

THE MISSISSAUGA Times

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Publisher
Richard W. Desrochers

Editor
Peter Armstrong

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Vice President Director of Publishing West Division H. J. Foley

End the strike

It is becoming painfully obvious that our school trustees have lost sight of their primary duty in their dealings with Peel Region's elementary school teachers.

They have allowed a contract dispute to degenerate into a teachers' strike, which is seriously disrupting the lives of tens of thousands of families. They have entrenched their position and allowed that despite the teachers' pleas that the entire dispute be settled by an independent arbitrator. In other words they have decided it is more important to be stubborn than to keep the schools open.

They have justified their position to the public with misleading figures and out-of-context statements designed more, it would appear, to win public opinion than inform their constituency.

Last night they held a meeting to discuss whether or not to close the region's schools during the strike — and by abusing their policy on closed meetings kept the public from hearing the discussion.

Now it has become apparent that the school board has deliberately misled the public on a key issue in the 18-month dispute.

The teachers have been saying that with declining and shifting enrolments in Ontario — and the possibility of layoffs — greater job security should be written into their contract. They happen to believe, wrongly, that seniority should be the sole criteria used by the board in deciding which teachers are laid off, if any, but are willing to put the issue to binding, independent arbitration.

The board has been saying that tenure is not an issue in Peel because enrolment patterns are just shifting, not declining, as in some other school board jurisdictions. The board's pamphlet, distributed door-to-door two weeks ago and bearing the signature of board chairman Bill Kent, reads as follows: "Guaranteed job security for all teachers . . . is unnecessary because Peel is growing. No teachers were laid off in 1978 — teachers were hired. No teachers were laid off in 1979 — teachers were hired."

Peel is growing. And no teachers have been laid off their jobs. And teachers are being hired. But in fact there are 48 fewer teachers and 600 fewer students in the Peel system this year than last year.

Because of teachers, retiring, quitting and dying and because many teachers have been on contracts that end after one school year, it has been possible for the school board to hire teachers while reducing the total number of teaching positions.

It is our considered opinion that the trustees are elected and paid by their constituents and represent their interests. The taxpayers of Peel are not being informed — they are being snowed. The taxpayers do not want a strike — they want their kids to get an uninterrupted education.

This strike should never have begun and must end, quickly. By losing sight of that, the trustees have effectively abdicated their roles as leaders in this dispute and we look towards our provincial representatives taking the necessary steps to return Peel's schools to normal.

BLAKE MISSISSAUGA TIMES



"WORST CASE OF 'MALTON-ITIS' I'VE EVER SEEN"

People

Forty years ago, The Mississauga Times (then the Port Credit Weekly) offered 100 Bubbles dolls to the first 100 girls to sell a new or renewal subscription to the newspaper. "Your friends, relatives, teachers, everyone will be glad to help you obtain one of these wonderful dolls free." . . . Lt. Col. Louis Keene, E. D., the commanding officer of The Lorne Scots, was ordered to mobilize the first contingent of the regiment. "This honor reflects credit on the efficiency of the regiment in its previous annual training and the Counties of Peel, Dufferin and Halton should be proud that their county regiment has been called upon for this important task." Recruits of good physique, character and willingness to serve their King and Country were to be accepted at armories at Brampton, Oakville, Streetsville, Port Credit and Milton . . . the paper reminds readers that "a newspaper is largely dependent on the generosity of the people in the district it serves for news" . . . Cooksville Fair was well attended with awards given for grain, fruit, ladies' work, honey, art, baby show, heavy draft horses, dairy and beef cattle, vegetables, poultry, household sciences and penmanship.

postscript: "The motion to send this card was passed 5 to 4." Who says the quality of mercy is not strained?



SUPERFAN . . . Rootin' tootin' Port Credit Secondary School football fan gave it everything he had before Port Credit went down to defeat in high school football last week.

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