

Recommendation rejected

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Paquette said in the letter that the Commission is confident that the recommendations, if accepted by the board and FLAC, will bring about a settlement of the question to the satisfaction and benefit of everyone concerned.

The majority of the board disagreed, and voted against the Commission's recommendations.

Trustee Jamie Kydd of Cochrane pointed out before the vote that history has shown that if a decision is made against such recommendations, the Minister of Education can still force the board to accept the entity.

The board was also reminded that there were only 750 replies sent to the 2,000 OISE surveys sent out, with only 430 in favour of the entity.

Board Superintendent of Schools R. G. Michon and Superintendent of Business Affairs William Mitchell asked the board what should be put in the letter to the Commission,

along with the results of the vote on the recommendations.

A consensus was reached to use both the survey results and the local petition results in the letter, along with a comment about the long term financial aspect of the proposed entity.

"Who will look at this letter?" Powell asked. "This is a very important document."

The board agreed to look at the final draft of the letter at the next board meeting before the letter is mailed to the Commission. The next board meeting is scheduled for Oct. 25 at 7 p.m. in the Iroquois Falls Secondary School Library.

Powell reminded the board that there is a similar case currently going on in North Bay, where the local FLAC has placed the case involving the Nipissing Board of Education before the Supreme Court of Ontario because the board has not established the proposed entity.

"FLAC is basing their case on the Bill of Rights," Powell

explained. "However, that is not exactly the same as our situation here. In their case, there were not enough French ratepayers supporting it (the entity)."

Michon, following the meeting, said the next step belongs to the Commission, the Minister, or FLAC in the Iroquois Falls case.

"I really don't know if it's over," McGrath admitted.

OLIC suggestion

rejects
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By Conrad Felber

By a 10 to four vote, the Cochrane-Iroquois Falls Board of Education, at its monthly meeting Oct. 12, decided to reject a recommendation from the Languages of Instruction Commission of Ontario to establish a French Language Entity at Iroquois Falls Secondary School (IFSS).

There were a number of cheers and a great deal of applause from the delegation of

about 35 people following the vote on the matter at the meeting, which was held in Cochrane.

However, Board Chairman Clara McGrath warned that the separate entity issue at IFSS is not over yet, and added that the vote to reject the recommendation is the board's answer to the Commission.

"We hope it's over now," one of the organizers of a petition, Viviane Mongrain, said. "It was over two years ago, and now it's

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starting over again."

She and her husband, Jean-Guy, along with the rest of the delegation, pointed out to the board before the vote that 2,360 signatures were collected on the anti-entity petition.

"Last September a group of serious minded citizens organized a petition to counteract the controversial survey by OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies and Education) which was conducted in the spring of 1982," Viviane Mongrain said.

The survey only managed to generate 430 people in favour of the entity proposal, she pointed out, adding that 1,117 residents didn't even answer the survey.

"The people of Iroquois Falls don't want a separate entity," she insisted. "We are still the same serious minded citizens....how many times will we have to do this?"

Board trustee Dolores Grenon of Cochrane said she is for the entity herself because she believes the majority of the francophones want an entity.

"We can't neglect that," she added.

"That portion is not from Iroquois Falls," someone in the delegation replied. "The percentage from Iroquois Falls is very small."

Trustee Gilles Chartrand, also of Cochrane, answered that the OISE survey speaks for itself.

"A petition anyone will sign because they don't want to refuse," he added. "It doesn't have the same value as a survey."

"For us, the petition had more value," someone else* in the audience responded. "If you want an entity in Cochrane, that's fine with us, but we do not want one in Iroquois Falls."

"Nobody was more aware of the situation than the Cochrane trustees," trustee David Hughes of Cochrane said. "No one can say that this situation won't face Cochrane a year from now (but) Cochrane trustees must make decisions on all board matters."

The letter from the Commission to the Director of Education with the board, David Powell, pointed out that the Commission originally recommended to the board that a decision on the entity be delayed. That recommendation was made on Jan. 23, 1981.

Ryan Paquette, the Chairman of the Commission, added in his letter that pursuant to Section 277 of The Education Act, the Commission is "now prepared to recommend a course of action that it considers

appropriate to settle the disagreement between the board and its French Language Advisory Committee (FLAC)."

He explained that the request for the entity appears to meet the criteria set out in the Minister's Statement of Oct. 5, 1979, namely, an adequate number of students, suitable facilities, an available staff and a community possessing a significant number of French-speaking ratepayers.

"The Commission cannot understand why the board has failed to live up to its previous commitment," Paquette added in the letter.

"(We) strongly recommend that a resolution be adopted by the board establishing a French-language Entity at IFSS (and) that the co-operation of FLAC be sought with a view to planning for the gradual establishment of the proposed entity," the Commission recommended.

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