

**"The Formation of the South Peel  
Board of Education"**

**prepared for**

**Dr. W. Brehaut**

**by**

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## THE FORMATION OF THE SOUTH PEEL

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

The history behind the formation of a school board to control both public and secondary education in the southern part of Toronto Township is very interesting, yet unusual. Because of a situation which existed between a village and a township, the South Peel Board of Education had to be established by a Private Member's Bill in the Ontario legislature, thus becoming the only school board in the Province of Ontario to be created in this manner. A brief history of the administration of education in some of the school sections of Toronto Township, and a more detailed account of the events and agreements prior to the passing of this Bill Number 26 in 1952 is necessary in order to achieve complete insight into the problems that faced those people who were vitally concerned with the educating of the youth of this area.

Toronto Township, like the other townships throughout Ontario, was divided into school sections for the purpose of education. These school sections were based upon settlement rather than according to surveyed boundaries. They were administered by 3 trustees elected by the ratepayers at an annual meeting which was usually called at the end of a calendar year. These men received no remuneration. In many cases throughout the township, the annual meetings were poorly attended; and people nominated usually won by acclamation. It was a thankless job which demanded many hours of work dealing with such tasks as finances, budgeting, hiring of teachers, maintenance of buildings, acquisition of supplies and the struggle to obtain as much money as possible from the

Toronto Township Council to carry out these obligations.

A historical study of how each school section was organized would certainly provide the needed background to understand some of the problems to be encountered when amalgamation under one board was proposed. To avoid repetition and to attain a clearer picture, three school sections only will be examined. School Sections No. 5 and No. 1 will be described to get a general idea of how a section was administered. The situation in School Section No. 19, which was to be a cause of friction between the village of Port Credit and the Township of Toronto, will be defined.

S.S. No. 5 contained one of the first schools in Toronto Township, the "Red School House", built in 1826, and later to be replaced by the present Hillcrest Public School, Clarkson. S.S. No. 1 had as its school the "Dixie Public School", erected sometime before 1856. Both schools were built by local resident shareholders whose names have been recorded in the detailed ledgers and minutes that were kept at the annual meetings designated by law. At these annual meetings, the chairman and secretary were appointed; the reports of the trustees from previous years were heard and adopted; the new trustees were elected; and then the new business for the coming year was discussed. This was the procedure that was regularly followed.

Money was procured from provincial and other grants, the Clergy reserves fund, land assessment and rate bills; that is, a fee of so much per month per pupil (in 1861, 25¢ per month). Grants and taxation from assessment are the only means of

procuring money today.

Expenditures in both sections were broken down to the last detail, but as years progressed the items were banded together under general headings to simplify the balancing of the ledgers.

These are only a few of the procedures which each School Section followed and which influenced the people to be satisfied with the administration of education in their local areas.

School Section 19 offers a complicated picture that needs to be explained in some detail. This school section included the area now controlled by the Town of Port Credit and the area adjacent to the Mississauga Road from the Lakeshore up to the vicinity of the Queen Elizabeth Highway. A transition occurred in Port Credit when the control of education was taken over by a Board of Education whose members were elected by the ratepayers of this area. Under their jurisdiction were two elementary schools, Forrest Avenue and Riverside, and the Port Credit High School. The problem of what to do with those ratepayers who lived in the part of S.S. 19 that remained in Toronto Township was solved when it was decided that these people (who had invested their money through taxation in the modernized Riverside Public School) would send their children to the above mentioned school and subsequently to Port Credit High School.

In addition they would be able to nominate and to vote for candidates to be members of the Port Credit Board of Education. The other essential services such as hydro and

4.

public works were still received from Toronto Township. The Port Credit High School at first was a continuation school situated in the Forrest Avenue Public School building. The principal of Forrest Avenue P.S. ran the continuation school and handled the discipline in the public school, while the principal of Riverside was in charge of the academic administration in both public schools. In 1927 the new Port Credit High School was built; this left redundant accommodation in the Forrest Avenue Public School. This space was made available to Lakeview and Middle Road Public Schools which were overcrowded, and in addition, the Port Credit Board of Education supplied the teachers and used their teaching methods to educate these children who were outside their school area. At this period prior to unification, the Port Credit Board of Education and all the Toronto Township Public School Sections co-operated to provide school subjects that proved too expensive for a local area; for example, they formed a committee to supervise and administer the teaching of music on a large area basis.

Since each school section in Toronto Township provided elementary education for its residents, the pressing problem was how to provide secondary education for its grade eight graduates. The Port Credit Board of Education supplied the answer by accepting these secondary students for the complete south end of the township--that is, the area below the Base Line; and the Board received payment for this service from the Toronto Township Council, who of course gained its revenue through taxation of the residents. This accounts for the fact that the County of Peel appointed one to three members to the

Port Credit Board of Education to assist in the administration of secondary education.

Since the Port Credit Board of Education was educating these students from outside its area, the Board, around 1940, became interested in a move towards a larger school area. Thus a "Committee For a Larger School Area" was formed to study this problem, and through its research found that the Lakeview and Middle Road Public School Areas--school sections within Toronto Township--were leaning towards an enlargement of the Port Credit Board of Education to include their areas. Although these discussions, encouraged by the above committee, were discontinued, they were rekindled in the mid' 40's at Middle Road School (the present Queen Elizabeth Jr. High School). A meeting was called; those present were members of the Port Credit Board of Education and representatives from Cooksville, Dixie, Lorne Park, Lakeview and Middle Road Public Schools. They indicated at that time an interest in becoming a part of an enlarged Board of Education. Other school sections, namely Upper and Lower Clarkson, along with Erindale, indicated that they also might be interested in this scheme. Perhaps the problem in these school sections in Toronto Township was that during this period the population increased to such an extent that a continuation school was formed in the Cooksville public school. The continuation school was now under the direct control of the Toronto Township High School Board which up to this time was concerned only with the finances of secondary education and the subsequent payment of money to Port Credit Board of Education.

Furthermore, at this time the Ontario Department of

Education was faced with the need for enlarged Secondary and Public school areas, and therefore approached the County Council of Peel to find out what measures could be taken to remedy this situation. Owing to this inquiry, the council formed the "County Consultive Committee" to look into an area Public School Board and an area High School Board. The committee called one meeting at Cooksville where Mr. V. K. Greer (Superintendent of Education) spoke concerning the setting up of a public school area. At another meeting, Mr. Ashbury and Mr. Rendall (Assistant Superintendents of Secondary Schools) spoke on the advantages of a Secondary School Area Board.

The Port Credit Board of Education was at both meetings, and looking to the future, insisted that there was a need to consolidate and co-ordinate all the high schools and public schools in Port Credit and the south end of Toronto Township into one large Board of Education. Unfortunately at these meetings neither group would talk about the other phase of education.

In 1947, the "County Consultive Committee", having as its members the deputy reeves from Port Credit, Toronto Township and Brampton as well as Mr. Underhill (County Inspector of Education) put forth a motion to have two High School Area Boards called "South Peel" and Central Peel". This was done without consultation with the Port Credit Board of Education, even though this board had consistently requested a meeting with the committee.

In the May of 1948 the County Consultive Committee set a deadline for the Port Credit Board of Education to dissolve and form a Port Credit Public School Board, and to combine with the

south end of Toronto Township to form the South Peel High School Area Board. The Port Credit Board of Education, under pressure and protest, passed a motion for dissolution. As a final attempt in December 1948, Port Credit Public School Board again raised the point that it was illegal to dissolve the old Board of Education; and it made a motion for the dissolution of the South Peel High School Area Board by an ordinance of their village council. But the council, after due consideration, vetoed this motion.

It is worth noting that at an earlier period the Port Credit Board of Education had put pressure upon the southern section of Toronto Township to consolidate both public and secondary education; this was verified when the people of the village of Port Credit voted in the ratio of 4 to 1 favouring the establishment of a Board of Education for all educational purposes in the village and township. At that time however, Toronto Township council indicated that it had no interest.

At the time that Port Credit was voting on this referendum, there was a movement in Toronto Township to form a Toronto Township Public School Area Board to incorporate all the school sections and thus to keep public school administration separate from secondary.

Just as Port Credit's proposal did not receive the needed support from the Toronto Township council, neither did this movement.

Then in 1950 the movement got the needed support, and the Toronto Township Council passed a by-law setting up one Public School Area in the southern end of the township, which was to include the part of S.S. 19 not in the town of Port Credit.

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This was opposed by the ratepayers of S.S. 19, led by Mr. E. Wright; and subsequently, because of this protest, the Department of Education disallowed this by-law. This forced the Toronto Township Council in 1951 to set up a committee to study the formation of a Board of Education. The committee in this instance consulted with the Port Credit Public School Board and after due consideration, recommended the following:

1. That a board of education be established for all Secondary and Public School education, but that it not have jurisdiction over Port Credit and School Section 19.
2. That Port Credit and S.S. 19 be given the privilege of uniting with this Board of Education at a later date if they so desired.

In the interim between the time when Port Credit voted 4 to 1 to press for a Board of Education in South Peel, and the time when Toronto Township council suggested the same set-up, there had been a wide building programme with large subdivisions springing up everywhere in the township (eg. Lyndwood and Applewood). The ratepayers of Port Credit foresaw that since their assessment was much higher, rate for educational purpose would increase in the future; and that they would accordingly carry the larger share of educating the pupils of South Peel. The second recommendation thus had to be introduced to give them a chance to consider the whole situation. Even in Toronto Township itself, many people in the various school sections were against the recommendations of their council from the standpoint of taxes and an ever-increasing mill rate.

To overcome this opposition, the township council, under the legal guidance of Mr. A. Van Every Q.C., introduced a Private Member's Bill before the Ontario Legislature to form the South Peel Board of Education. Port Credit was violently

opposed for two main reasons:

1. Toronto Township had changed its original plan and decided to include that part of S.S. 19 that was in the township proper in its jurisdiction.
2. The Port Credit members that were to sit on the Board and to vote on High School matters were to be appointed, not elected--a situation the Port Credit people felt was undemocratic and unjust.

Their two reasons were enough evidence to prevent the bill's introduction to the Assembly and to send the Toronto Township Council back to its planning boards to revise its demands.

The following year, 1952, the bill was again brought before the Legislature by Mr. Stanley Hall M.L.A. for Halton, as the Hon. T.L. Kennedy, M.L.A. for Peel, felt that he should divorce himself from the whole issue. In brief, it again proposed that there be a Board of Education to control all public schools in the southern portion of the township and to absorb South Peel High School Area Board, but that it should have no influence on the Port Credit public schools. Although Toronto Township Council had one year to think over its demands, it refused to alter one recommendation from the original draft. When the bill appeared before the Private Member's Bill Committee, the representative for the Toronto Township Council was Mr. Van Every Q.C., for Port Credit, Mr. J. Reid Q.C. and for the dissenting Toronto Township ratepayers, Mr. G. Jackson Q.C.

Perhaps a summary of some of the other reasons for and against the bill should be outlined. The reasons for the bill were as follows:

1. To reduce the number of school areas.
2. To centralize control and have a better distribution of finances.
3. To follow Etobicoke Township's modern progressive standards and their foresight in hiring the best qualified teachers available.
4. To provide for this large area such subjects as shop, home economics and music in a planned location which a small school section could not offer.

The reasons against the bill were as follows:

1. The cost of education would increase since more personnel such as a supervising principal or academic administrator, a business administrator, and office staff would be required.
2. The teachers under one board could form a larger bargaining unit, and thus eventually demand and receive further increases in salary.
3. It was feared that there would be a sharp increase in the mill rate owing to expenditures during amalgamation.
4. The Port Credit ratepayers felt that they would be carrying a heavier share of taxation than Toronto Township, and that the South Peel High School Area Board should not be included since this same board was doing an adequate job.
5. The people of S.S. 19 in Toronto Township wanted to send their children to Riverside Public School which they helped to build and not some other school within the township.
6. The local people in each school section felt that some teachers, who were doing an adequate job educating their children, and administrators might lose their jobs; and furthermore, if they amalgamated into one board, they wanted each new school that was to be built in their area to be in the middle of the school section rather than at a convenient point in the township.

Before the Private Member's Bill Committee, the Township and Town continued to argue until the chairman of the committee told them to go home and settle their differences and come back with a unified plan. A hurried meeting was called to take place in Clarke Hall in Port Credit; representatives from South Peel High School Area Board, the Port Credit Public School Board and delegates from all the school sections were present.

Nothing was decided, although the members of the South Peel High School Board said that they would not seek re-election if a Board of Education formed. The only outcome of the meeting was the sobering realization that some compromise must be reached.

At the next meeting before the Private Member's Bill Committee, Toronto Township compromised on the two main issues, that is, allowing:

S.S. 19 to remain under the control of the Port Credit Public School Board; and allowing Port Credit to elect its members who were to sit in on matters dealing with High School education in South Peel.

The Port Credit interest immediately dropped its opposition and so on March 27, 1952 the proposal was approved by the Private Member's Bill Committee and subsequently sent to the Legislature where it was passed and became Bill No. 26. The Bill is contained in Appendix I and a list of the members of the first Board of Education and the early administration follows in Appendix II.

How successful has the South Peel Board of Education been following its formation? Since 1952, three large modern Secondary Schools along with eighteen Public Schools, have been built. Furthermore, the board has accepted the aid to be supplied according to the Robarts Plan and has added a vocational addition to T. L. Kennedy S.S. and is in the process of building one of the most modern composite schools in the province. The quality of teaching has increased and the future of the Board looks exceedingly good. The story of the South Peel Board of Education is only one example of the advancement of education through co-operation.

## BILL

An Act respecting the Township of Toronto  
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Whereas the Corporation of the Township of Toronto by its petition has prayed for special legislation in respect of the matters hereinafter set forth; and whereas it is expedient to grant the prayer of the petition.

Therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

1. On the day on which the Board of Education established by this Act holds its first meeting, hereinafter referred to as the commencement day, those parts of the TOWNSHIP of Toronto that are included in Public School Sections Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 22 and 23 of the Township are hereby established as a township school area.

2. On the commencement day The South Peel District High School Board and the public school boards of the said Public School Sections Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 22 and 23 are hereby dissolved, and all their powers and duties shall be performed by one board of education to be known as The South Peel Board of Education which shall be a corporation by that name, and is hereinafter referred to as the Board of Education, and which shall have all the powers and perform all the duties which by this or any other Act are conferred or imposed upon a public school board, a high school board or a board of education.

3. (1) The powers and duties of the Board of Education shall not extend to the public schools of the Village of Port Credit unless the council of The Corporation of the Village of Port Credit passes a resolution requesting the inclusion of the Village in the said township school area, in which case the council of The Corporation of the Township of Toronto shall pass a by-law to include the Village in such township school areas.

(2) The day of the inclusion of the Village of Port Credit in the said township school area shall be fixed in such by-law and on such day The Port Credit Public School Board is hereby dissolved, and all the real and personal property that is vested in such Board shall become vested in the Board of Education, and all debts, contracts and agreements for which such Board is liable shall become obligations of the Board of Education.

(3) All rights and claims between the Village and the parts of the Township within the said township school area shall be

valued, adjusted and determined in the manner provided in section 17 of The Public Schools Act.

4. The Board of Education shall be composed of the following members: two members shall be elected in each ward or part of a ward of the Township that is within the said township school area, except in the part of Ward 5 that is within such area, which part of Ward 5 shall be deemed to be part of Ward 3 for the purpose of the election of such members; four members shall be elected in the Village of Port Credit; one member may be appointed by the council of The Corporation of the County of Peel, and one member may be appointed by a separate school board in the manner provided in section 23 of The High Schools Act.

5. (1) The first election of members of the Board of Education shall be held at the earliest possible date after this Act comes into force.

(2) The provisions of The Public Schools Act respecting qualifications of urban school trustees and the election of such trustees by ballot shall apply to such first election.

(3) No person shall be disqualified to be nominated and elected as a member of the Board of Education at the first election of members thereof by reason of being at that time a public or high school trustee.

6. The provisions of The High Schools Act respecting qualifications of trustees shall apply to the appointed members of the Board of Education.

7. In each of Wards 1, 2 and 3 of the Township, the two candidates receiving at the first election the highest number of votes shall be elected, and as between themselves the candidate having the larger number of votes shall continue in office until the 31st day of December, 1953, and the other until the 31st day of December, 1952, and until their successors are elected and the new board is organized.

8. At the time of holding the municipal elections for the year 1953 and thereafter the elective members shall be elected in the manner provided in The Boards of Education Act except that the qualifications of such members shall be those of urban school trustees as provided in The Public Schools Act.

9. The clerk of the Township shall call and until a chairman is elected shall preside at the first meeting of the Board of Education which shall be held on a day to be fixed by such clerk, but not later than the 28th day of June, 1952, at the hour of 2 o'clock in the afternoon at the township hall, at which the members of the Board of Education shall elect a chairman and secretary-treasurer or a secretary and a treasurer.

10. On the commencement day all the real and personal property that is vested in The South Peel District High School Board and the public school boards of the said Public School Sections Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 22 and 23 shall become vested in the

Board of Education, and all debts, contracts and agreements for which the said boards are liable shall become obligations of the Board of Education.

11. While the Village of Port Credit remains outside the said township school area, the members of the Board of Education elected in the Village of Port Credit shall not vote or otherwise take part in any of the proceedings of the Board of Education exclusively affecting the public schools.

12. All rights and claims between the respective parts of the Township comprising the said Sections on the commencement day shall be valued, adjusted and determined in the manner provided in section 17 of The Public Schools Act.

13. All the provisions of The Boards of Education Act, The Public Schools Act and The High Schools Act that are not inconsistent with this Act shall apply to the Board of Education established by this Act in the same manner and to the same extent as if the Board of Education had been established pursuant to The Boards of Education Act.

14. This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

15. This Act may be cited as The Township of Toronto Act, 1952.

Appendix II

The Members of South Peel Board of Education

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Port Credit and S.S. 19

Mr. E. Wright  
Mr. A. Sanderson  
Mrs. Young  
Mr. J. Whyte

Ward 1

Mr. R. Cole  
Mr. P. Gorrie

Ward 2

Mr. J. Pengilley  
Mrs. J. Van Every

Ward 3

Mr. L. Hughes  
Mr. J. Featherston

Mr. Barrett, Chairman, resigned in July 1952.  
Mr. L. Hughes assumed the role as chairman.  
Mr. Wright was the secretary.

Mr. H. J. A. Brown, B.A. became the first Business Administrator as of September 15, 1952.

SOURCES

1. An Early Red School House and its Century Old Record Book - by John Barnett, for the Ontario Historical Society.
2. "An Examination of the Ledger of Toronto Township S.S.#1 1856 - 1908" prepared for Dr. Phillips for the Board of Education, by Miss J. C. MacDonald, February 1, 1958.
3. The Port Credit Weekly - Weekly issues for the years 1950, 1951, 1952.
4. A private interview with:
  - (1) Mr. E. Wright - a former chairman of the South Peel Board of Education.
  - (2) Mr. H. J. A. Brown - Business Administrator of the South Peel Board of Education.
5. Historical Atlas of Peel County, Ontario - published by Walker and Miles, 1877.

June 8, 1963

MEMORANDUM of comments regarding  
Mr. Fred Chalk's thesis on "The  
formation of the South Peel Board  
of Education".

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Page 1

The South Peel Board of Education, herein referred to as the "Board", is not the "only school board in the Province of Ontario to be created" by a private Act of the Legislature. In Etobicoke, for example, a board of education was created by a private Act a few years before 1952.

Page 2

The history of the organization of each of the former rural public school sections is unimportant for the purpose of the thesis.

Page 3

The people were not satisfied with the administration of those rural public schools. The population of the south part of the Township had been greatly increased by many new residents from the City of Toronto who demanded better schools.

Page 8

If the Township records are checked, they will show no township school area by-law to have been "disallowed" by the Minister of Education. Early in 1950 the councils of both Port Credit and Toronto Township passed resolutions requesting the County council

- (a) to reduce the size of the South Peel school area so as to leave out of the proposed board of education area certain northern rural school sections where attendance was small, and
- (b) to set up a board of education for the southern area including Streetsville.

The main opposition to the proposed unification of the rural school sections in the southern part of the Township was in the section which included the British American Oil Co. Ltd. refinery, the school taxes from which went to the public school trustees of that single section.

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Lines 9 to 26 are not correct.

The bill (26) to create the Board was first introduced in the Legislature in 1952. Its sponsor was the member for Halton because the rules forbid a cabinet minister (Hon. T.L. Kennedy, member for Peel, was Minister of Agriculture) sponsoring a private bill.

When the bill was first considered by the Private Bills Committee Mr. Gordon B. Jackson, Q.C. represented the Township and the bill was deferred to a later day when Mr. Van Every, in place of Mr. Jackson, represented the Township. At the second hearing the bill received the approval of the Committee and soon afterwards was passed by the Legislature.

All names of persons should be omitted from the thesis.

*Alan Van Every*