

Editorial comment

Equality in our education system?

Dear Editor:

If you enter the 'gates' of Penetanguishene, you will notice the angels have been temporarily removed for refurbishing. These statues which were originally erected many years ago were intended to represent the two existing cultures - French and English - living in harmony. Since when did harmony mean inequality, intolerance, resentment, and prejudice? If these holy angels symbolize a blessed respect for the differing cultures, then hypocrisy has a new meaning.

For many years, we have all been silently watching certain major issues blister and finally come to a head. For many years we have tolerated the needs and rights of the community. For many years we have allowed the French their rights, the Roman Catholics - their divine rights, and the French Roman Catholics - their divine rights in their own language! Now we have a situation of 'no rights' for the English speaking heathens!! Isn't it about time, the administrators, super-

visor and officials clean up this ridiculous mess and give those poor angels some credibility!!

We're talking about education, We're talking about tax dollars. We're talking about equality for all children.

Penetanguishene is a wondrous comedy of educational errors. Only three similar situations exist in all of Ontario. (Thank God!)

Here is a community with a population of 5,400 supporting 5 elementary schools and 2 secondary schools. We have an English Roman Catholic School (St. Ann's), a French Roman Catholic School (Ste. Louis), a French Public School (St. Joseph), an English Public School (Corpus Christi), a Protestant Separate School (Burkevale), and a French High School (LeCaron), and finally an English/French High School (ESPSS). Yes, all this in the name of 'Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Belief'. Yes, all this is paid for (excepting one) by the public taxpayer. Taxpayer - public school taxpayer, please read on.

Firstly, we will discuss St. Ann's. This group had a divine need to have God lurking around in their classrooms. Now, these people have a divine need for more space, and just recently their divine superiority allowed them to make a verbal attack on another school accusing the latter of ill-feelings, not to mention the downgrading of all public schools. Public taxpayer - you're paying for this

Secondly, we've satisfied the French Roman Catholics who expressed their necessity to learn about God in their own language! French Roman Catholic - you say! Strangely enough, to get enough enrollment this group encouraged students from all denominations, any language! Talk about tending the "French" flock!!

The best is yet to come! St. Joseph, a "so-called" elite school enjoy a French speaking system in a Public School Board, who are answerable to a FLEC committee who apparently is answerable to no one! However, you're somebody, or think you are, better send your kids to St. Joe's. Your child may

cry out of frustration but, the attending child going to St. Joe's will surely give you something to talk about while your dentist is cleaning your teeth!

This school, St. Joe's, is avidantly answerable to FLEC, yet supported by the SCRE - the public school taxpayer! This school receives special treatment and more benefits than the public school - yet it is supported by the public school. Why? Can you also tell me why a student receives a higher grant money than does the public school child? Is it because these students are better - or perhaps they're French. In any case - this is wrong, it's inequality, it's reverse discrimination. All people are created equal, and should have equal rights and opportunities.

Now, this school, which was initially denied access to information regarding ESPSS programmes for grade nine students, by FLEC, continues to promote Le Caron.

And now for the ultimate example of discrimination and inequality! The FLEC committee has convinced the board that a junior kindergarten is a necessity at St. Joseph's School. Public school taxpayer, you are paying for this privilege - but not for your child, for someone else's child. This motion of granting St. Joe's JK detrimentally affects the entire public school system of Simcoe County. This motion should and must excite all families who believe in justice and equality. Right now, in fact, as you read this lengthy letter, all separate schools offer JK to their subscribers. Our tax dollar pays for this - yet we are denied the same option. Why?

Something that is no' only puzzling, but also remarkable - with all the publicity these schools are receiving, we have yet to read any articles from the oppressed - Corpus Christi, ESPSS. Why are you silent?

I am a public school taxpayer. My children are enrolled in a public school. I believe in God. I believe in equality for all children - yours and mine. I believe through compromise, fairness, and respect for each other, we can live in harmony.

Name withheld

Decision may be hasty

Only time will tell if village officials in Victoria Harbour were a little hasty in their decision to rescind the bylaw that created the administrator's position in 1984.

Last Thursday evening the five member council met at a special meeting to discuss the controversial issue that has plagued the village council since the election in November of 1985 with the final result being a 3 - 2 vote in favor of abolishing the position.

Although some village residents may argue the salary, paid to Administrator Doug Jackson, was too much for the taxpayers to handle, the crux of the matter is that the village was not paying Jackson's complete salary. A portion of the administration salary came from the Ontario Hydro.

In the long run, taxpayers could end up paying more if another individual, not an administrator though, has to be hired in the next year or two, to cover the workload that before now had been handled by Jackson.

Despite the fact council has debated over this matter for the past year did any of the councillors take the time to examine the administrator's track record over the past two and a half years.

Was the village, through the efforts of an administrator, able to obtain extra funding, in the form of grants, from the various provincial and federal government ministries? Have the councils of the past two and a half years operated more smoothly because of the administration position? Is the village office run more efficiently than it was when there was only a clerk-treasurer?

If the council can answer all of these questions with a 'no', then they have made, undoubtedly, the right decision.

If the answers should be yes, council will know within the next few months.

Viewpoint

Carey Nieuwhof

Paving the way for Ed?

There are hardly words to describe what is happening in Ottawa these days. There is no such thing as having the "bottom line" on national affairs anymore, because as we are constantly finding out, the bottom line continues to sink deeper.

Each day, Canada wakes up hoping that it has heard the last of the scandals and allegations of wrongdoing, and each morning Canada awakens to find more blood on the doorstep: yet another Tory has fallen. How does one respond to this?

The political jokes are hardly funny anymore - Why did Brian Mulroney cross the road? He didn't, he just said he did. Or maybe jokes are the solution. Perhaps if we voters laugh our way through the storm, we'll one day find sanity restored to Parliament Hill! (Question: Did sanity ever exist there in the first place?)

It looks like most people don't know how to respond to the wave of scandals in Ottawa. After all, has there ever been a time when so many people have been so misguided at once? The allegations of influence peddling, corruption, political interference and whatever else lies ahead makes one's head

spin. Do we laugh, cry, get mad, or hold our breath until our face turns blue? If it turns Tory blue, then maybe Ottawa will pay attention to us.

The polls are also telling us that this country is reacting strangely to the current situation. The chief beneficiary of Brian Mulroney's woes has not been John Turner. It has been Ed Broadbent. Perhaps the one correct thing Brian Mulroney has said recently has been his analysis of his government's standing in the polls - 23 per cent. "We're about as unpopular as Pierre Trudeau was four years ago". Well, Brian, maybe you are right. I don't think most Canadians share the deeply rooted animosity they had toward Pierre Elliott, but they certainly don't feel that you deserve their trust either.

What is particularly striking about Mulroney's analysis of the latest polls is that it seems the Liberals are still no as popular as they should be. For all the scandals the Liberals have exposed, for all the apparent victories they have achieved by assassinating minister after minister, they are still only at 42 per cent in the polls. Do people still see

Trudeau when they look at John Turner? John certainly hopes they don't. Have they still not forgiven the Liberals for the "sins" they committed when in office? Why is John Turner not the knight in shining armour he so desperately wants to be? That is a 31 billion dollar question.

The polls tell us that many people are putting their faith in Ed Broadbent and his cohorts. While Mulroney slides and John Turner stagnates, Ed Broadbent is stealing home. Is Canada ready for Broadbent? Is Broadbent ready for Canada?

Just a year ago, political analysts were still saying how nice it would be to be Ed Broadbent, leader of the third party. You could say whatever you wished. You could promise the world to voters, paint an image of a political Utopia, you could cast yourself as patron saint of Canada and never be held accountable for any of this, since, of course, you would never be elected Prime Minister.

But if the scandals continue Ed could find himself very close to the drivers seat very soon, if not behind the wheel. It is becoming clear that while few people will vote for Mulroney whilst his government remains in

its current condition, not more than 40 per cent of any group of voters anywhere will give Turner the nod. Perhaps Canadians are just as tired of Liberal mudslinging as they are of Tory wrongdoing.

Broadbent knows that he has a much better chance of victory in the next election than he has ever had before, and he's preparing to seize that opportunity. Rumour has it that Dave Barnett of B.C., Saskatchewan's Allan Blakney, Manitoba's Ed Schreyer, and Ontario's Stephen Lewis may all stand for the federal New Democrats in the next election. These people, if I may put it frankly, are not caucus material. These people are cabinet material. The rather large question now is whether the current NDP surge is the by-product of a temporarily dissatisfied electorate, or one that has genuinely had it with the old parties.

Unless Brian Mulroney gets his act together soon, and who knows how long that may take, and unless John Turner manages to make charisma a personal priority, Ed Broadbent will be pleased to know that the answer to that question is the latter.

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Letters

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