple is about to become the tourist capital of North America. No doubt, visitors to the Taft Midway will want to see the other points of interest in the village.

No serious tourist would want to miss seeing the largest garbage dump in Canada. It will be easy to locate. If the wind is in the right direction, we'll just say, "Follow your nose!"

The more adventurous will want to

witness the excitement of the Keele Street Speedway.

As I glance out my window, just now, I can see the garbage and dump trucks are already practising for the "big time".

Congratulations, to the town of Vaughan for a job well done! Councillors, I only hope your so-called progress doesn't cost too many lives.

GLORIA SHEEN,
Keele St., Box 81,
Maple Ont.

Dogcatcher scapegoat

Dear editor:

I think it's time someone said a kind word for our much maligned Canine Control Officer James MacMillan. He seems to be Vaughan's scapegoat at the moment.

First I would like to say that we live in an area which seems to get more than its share of abandoned dogs.

That's right, they are not "stray" dogs, but dogs which have been tossed aside by owners who have grown tired of them.

We have found newborn puppies in a plastic bag and tossed over the fence. We have found half starved dogs in the dead of winter when the temperature hovers for days at 0F.

We have found fly bitten, half starved dogs on the hottest days of summer, desperate for a trickle of water to quench their thirst.

All of the poor creatures no longer able to run when they see a stranger approach. For unlike what some people seem to think, their "beloved" pets do "NOT" go to the nearest warm house in search of shelter and food.

Indeed not, they run aimlessly back and forth on the short stretch of road where they last saw their master, in the

vain hope he will come by and take them home again.

Yes, Mr. MacMillan and I have ex-



Ruth Reesor
...kind word time

changed angry words. It was a shared indignation directed against the callous owners of these poor dogs.

I would like to state emphatically that on each occasion I have had to contact Mr. MacMillan he has been courteous.

Everytime he has come for a dog he has treated it with patience and kindness. How many of his detractors have had to contend with ill-tempered dogs?

How many of you have treated such dogs with any kind of patience? With so many animals needing to be picked up for the above reasons, where on earth do you think the dog catcher finds the time to lurk about ready to pounce on dear old Fido, who has only been off his leash for "a few minutes"?

I have no way of knowing how conditions are at the kennels. I do know when we wanted to keep a beautiful stray, Mr. MacMillan told us we could have her if no one claimed her.

Three weeks later he brought Sasha back in beautiful condition and totally unafraid of him. I feel this shows he is kind to the animals under his care.

Come on you guys, have a heart. The poor man is only doing the job he was hired to do, that of controlling the dogs running loose and being nuisances.

RUTH REESOR,
RR 2, Maple, Ont.

Remarkable canine control

Dear editor,

I was very pleased to notice in your latest issue of The Liberal an excellent picture of an animal rescue worker and one of their many little charges.

I do not believe we can think or speak too highly of that remarkable plant, the Canine Control Centre of Richmond Hill and Markham.

Not only is it well equipped and well stocked, but it is so located as to be within easy reach of most of the surrounding districts involved.

Not only is it a vast and spacious property, but in it are embodied good sense, hygiene, humanity and adaptability.

It really would seem all these virtues and many more are to be found in that skilled and courageous gentleman Jim Ryan, and his splendid staff of men and women.

These are people as much dedicated to their job as many other workers of many other — perhaps more widely publicized — institutions.

I wonder if some of us realize the labor, the good sense, the good humor and the danger that is the daily requirement of such a calling!

Do we, many of us, know how often they risk life and health, not only for the



Emma Hall
...dogs need homes

pitiful charges they try to rescue, but for us as well, for most people know that diseased or unhealthy animals sooner or later mean diseased and unhealthy people too.

Yet these workers brave all weathers, all road conditions, all unforeseen circumstances, all delays, and, possibly the most trying of all, the moods, oppositions, peculiarities and, very often rigorous eccentricities of we — The People!

Yet they live through it all with courage, courtesy, firmness — where needed — and above all with that saving sense of humor that is such a necessary stock-in-trade for everyone.

Surely we can help them! We may not be able to give much financially, but good words, good wishes, and where possible, practical aid such as adopting some needy little inmate from the shelter, will do much.

Couldn't we — some of us — give it a try?

MISS EMMA HALL,
89 Rockport Cres.,
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Schools in mess

By Russ Rees

Before responding to "Proof schools declining" (Feb. 16) and to "Thornlea Secondary horrors" (March 2) I would like to congratulate "The Liberal" on being judged "top paper".

This paper has a lively open forum of local affairs and as such is vital to a democratic society.

Of priority importance because they deal with the future, are problems of education.

In my perception the well substantiated claims of declining achievement in secondary schools, and identification of students for particular kinds of secondary schools, are the same.

In essence, educational change since 1965 is misunderstood and therefore inadequately implemented.

The real problem is confusion that the permissive society of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and educational change, were the same.

They were not. They were quite different.

Running wild

Everybody doing their own thing was the outcome of the confusion. As a result, reasonable thinking declined, as did the educational attainment of individual students.

With lack of cohesiveness from school to school, students found themselves in a school environment alien to their natures.

There is a real job of retrenchment to be done immediately for the benefit of



The
guest
spot

A topical column of opinion by our readers. Submissions should be no more than 500 words. Typed preferably.

youngsters. The York County board of education must work on real concerns unless it wants to propagate a generation of students miserable in their future adult lives.

Master teachers

A priority action is to reinstate master teachers at the secondary school level. They are the agents of responsible development.

An equally important priority is a thorough evaluation of secondary schools. I suggest the following evaluatory criteria stated as questions:

a. Is there transmission of our ways of life, of our social heritage? (By 'our' I mean the richness of culturally varied ethnic endowment with which the Canadian mosaic is blessed for its future greatness).

b. Is there merely concern with elements of knowledge without understanding and developing attitudes? What are the attitudes?

c. Is there concern for a student's physical health, also her/his mental, moral and emotional well being? Is the student being brainwashed to one narrow parochial point of view?

d. Is there a view that the value of discipline is self discipline?

e. Is there emphasis on process of learning — the "how" — rather than the process of teaching which is authoritarian, dogmatic and an instrument for making students dependent?

f. Is some responsibility for learning being transferred gradually from teacher to student?

g. Is there concern not only with adapting people to the existing social order, but also with preparing students for adaptability to a changing social order, and for contributing to changes likely to increase human well being?

h. Is a basic emotional need of human beings for self-expression, initiative, and creativeness helped through schools giving emotional support?

i. Can schools justify methods they are condoning on the part of staffs on authentic, reliable, valid, research data?

Board must act

A board of education which does not initiate a thorough evaluation of schools and its staff at the present state of this society's very real disintegrative tendencies is nothing short of criminal.

(Russ Rees lives at 18 Thorneybrae Dr., Thornhill. — Editor).