

# OCU fights for life, Board's hands tied



**Bud Newton**

## Provincial job for Hill man

Engineering Administrator for the town of Richmond Hill, Bud Newton, has been elected president of a provincial engineering association for what might turn out to be a most important year in the life of the organization.

Mr. Newton, who has been with the town engineering department for four years, assumed office as president of the 10,500 member Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists (OACETT), at the Association's 19th Annual General Meeting in London, Ontario, May 26.

This year the association is pushing for more recognition in their field — "the legal right to practice engineering," said Mr. Newton.

Members consider provincial legislation "out-dated" and they

wish to change the law to enable them to perform their job "to the full extent of their capability," said Mr. Newton.

Operation Catch-Up, a community service organization working privately with young students who have learning and behavioral problems, won't be getting the support it had hoped for from the York Board of Education.

OCU lost its Canada Works grant this year, worth about \$125,000, so it approached the program committee of the public school board and the Separate Board's education committee asking for support.

David Burns, Chris McMonagle and Dave Porter, speaking for OCU, asked for approval that local school boards could buy special services from organizations such as OCU without penalty. They also wanted them to write the ministry stating that intent. At present, boards are only allowed to buy such services from other school boards.

But the committee

asked for a report on the implications of overtly supporting OCU and also asked for an opinion from the ALSBO (association of large school boards) curriculum committee.

The result is not good for the livelihood of OCU.

The word from ALSBO is that all such requests be resisted because of the many legal loopholes they present.

It feels such support could be transmuted into a way of diverting ministry funds to private schools.

However the committee will recommend to the full board on June 11 that it support OCU in seeking financial assistance from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, regional government and any other agents deemed feasible.

The big problem is OCU is now guaranteed only \$50,000 out of a \$170,000 budget. It gets \$25,000 from United Way, \$10,000

from Community and Social Services and \$10,000 from Probation and Aftercare, another community service project.

"I can recognize some of the problems with endorsing OCU" but I still think it is the board's ultimate decision on which services it can buy," said Richmond Hill Trustee Bev Breslow.

Though she is not a member of the program committee, she attended last week's session because of her keen interest in OCU. She feels there is no service comparable to what the organization can provide.

However, she admits it isn't feasible or financially possible for the board to provide such a service, much less agree to buy it privately.

"The board would have

to monitor the program and all teachers would have to have certain levels of certification — something most of those in OCU currently don't have. The problems of red tape would be enormous," said Mrs. Breslow.

The Separate School Board has been waiting to see its counterpart's decision on OCU.

Superintendent of Special Services Jack

Cronin also sees value in removing students with certain types of problems, from the school environment altogether. Classes are usually held by OCU in private residents' homes and basements.

"I don't know how they're going to continue with the program they're planning now," said Mrs. Breslow. "They're really an amazing bunch of people and I'd hate to see the service fold for financial reasons."

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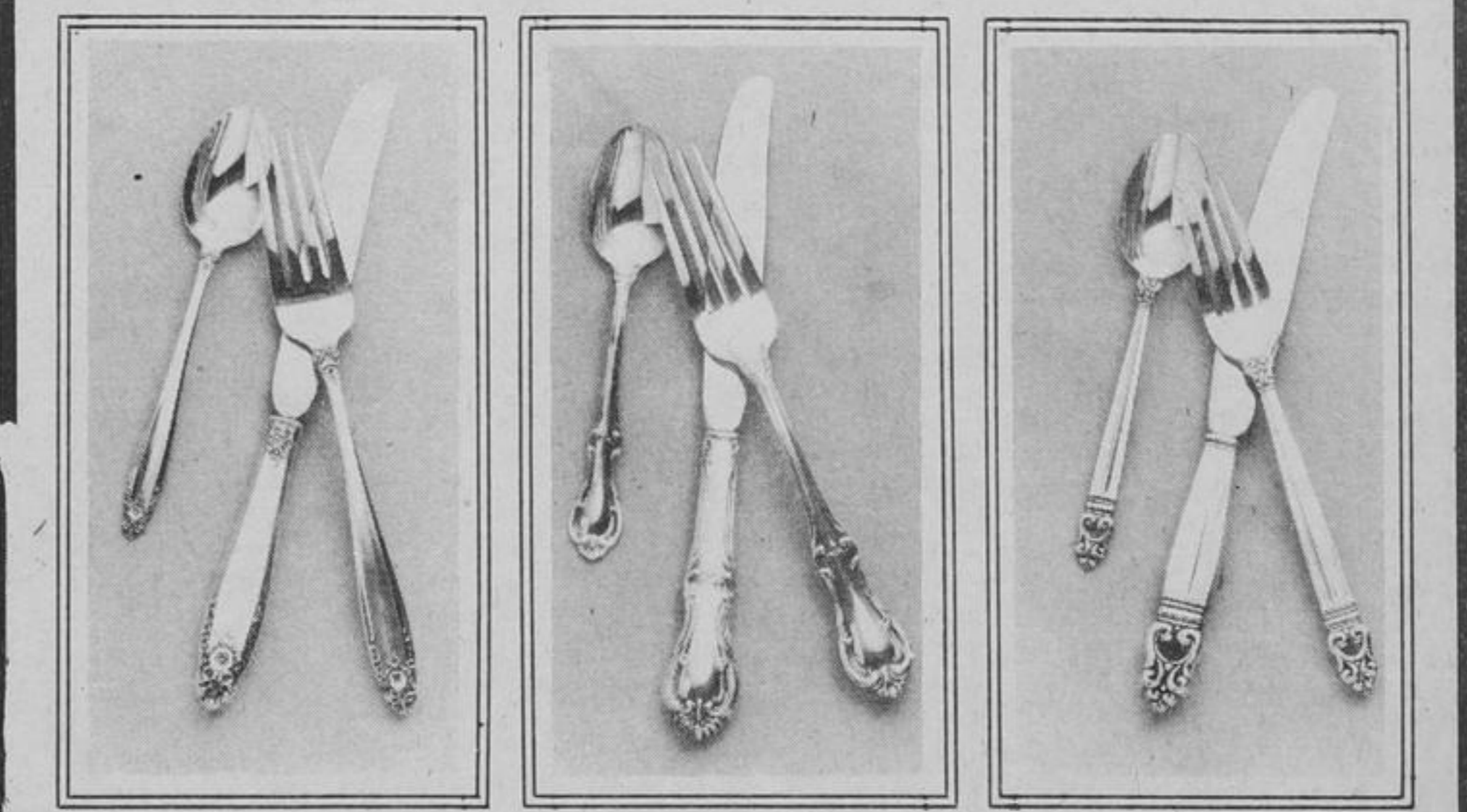
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