

The Tribune *Stouffville*

Vol. 105 No. 11 A Metroland Community Newspaper Wednesday, March 17, 1993 20 Pages 50 cents

Welfare

Unemployed have tough road ahead: York

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

A large number of York's unemployed have been out of the workforce for more than a year, and will likely "lag" behind when companies begin the re-hiring process.

York's community services commissioner Peter Crichton said "a lot" of the region's welfare recipients have been out of the labor market for more than 12 months.

This will likely stifle their chances of being among companies' first choice picks when economic forecasts improve, he said.

"There are certain economic indicators that say the recession is over but there are certain other indicators that say even when the economy pros-

pers we will not feel the impact," Crichton said.

He added reports show that while the economic outlook is encouraging for some sectors, consumer spending and hiring has made no improvement.

York's community services department presented its first report of 1993, which indicated 8,756 people or three per cent of the region's 404,000 population are out of work and on social assistance.

"This is the highest range we've ever had," Crichton said.

He said January showed a significant "jump" over December's figures but that the surge was only temporary.

"We didn't know exactly why this happened - we attribute it to the theory of things - it's an inexact science," Crichton said

last week.

He said January's figures are the result of "employment patterns from months ago," and blamed Unemployment Insur-

ance Commission (UIC) cut offs as the primary reason people turned to welfare in early '93.

York taxpayers spent

\$926,000 in January to keep their unemployed neighbors off the streets - a \$6.4 million provincial tab in the first month of the new year.

Attewell jumps on Campbell bandwagon

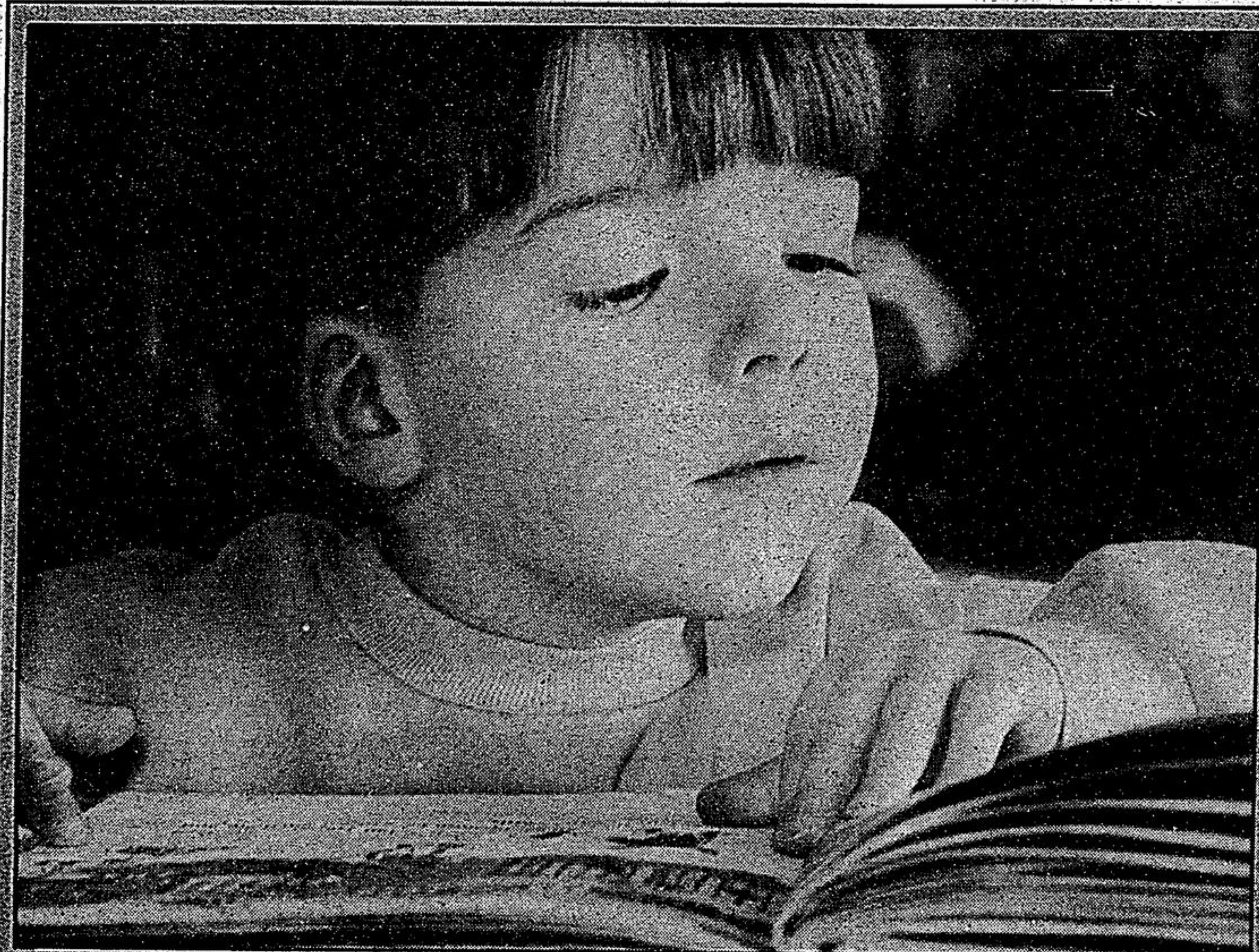
Kim Campbell's bid for the Progressive Conservative party leadership will be led in the Metro Toronto area by Markham Whitchurch-Stouffville MP Bill Attewell.

With the decision on the weekend by External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall not to seek the Tory leadership, and retire from politics, Attewell, who would have been the co-chair of McDougall's campaign, has decided to support Campbell.

"Kim's campaign has asked me to head up Metro, and with Barbara no longer in the race,

I've agreed," said Attewell in an interview from Ottawa Monday. He admitted that Campbell was his second choice for the leadership. "I think that Barbara would have been an excellent choice, but I respect her decision. She's given a lot of her time to public life, and she wanted to spend

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Curious Landon

Landon Hulse, 3, peruses one of his favorite books, Curious George, at the library in Stouffville last week. March break activities are on all this week.

Photo: CELIA BRONKHORST

Hydro plans no surprise to local commission

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Ontario Hydro's recent restructuring and cost reduction plans to help deplete its burgeoning debt were no great surprise to local commission engineer Walter Metcalfe.

Metcalfe predicted last January that Hydro would be forced this year to listen to provincial commissions and its cash-strapped customers before rates grew completely out of hand.

"I think in the future we will see some encouraging signs," that will mean less rate hikes from Ontario Hydro, Metcalfe told The Tribune about two months ago.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville hydro commission was forced to hike its rate by seven per cent in 1993 - an increase Metcalfe insisted was "bottom line" in order to keep up with essential maintenance programs.

The local commission also sent Hydro a letter last month stressing "great concern" to the debt-ridden corporation's rate hikes, which were being pawned off to customers.

In the letter, commission chairman Robert Smith accused Ontario Hydro CEO Maurice Strong of spending unwisely and sending "confusing" economic messages to commissions across the province.

Hydro promised no rate hikes in 1994 by slashing about 6,000 jobs in a move already approved by the board of directors.

The cuts will result in \$875 million savings next year which could swell to \$1.4 billion by 1996, reports indicate.

By freezing several nuclear energy operations, deferring major

hydro projects and reducing previously planned purchases and restructuring its operations, Hydro hopes to keep a line on hikes for the next few years, reports show. Critics, however, say Hydro's cutbacks will only transfer the burden onto social assistance programs when thousands of laid off employees turn to Unemployment Insurance Commission and welfare.

Parental input sought

Each year the English and French sections of the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board review their special education programs and services.

Ratepayers are invited to take part in this year's process. Interested residents should submit a written statement on any aspect of special education services and programs by March 30. Send submissions to Sandra Reinsborough, Superintendent of Student and Instructional Services, 8911 Woodbine Ave., Markham, L3R 5G1.