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Public needs more than expert figures

The public, Halton Region is finding out, is adamantly against burying garbage in the ground, but it has some reservations about energy-from-waste (EFW) projects, too.

At a public meeting in Oakville last week, residents told regional officials they were concerned about air emissions from an EFW plant. Their reluctance no doubt stems from problems with the solid waste reduction unit (SWARU) in Hamilton, which will undergo expensive repairs to reduce its emissions.

The public has also shown repeatedly, however, that it wants nothing do to with burying garbage underground, and especially if that ground is in their neighborhood.

The job now confronting the Region and its advisors, ad-

ministrators and elected officials is relatively simple: it must convince the public that it is serious about finding alternatives to sanitary landfill as a means of disposing of municipal garbage, and it must convince the public that the new means will be safe for all concerned.

The way to convince the public, however, is not to overwhelm them with high-priced experts who can fight their way through a hearing. The public must be dealt with fairly, given all the information available in the most understandable language possible, and then allowed some reasonable input into the development of the project.

Without participation, it is unreasonable to expect the public to understand and agree to regional decisions.

CLOSING 10% OF ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS TO SAVE MONEY ON FUEL COSTS.

Fact and fiction.

It's often difficult to differentiate between the two, particularly when you have to depend on someone else to interpret for you.

Such is the case with newspaper readers. They must depend on the newspaper's reporters to separate the fact from the fiction in what they see and hear, and then interpret the two items in the newspaper stories.

The real problem develops, however, when there is confusion between reading a story, which is an interpretation of fact, and reading a column, which is the opinion of the writer.

Such was the case with two recent instances in The Post and Weekend Post. The first was a column — or more correctly, a series of columns — written by W.J.D. (Bill) McAlister in which he asked a number of questions about the expansion of City Hall, and then challenged Mayor Roly Bird to answer them.

The second instance was a column on the whole question of nuclear generation of electricity, its safety and cost benefits.

In the first case, McAlister was accused of inaccurate reporting. Such was not the case at all, as far as I can tell. What McAlister was doing was reading the newspaper accounts of the expansion — accounts which Mayor Bird said were fair and accurate —

and then putting forth his opinions on those fair and accurate reports.

The fact that some officials at City Hall happen to be in disagreement with McAlister or are uncomfortable with his asking questions really has no bearing on whether his opinions are valid or not.

What is important, I think, is that there are questions being asked about the expansion of

Dave de Jong



City Hall, whether it is needed and how much it will cost. It is just unfortunate that, as Mayor Bird pointed out in his reply in the June 2 issue of Weekend Post, the public has not seen the issue as important enough to express themselves on.

As for the lengthy reply from Atomic Energy of Canada in last week's issue of The Post, and a letter in this issue from Ontario

Student Theatre says thanks