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**18** Spirit downed by Couchiching 5-3, bringing an end to the team's winning streak.

**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**  
**EVENT:** Adult Skating Club Halloween skate  
**WHEN:** Tuesday, Oct. 27 from 8 to 9 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Stouffville rec centre

**FALL BACK** 

It's daylight savings time. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour before bedtime tonight.

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# Stouffville Tribune

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**TAXES:** Province blames region for huge business tax hikes

## Fingerprint found on shotgun, jury hears

*Ballantrae man pleads not guilty to attempted murder charges*

BY RICK VANDERLINDE  
 STAFF WRITER

A shotgun-toting marijuana farmer tried to kill two York Region men when he caught them stealing pot plants on his Ballantrae property, a jury heard Wednesday.

In her opening address, Crown attorney Marcy Henschel argued John Murray Bolender shot and injured 25-year-old David Showers of Aurora and 28-year-old Mark Cowie of Whitchurch-Stouffville on Aug. 21, 1996.

Bolender has pleaded not guilty to attempted murder, aggravated assault and cultivation of narcotics for the purpose of trafficking.

Henschel told the jury Showers and Cowie went to Bolender Excavating at about 1 a.m. to steal some of the 50 to 80 marijuana plants they had found growing on the Hwy. 48 property.

Henschel said the pair was unaware Bolender was living in a construction trailer on the property at the time.

As Showers and Cowie loaded marijuana plants in a car, they heard a loud gunshot.

"Realizing they had been shot at they crawled into the car and attempted to flee," Henschel said. Then there were approximately three more shots. The rear passenger window was shot out.

As the pair drove to Markham Stouffville Hospital, they both realized they had been hit by shotgun

See Ballantrae, page 3.

## Mayors rip Eves' tax plan

BY LISA QUEEN  
 STAFF WRITER

Business owners who received a property tax break will have to return some of their windfall thanks to Treasurer Ernie Eves, York Region mayors are warning.

"People should remember this at election time," Aurora Mayor Tim Jones said.

In response to an outcry from

small business owners facing huge increases under the province's new property tax system, Eves announced yesterday he is introducing legislation that will cap commercial and industrial taxes at 20 per cent over the next three years.

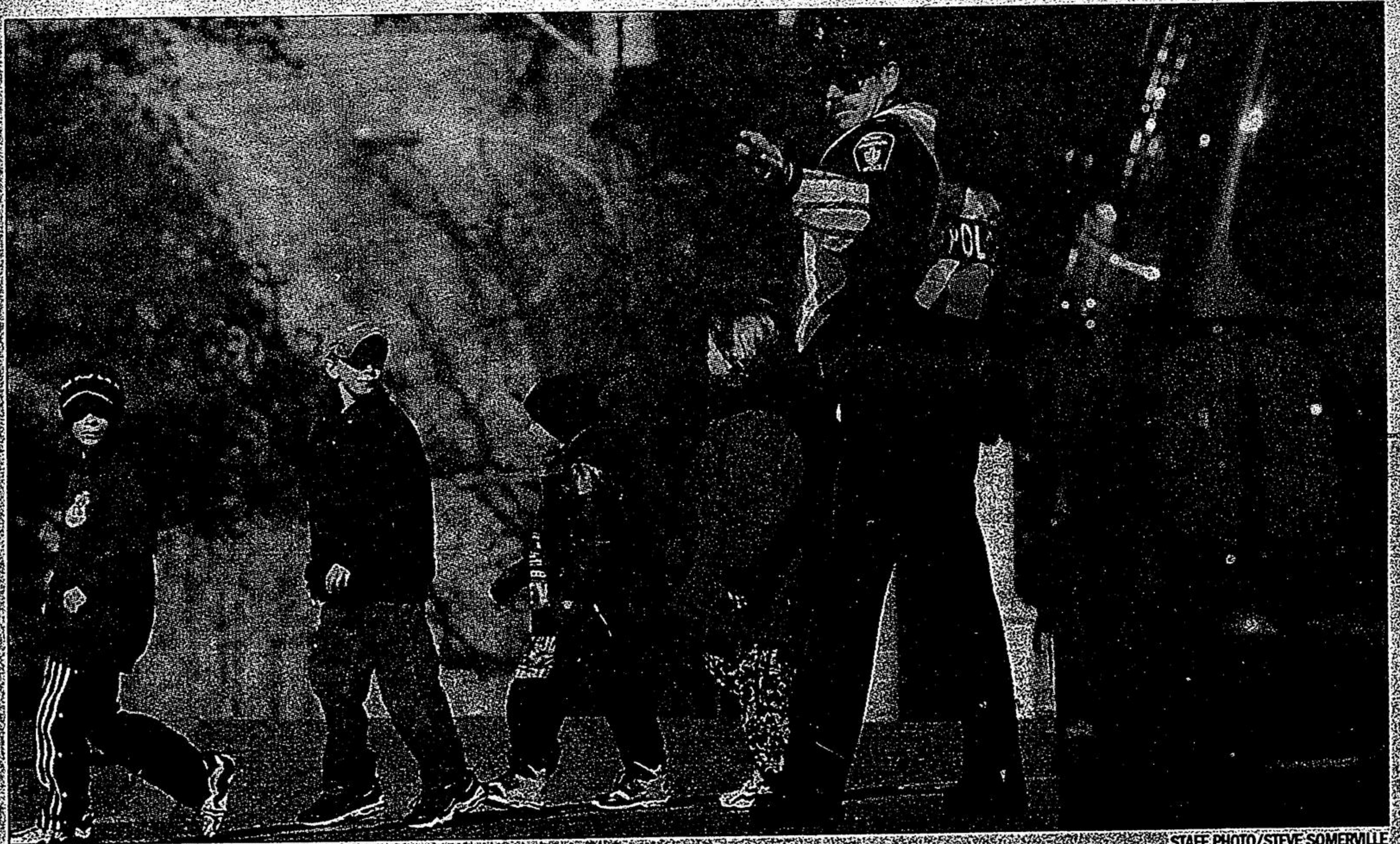
The maximum hike merchants will pay this year is 10 per cent, the limit next year is 5 per cent

and the cap in 2000 is 5 per cent. "We are listening and responding to small business owners facing crippling and unnecessary property tax increases caused by assessment shifts and the reluctance of many municipalities to fully use the tools the province gave them to limit tax increases on this vital sector of our economy," Eves said.

"These increases, some as high as 600 per cent, threaten the very survival of many of these valuable contributors to Ontario's economic well-being. We are not prepared to stand by and let this happen."

Under the plan, businesses that got decreases will have to

See MAYORS, page 2.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

### SAFE CROSSING

York Regional Police Constable Doug Cooper helps children cross Main Street at the Mill Street intersection Thursday after school.

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