

Teachers sold "bill of goods"

Tom Ramautarsingh, Honorary Life Member of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) and former President of the Halton Secondary School Teachers' Federation (1971-1973), was selected to represent the OSSTF at the 49th Annual General Meeting of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) in March.

Mr. Ramautarsingh offered varied thoughts on the meeting.

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Education in her address stated that change is taking place in every way you think of it. Education is no exception and it needs to change. There is a major reorganization in the Ministry of Education and Training. Changes are made through consultation. Today the majority wants an integrated approach.

The Transition Years in Grades 7, 8 & 9 are being introduced in September, 1993, unless permission is granted to extend its introduction. There are learning outcomes, bench marks, development of skills and appropriate strategies. Destreaming is not much of a change. It does, however, de-label students from the Basic, General and Advanced programs.

The Common Curriculum guidelines are being released. It is a beginning of a dialogue which will improve knowledge and skills. Today we have children of differing backgrounds and changes are necessary to accomplish the things that are necessary to accomplish the things that are pertinent. Everyone will have to work together collaboratively to achieve the mandated outcome based education. There must be cost saving between boards of education, fiscal restraints and duplication eliminated. Boards of Education must be responsive to community needs.

After the address, OECTA members lined up and stated their feelings about what the Ministry of Education was doing to the students, teachers, parents and society-at-large. Here are a few of the statements made and the Assistant Deputy Minister was requested to relay these to Education Minister David Cooke.

"We have given up our holidays to discuss educational matters for the good of the students in this province and yet the Minister of Education has gone on holidays. He knew of our AGM and our invitation to address this assembly which represents 33,000 teachers. He has shown great disrespect to the teachers of OECTA by not being here."



Tom Ramautarsingh

"We are angry that the Minister is not here to dialogue with us. It is the first time in history that a Minister of Education has not had the courtesy to hear what the teachers in OECTA have to say."

"Teachers have been sold a bill of goods by this NDP government."

"We don't need massive changes as there are no major flaws in the educational system."

"Under the guise of change the teachers are made the scapegoats for this government."

Mr. Ramautarsingh feels teachers are anxious and uneasy about the Common Curriculum, especially the Transition Years because no curriculum is developed, Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines were recently sent out (March), no in-service training for the teachers has been held, no money is forthcoming for in service training, resources are inadequate and have not been developed for teaching students of various programs in one classroom, the time-line of September, 1993 is too short a time to implement the Transition Years, the pilot projects have not been evaluated and if they have, the results have never been released, and lastly, the decrediting of Grade 9 is dubious and debatable.

The Minister and this government should reconsider some of the things that are being mandated.

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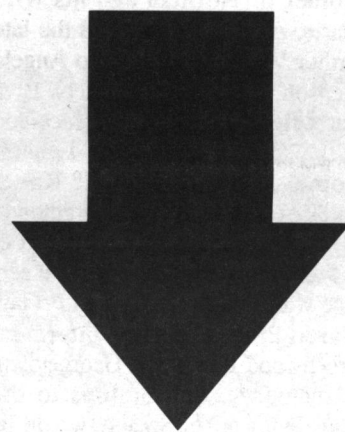
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