



Ray Deleгарde, transportation officer of the Dufferin-Peel Separate School Board: "We're getting a fair shake

now from the province, but if that ever changed we'd be forced to really cut back."

The RC school bus system and the man in the middle

By GREG SNOW

There's an old saying that the only person with all his troubles behind him is a school bus driver.

If that's true, and even if it is not, then pity poor Ray Deleгарde.

Because Deleгарde, the transportation officer of the Dufferin-Peel Separate School Board, not only feels responsible to the students on the yellow buses, but also to their parents and to the trustees on the board. Not to mention the driver and the person who owns the bus.

"As a transportation officer, I am the middleman," he says. "I have to satisfy everyone. Sometimes I may have to ask questions, but I always have to have the answers."

And the logistics of satisfying everyone, of busing students as quickly, safely and economically as possible are eye-brow raising.

Over 12,000 students, or 50 per cent of the board's total enrolment, are bused to school daily.

This requires the mobilization of a fleet of 86 large school buses covering 213 routes, in addition to seven mini-buses, 20 station wagons and 114 taxi cabs.

Altogether they travel 6,000 miles a day, a total of 1.2 million miles a year.

Transportation alone costs the board \$1.3 million annually and Deleгарde expects this figure to rise to \$1.7 next year.

Deleгарde says the biggest headache is trying to cut costs while continuing to deliver an adequate service.

"We hope to keep costs down, but with gas, insurance and maintenance prices rising, the operators are asking for more money and I can't say they aren't warranted. You also have to remember that there are more and more passengers every year."

He says that the provincial government picks up almost the entire tab through grants, but worries that that may someday change.

"We're getting a fair shake now from the province, but if that ever changed we'd be forced to really cut back. Students would have to walk farther and programs like junior kindergarten which is academically valuable, but very expensive, may have to be dropped."

Deleгарde isn't predicting the arrival of that day, but says the time is approaching when transportation costs will have to come under very serious review.

"Our biggest criticism," says Deleгарde, "comes from parents asking for a bus to come around starting tomorrow, but we can't do it. We need a couple of days, at least. It's a big problem."

As a result of this constant contact with the public, Deleгарde thinks that he and others in his position should be always conscious of establishing good relations.

In a recent speech to a gathering of his colleagues, Deleгарde said that transportation officers let themselves "get bogged down in the day-to-day realities of the operation to the extent that we are frequently caught with our poor public relations showing. Transportation is a big business. We must demonstrate that the money we spend is a sound investment."

That's why Deleгарde is always so polite on the phone. Even though he has heard all the problems many times before, he says he always acts like the situation is unique.

That is important for the

separate school board. Know-

ing they have good bus service might encourage separate school supporters to send their children — and tax support — three miles away to a

separate school rather than three blocks away to a public school.

And what about the students? How do they wear during all this travel?

Mini-calculator proposals backed

By GREG SNOW

Approval has been given by the program committee of Peel Board of Education to recommendations which will establish a policy for use of mini-calculators in classrooms.

The recommendations are by and large a restatement of guidelines which have been in effect since October, 1975 and allow calculators to be used, but only under carefully monitored conditions.

The use of calculators in elementary schools is prohibited until Grade 4 and after that may only be used with the approval of the superintendent of schools.

In addition, no elementary student will be required to purchase a calculator and they may not be used in exams unless all students have equal access.

In secondary schools, use of calculators must be approved by department heads and the principal and they must not be a prerequisite for courses.

Those restrictions are not good enough for trustee Margaret Marland.

"There is no way I will ever support the use of calculators in elementary schools," she said.

Mrs. Marland said the use of calculators would lead to a loss of the mastery of the basic skills. "It puts our students in another experimental environment unnecessarily."

But Stan Korchuk and Al Norrie, two staff members who prepared a report on calculators, claim that fears surrounding the controlled use of calculators are unfounded.

"There is evidence to indicate that calculators can reinforce the very things that they are supposed to threaten, namely the basics. They can be a very positive motivational tool," Norrie said.

"Their use will be controlled and will be the exception rather than the rule," Korchuk said. "I don't think you'll see a flood of calculators in the classroom as a result of this policy."

Arn Krever, the board's superintendent of programs, told trustees that calculators were beyond the experimental stage.

Courthouse ransacked

Someone broke into the Hensall Circle provincial courthouse early Thursday morning and caused about \$2,000 damage.

Police said an unknown amount of cash was taken from a safe, which was dragged into the basement from an office and forced open.

Court officials are taking an inventory of their records to determine what's missing.

The burglar entered through an unlocked ground-level window, police believe. The general office and an ex-

hibit room were ransacked. The investigation continues.



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THE LOAN

a RANGER

by Jim Wales

A kiss is a pleasant reminder that two heads are better than one.

Nowadays, most of the folks running for offices aren't politicians. They're commuters.

We'd all be rich if we worked as hard at our jobs as we do on our vacations.

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2nd CVCA nature centre urged

The interpretive centre in the Orangeville Conservation Area, which provides outdoor educational opportunities for students, is in the wrong location for most Peel students.

The executive committee of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority was told this week that since 70 per cent of the population of the region is in the south in Mississauga, another interpretive centre at Silver Creek, near

Georgetown, should be established.

The executive was discussing a recommendation from its information and education advisory board suggesting that work for the interpretive centre at Silver Creek begin immediately.

The executive was told Vaughan House on the property was suitable for a centre and CVCA education officer, George Roberts, said

marking of trails could begin almost immediately.

But CVCA Chairman Grant Clarkson seriously questioned the board's proposal. He said it "strikes right at the overall planning of the authority."

Instead of going ahead, the authority should wait until a report by consultant William Coates on the long-term plan for Silver Creek is complete in March, advised Clarkson.

Coates has already been instructed by the executive to

include provisions for an interpretive centre in his proposals.

Robert Harrison of Mississauga, the chairman of the information and education board, noted that if his board's recommendation was adopted no money would be spent on bricks and mortar.

"The interpretive centre at Orangeville is not being used to any great degree and it never will be because it's way out of the way for people in

the south where most of the students are," he said.

He told the executive that the Orangeville centre has some built-in problems because of its distance from population centres.

Following the lengthy discussion, it was agreed to defer the advisory board's recommendation to proceed with the Silver Creek centre until after Coates' final report on the master plan of the area is ready.

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