

North York Board can learn from York

With one contract dispute concluded by third-party arbitration and another that has regressed to the fact-finding stage, the York County Board of Education should be closely scrutinizing the labor hassle between high school teachers and the North York board.

A similar situation has developed there that existed here in August — both sides are at an impasse in salary negotiations. Monday night, however, North York trustees voted not to re-open the high schools after the Christmas break on January 3 unless a solution can be reached between now and then.

Sound familiar? The reason, of course, is because of a crippling work-to-rule campaign by teachers — something over which student council presidents took the initiative and called a three-day boycott of classes last week.

Work-to-rule by York County high school teachers was the impetus for closing schools here for two days last September while final contract ratifications took place.

In the opinion of the board, the operation of its schools under those kinds of conditions was detrimental to and unsafe for its students.

So it exercised its right under the Education Act and closed the schools. Teachers immediately claimed it was an illegal lock-out and filed charges with the Ontario Labor Relations Board to reclaim two days' lost wages (about \$250,000).

There's lots of time for the North York dispute to come to an amicable solution. The question is — if schools are closed (presumably under the same section of the Education Act) will teachers be screaming about the money they'll be losing? Would there be an OLRB hearing about it?

The York County hearings continue December 18 through 21 and even then it's unlikely they'll be finished. Trustees have been subpoenaed and so have tapes of the meeting where the decision was taken to close the schools. The tapes have been admitted as evidence but the Labor Board has chosen to hear them in private only.

North York — you have been duly warned. There may be here only one Watergate but we're sure there's room for another Trusteegate.

Recent radio reports claim all these current contract disputes were touched off by the first elementary teachers strike in the Province's history — the one in Peel.

Think back. It was a bitter 8-week strike in 1974 by York Secondary School teachers that spawned Bill 100. That piece of legislation, which forced teachers back to the class, is currently under Provincial review and the right of withdrawal of services is seriously being questioned.

Teachers rely on Bill 100 as giving them not only the right to strike but also the vehicle of work-to-rule, also known as a strike with pay. Boards of education can rely on the Education Act to close the schools.

Minister of Education Bette Stephenson said the two major contract disputes — North York and Brant County — can be resolved if the trustees and the teachers stop playing games with each other.

Yesterday, she said she wasn't prepared to legislate an end to either set of negotiations because the education of the children involved isn't severely affected.

How far is the public willing to let these people go. It may be shameful to say, but the examples set by York County shouldn't have to be followed.



By BOB RICE

Rice burrows in for winter

SNOW, SNOW, BEAUTIFUL SNOW YOU KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR BEAUTIFUL SNOW!

Well gang, here we go again. It's that time of year when we wonder if there really is somewhere else we would rather be.

I've finally put away the patio umbrella and barbeque and as the ice forms on the pool cover I have once again resigned myself to a three month hibernation indoors.

I think that last year I told you I plan to take up cross-country skiing this year but . . . I now feel that I may delay that move for yet another winter.

I made this decision just the other morning when I looked out the kitchen window at my nifty new thermometer and I saw it inching slowly toward the minus 15 mark (that's Celulose . . . not Frankengrade).

I was not made for the cold!

My idea of a perfectly neat winter is lying on a Caribbean beach, rum punch in hand, phoning in my traffic reports to CKEY and idly typing out my Liberal column with my big toe.

Failing all of that, my second choice is to lock myself indoors and do the same amount of work whilst enjoying the benefits of a roaring fire.

Ah well . . . such is not to be. To be sure, I have had a recent excursion to the South and, hopefully, will escape for a much shorter sojourn in early January but, for the most part, my poor body will have to suffer the bulk of the wintertime here in the confines of frosty York.

Last week I dropped by Reimer Fuels on Centre Street and picked up several bags of canal coal (it makes a much hotter fire than wood) and in a few more days I will be calling my friend Eddy Sokolor at Seagraves to order my supply of frostbite medicine.

I'll have plenty to do around the house to while away the frigid hours and this weekend I'll start my long delayed home improvements by splashing several gallons of paint on the living room walls.

I'm also gonna make a stab at some other do-it-yourself projects and, if the past repeats itself, this will ensure continued springtime employment for the skilled tradesmen who will have to come and repair my mistakes!

Who knows . . . maybe I'll even get around to getting my model railroad working again. It has been several years since my miniature steam engines huffed and puffed over trestle and track and if I can just find that elusive 10 by 12 foot area in my house the Great Rice Regional will roll once again.

I've made some rather rash promises to my girls over the years about tobogganing and building snowcastles and, since they are getting as big as me, I fear that I will have to set foot outdoors once or twice to honor these commitments. Other than that . . . don't look for me on the streets.

I'm even considering buying one of those gadgets that starts the car by remote control. Should I procure said item, my neighbors will only witness a blur as I cover the distance between my back door and the waiting automobile.

It is with some reluctance that I admit I still have a few years to go before I can retire to my island in the sun but you can bet your snowmobile boots that I am going to do everything in my power to make the wait as comfortable as is possible!

The ol' Millpond Philosopher once said . . . "A snowflake is a wondrous sight to see . . . but such a darn cold thing to hold!"

LIBERAL SPRINKLINGS

Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong

By RON WALLACE
Liberal Editor

Last week wasn't a particularly good week to be editor of this paper.

Following hard on the heels of Murphy (everything that can go wrong, will go wrong) I began to feel the problems soon after the paper came out Wednesday.

To wit:
— In the Richmond Hill edition, we ran a picture of the Good Brothers on Page 1, and many of their fans were quick to point out we had given the wrong names to the wrong faces.

— Also on Page 1, we gave Alf Stong, York Centre's Member of the Legislative Assembly, a promotion to federal politics without an election. We said "Monday, in the House of Commons, Mr. Stong asked . . ."

— We upset a few readers with other less serious but still embarrassing items in the paper.

Usually I have my guard up against any of the above occurring. I worry. Tuesday nights especially.

When I worry nothing serious goes wrong. The harder I worry, the better the paper. This has nothing to do with physically finding or correcting errors. I simply go home when the paper is finished and I spend the rest of the night worrying about it.

It's not unique. I had a news editor once who worried so much she'd make herself sick Wednesday morning.

Last Tuesday night I guess I didn't worry hard enough, because as soon as I got to work Wednesday morning, the "good morning" had been replaced with a "ha, ha, there's a big mistake on Page One".

People love to tell you when you've screwed something up.

It was at that point I knew it wasn't going to be the best of days. Unfortunately, the calls didn't end when Wednesday did. I was still getting them into the weekend.

After 17 years, one would think the skin would be thick enough to handle it, but it still smarts when obvious errors get by me and are put on display for thousands to see.

I guess I'll have to increase my worry intensity.

highway when I was travelling at a fair clip. That sudden thud against the car is a frightening sound, and had I caught the culprits, there would have been a sudden thud in other places, too.

This has turned into a rather depressing column. Think I'll go beat up the staff.

I'm going to start with Millie Stewart who has interrupted me 400 times since I began writing this.

Letters

She thought Hohener letter a good one

I just went down to the cellar to search for last week's Liberal, to read again Marion Hohener's letter.

Unfortunately the papers seem to have gone out for recycling this week, so I will never know just what it was that sparked such a vitriolic reply from P.M. Kelly.

I remember thinking that Mrs. Hohener had written a good letter!

Mr. (Ms.) Kelly challenges CAG (Citizen's Advisory Group) to use the Liberal as a forum more often, and what better way to start than by replying to his (her?) letter.

I object to people who insist on judging the motives of those in our community who have the "audacity" to speak out.

No one can really say why another person acts in a certain way.

Sometimes even we, ourselves, are not truly sure of our motives, but until it can be clearly shown that those motives are indeed less than admirable, I for one, choose to try to think the best of people.

It is a much happier and healthier way to live. Is it too much to believe that people act according to what they believe in, and not for what they get out of it other than the satisfaction of having done so?

How does one get to participate in a P.A. Day? I have certainly never been invited to do so, and have had no indication that an offer to do so would be welcomed.

I agree that the Letters to the Editor can be an excellent forum for discussion and congratulate The Liberal for printing such lengthy epistles, especially when

I know the paper is often tight for space. I trust that when CAG uses this forum, P.M. Kelly will not be tempted to accuse us of "trying to gain credibility" or of being a "political power group that needs a convenient place" to express itself.

Janet Fayle
Chairman
Citizen's Advisory Group

Metrification for the nation -who needs it??

Once we measured things by the length of an arm or a foot, or the width of a thumb.

True, a thousand paces of a Roman centurion did come to an awkward 5,280 feet, but this was something we grew up with, something we were used to.

Someone had a better idea. We should measure everything in terms of a ten-millionth part of the distance from the north pole to the equator.

Organic. Handy. HANDY!?! A great lot of effort went into determining just what this distance might be.

When they found it, they copied it down on a bar of metal and put that somewhere safe.

By the time they found

Never mind that it would cost fortunes to re-tool, to buy new scales and measuring cups and signs.

Metric measure is Progress.

I still drive 90 miles to Collingwood, because I still drive an old car. The highway signs are different, though.

Gas comes in litres, and mileage, or kilometrage, is given in litres per hundred kilometres.

I don't. I use the most meaningful unit I know. Miles per dollar.

Alec Bruyns
Richmond Hill

ENERGY SAVERS

Ronalds Printing hits the news again, this time with an in-plant campaign against waste.

Each week Ronalds Printing sends about four tractor trailer loads of waste paper to be recycled.

Although most of this loss is made up from trimmings from magazines and books, and as such cannot be curtailed, some of it is spoiled inadvertently, by employees.

Assistant Plant Manager, Andy McGregor, pointed out, some damage is done in the presses, a portion in handling, part in shipping.

The Richmond Hill company set up a program last week

to show employees how much things cost, hoping to cut down on the amount of waste.

Supervisory personnel wore T-shirts with "WOW" printed on the front — to stand for War on Waste — and a display was set in the middle of the plant floor, where employees could not miss it, to show cost of various materials used in the plant.

Paper, ink and printing plates, as well as damaged magazines, pocket books and telephone books.

Mr. McGregor said Ronalds Printing is monitoring the amount of waste after the campaign hoping to reduce their loss about six per cent.

Energy tips

— Fireplace glass doors preserve the beauty of your flames and save your warm room air from going

straight up the chimney. Do-it-yourself fitted fireplace covers prevent any warm air loss when

the fireplace is cold. Some beauties are occasionally available at antique shops.

— Save those "festive cheer" bottles for the Richmond Hill Recycling Depot. Flattened pop cans, too.

— Locally-sold dryer heat-savers will allow the warmth and humidity of the air exhaust to do double-duty for your comfort.



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