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Privatizing liquor stores a bad idea, say employees, council

JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

Stouffville has sent a clear-cut and very formal message to the Ontario government: "Don't privatize liquor stores."

On Monday, Whitchurch-Stouffville Council gave the Ontario Liquor Boards Employees Union unanimous support to its move to convince the government to abandon any plan to privatize the province's 595 liquor outlets and warehouses.

At the Stouffville liquor store, its four full-time employees and four part-time workers are keeping a keen eye on developments.

Kevin McWhinnie, knows the business. He's worked at the Stouffville liquor store for 27 years. Now an assistant store manager, McWhinnie doesn't hesitate when offering his opinion. "Of course, I do not want to see it privatized," said McWhinnie.

When it comes to alcohol, the government runs a clean operation, is accountable and keeps a close reign on who can buy and who can't, union spokesman Mike Sullivan told council.

When there's a dance at the Stouffville District Secondary School, a call goes to the manager of the local liquor store. "When we know there's a dance, I tell the staff that they can expect more young people in. It keeps us on our toes," said store manager Brent Gibson. "The staff is trained. The training is important."

Last year, the LCBO profits stood at a record \$730 million over and above taxes. As well, a recent survey shows that "85 per cent" of Ontarians are "satisfied" with the current operation,

said Sullivan. During the last provincial election campaign, Premier Mike Harris's Common-Sense plan included the possibility of privatizing liquor stores. Today, however, a government spokesman paints a somewhat different picture.

Privatizing liquor stores is "speculation on the part of the union," said Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations spokesman

Chris Layton. While options are being reviewed, "no decision has been made" regarding privatization, said Layton.

The government is not really proceeding ahead with privatization. It's a modernization review process. We're looking at ways to

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Honourary trustee
York Region's Catholic school board is getting a new honorary trustee next week.

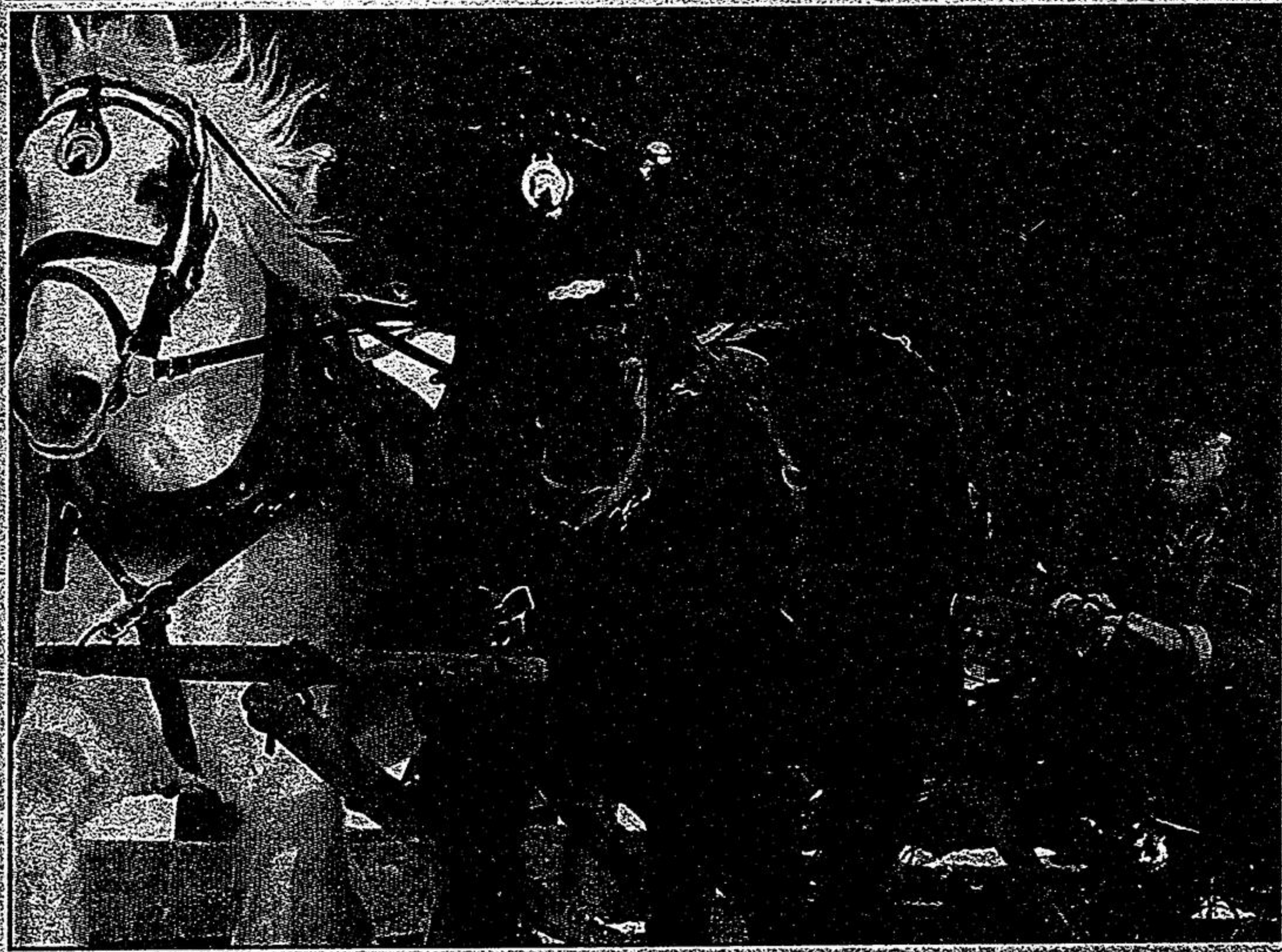
Bishop Anthony Meagher will become the latest cleric invested with the position next Tuesday at a meeting of the English-speaking district separate board.

Meagher will replace Bishop Robert Clune, who retired a year ago.

As honorary trustee, Meagher will perform special masses and preside over awards nights at the board, as well as contribute to its teachings on religion and family life.

"He plays quite a major role," board spokesperson Chris Cable said yesterday.

Toronto Archbishop Aloysius Ambrozic, named as a cardinal by Pope John Paul II, will continue to speak the board on national matters, such as the importance of maintaining sectarian schools in Newfoundland and other provinces, Cable said.



TEAMWORK: Farmer Rod Willis of Willow Grove Farm races his sleigh horses with some wood for the fire as students of Willow Grove Elementary School plan to enjoy some hot chocolate as a treat after their snowshoe trek around the farm Wednesday.

Catholic board to pick student logo winner

A drawing from a York Region Catholic student could be picked next week as the new corporate symbol of the district separate board. On Tuesday, school trustees will be shown three student designs for a new board logo.

Finalists from more than 150 entries. The new black-and-white design will "update our look" as it gradually replaces the old logo which shows figures in various poses around a cross, said a spokesperson. The board is getting new logo because it has a new official name. The district public board is asking people to submit designs for a new logo by Feb. 16.

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