

# Group pleads with SCBE to stop FLEC

Well over 400 local people filled the gym of Barrie's North Collegiate last Tuesday evening in an rally support from the Simcoe County Board of Education (SCBE) in their fight against the French Language Education Council's (FLEC) decision to abolish French programs at Ecole Secondaire Penetanguishene Secondary School.

While some of the delegation, that has banded together and formed the organization PROBE (Preserve Rights of Bilingual Education), asked for a reversal of FLEC's decision to phase out the French-language courses at ESPSS, others asked for the intervention of the entire board of education on their behalf. One Francophone, Bert Desrochers, asked the three-member FLEC to step down if the trustees do not change their decision.

But the group from North Simcoe boarded the bus in Barrie for home very disappointed, getting only moral support from other SCBE trustees.

In four delegations, by students and parents, the presentors made their points emotionally before the trustees.

Some called for the reinstatement of the programs, others called for the resignation of the French trustees.

However, the majority committee members, by law, are powerless to change the decision made by FLEC two weeks ago.

"I have never received four delegations appearing before the board," SCBE Chairman Linda Godhue said, after the delegations had been made. "The

jurisdiction over program in French-language schools is given to the FLEC members and that's where it lays right now. We're happy to receive you as a board and will look at your presentations."

Vice-chairman Joan Jensen, along with several other trustees, wished the groups well.

"It is regrettable this decision was made without the consultation of other board members. As a courtesy, it would have been considerate to be consulted," Jensen said.

Trustee Betty Aldridge reassured the groups of her support.

"I hope FLEC will reconsider (its decision)," she said. "If I was a parent, I would be out there in that delegation."

Trustee Roy Edwards complimented the delegation leaders.

"The presentations were extremely good and I wish them all the success," he said.

But what disappoints the groups, is the board's reaction time.

Godhue told the parents her board had gone further than ever before in giving them a spontaneous reaction.

However, the parents are currently concerned about their children's option sheets, which must be submitted to the board by March 20, five days before the next regular SCBE meeting.

"Timing's critical to us and timing's critical to you in terms of grants and staffing," said Bob MacKinnon, a leader of the ESPSS parents delegation.

FLEC vice-chairman Basile Dorion reassured the SCBE and the parents

his council would consider what the delegations had to say, although he did not give in to a request from PROBE, which represents parents and students at

ESPSS, to rescind the decision to phase out the programs at the bilingual high school.

"We can look at facts and studies and expert opi-

nions and not look at emotion and politics," said the acting-chairman. "I feel good our decision was based on facts and expert opinion."

"We'll be reading through the briefs," he told the crowd which waved signs and placards, "and taking every comment seriously."

FLEC meets tomorrow night. According to Alvin Gravelle, delegations supporting FLEC's move are scheduled to attend.



## Popular support

Louise Douglas received a lot of support as she told the Simcoe County Board of Education why they should force the French

Language Education Council (FLEC) to rescind its decision about phasing out the French-language classes at Ecole Secondaire

Penetanguishene Secondary School. The group of over 400 waved their placards in support of Douglas' statement to the board.

## Le Caron addition on hold until court rules

The addition of technical and family studies shops, a music room and another gym at Ecole Secondaire Le Caron will not be completed by September, as hoped by the French Language Education Council (FLEC).

The Simcoe County Board of Education's (SCBE) legal committee has recommended the board not build the addition to the French-language high school until the appeal of the Jacques Marchand case has been decided upon by the courts.

The full board accepted the legal committee's recommendation recently, at a special meeting of the SCBE in Barrie. FLEC Vice-chairman Basile Dorion said, during the discussions, his committee could not support the recommendation to put the addition on hold until the courts decide on the board's appeal. However, the three-member council

was outvoted. In accordance with the decision on the Marchand case handed down by Mr. Justice Sirois, the board has agreed to proceed with the planning of the addition.

According to Director of Education Richard Boswell, the board's planning for Le Caron must be based on potential enrolments rather than on actual enrolments, because this fact was stressed in Sirois' judgement.

The provincial court judge also said the board of education must provide equivalent facilities and quality of education for the Francophones as the Anglophones. However, this, said Boswell, is one of the statements the board and the Ministry of Education are appealing about the decision handed down by the Ontario Supreme Court in July.

In January, the SCBE received a \$300,000 from

the Ministry of Education, which was specifically designated for the planning costs of the Le Caron addition.

FLEC decided to use the money immediately, on the advice of Director of Education Richard Boswell, however, they went one step further and decided to apply for further ministry grants in an effort to have some additional facilities ready for this September.

The committee referred the matter to the SCBE's architects and presented a

draft to the entire school board at February's board meeting two weeks ago. It was then, that the SCBE decided to refer the matter to their legal committee to discuss whether it was within FLEC's jurisdiction to approve and proceed with building addition.

The legal committee's report also recommended the SCBE insist the Ministry of Education "agree to assume the full cost of any construction that may be required at Ecole Secondaire Le Caron".

The final recommendation, also related to the ruling handed down by Mr. Justice Sirois, underlined the board's concern that it not have to pay more in instructional costs at Le Caron.

The final statement recommended "that the Ministry of Education take all steps necessary to ensure that provincial funding for French-language instruction is adequate to meet the additional instructional costs that may be required by the decision of Justice Sirois."



## Ministry Man

Andre Lalonde, from the Ministry of Education, explained Bill 75 and the powers of the French Language Education Council (FLEC) to a group of 200 parents at Ecole St. Joseph Thursday evening. Lalonde answered questions about the bill which received royal assent last summer and set up FLEC this fall.

## Street light policy

Tiny Township Council is still working on formulating a policy on street lights in the township.

According to Township Clerk Guy Maurice, the council has received several requests for street lights, and in response to those, council toured the township in December, noting the unlit areas. As well, council is considering requests that have come in since that time.

The councillors agree they can't put street lights everywhere, since each light costs the Township

But Brasher added, residents can rent a light from Ontario Hydro for \$7.40 a month. He added, however, the light must face the private property rather than the street. \$1,000 to erect and maintain, Deputy-reeve Dr. Peter Brasher said.

As for the seasonal dwelling areas of the township, the councillors agree these areas must be placed at the bottom of the priority list, and more permanent areas must be given priority.



## Draw

The Centre D'Activites Francaises's draw for 1986-1987 came to an end this Friday. The last winner for this series of draws was Helene Desroches of Lafontaine. The draw was made by Phillippe Chartrand

and Richard De Grandmont. Tickets for the twelve draws from April 1987 to March 1988 are on sale at a cost of \$100 per book, offering 12 chances at winning \$1,000.