

Reader's comments

French rights protected by decision

Dear Editor:

I would like to make a few comments regarding the presentation circulated by "P.R.O.B.E." to the S.C.B.E. on March 3, 1987.

I presume that even the author will agree that her

statement, in her first sentence, is absolutely incorrect. She claims to "speak on behalf of the students and parents of the community of Penetanguishene (sic) area." She obviously does not speak for

many in this area.

And before she tells anyone that she speaks for the majority, let me quickly grant her that. We know that we are the minority. That is exactly the essence of Bill 75. This law, enacted to try to comply with article 23 of the Constitution, is to protect the language rights of the minority.

To claim that the anglophone element of Simcoe has made the

sacrifices for French education is surely a distortion that deserves a reply. According to the 1981 census, there are over 7,500 francophones in Simcoe. They also happen to be taxpayers. One could certainly argue that their taxes, over the years, have been used to pay some English teachers. It could even be suggested that their taxes have been used in a system which effectively assimilated them at an alarming rate.

I am particularly happy that she quotes the MacLeans article of July 1983, giving the virtues of bilingualism. What she fails to say is that, at the so called "all French school", all the students, without exception, can speak, read and write in both official languages.

She says: "We value honesty". Let's be honest and say that it is impossible to graduate from Le Caron and not be fluently

bilingual. Let's be honest; it is not the English language which is threatened. It is not the knowledge and the use of English which is a problem with our youngsters in our French schools; it is the knowledge and use of French. And anyone who doubts this should visit the playgrounds and hallways of any of our French schools. To suggest that a student risks to lose his fluency in English by attending a French school in

this region of Ontario is a gross mistatement of the facts.

Yes, let us be honest and tolerant. FLEC was elected to represent the francophones, this, they are doing, and at the same time, they are providing the only vehicle which guarantees that every graduate of the French system of education will be bilingual.

Yours sincerely,
J. Marchand

Trustees share residents' concerns

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to the many letters we have received expressing views concerning the recent decision of the F.L.E.C. to terminate the French-language Instructional Units at E.S.P.S.S.

Thank you for your time and the effort you have made to inform the trustees of the Simcoe County Board of Education and especially the F.L.E.C. trustees of your opinions.

We share your concerns

and have urged the members of F.L.E.C. to reconsider their decision.

We support maintaining a program of studies which will allow students attending E.S.P.S.S. the freedom of choice to receive class instruction in the French and/or English language.

Yours truly
Joan Jensen
Roy Edwards
Trustees
S.C.B.E.

Teachers support parents fight

Dear Editor:

On February 23, 1987, the Simcoe County French Language Education Council announced its decision to phase out French language instruction at the mixed secondary school in Penetanguishene, Ecole Secondaire Penetanguishene Secondary School. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, District 27, Simcoe Division, is strongly opposed to this decision. As educators and as taxpayers, we support the continued existence of the bilingual program at Ecole Secondaire Penetanguishene Secondary School. We believe that this program offers a unique opportunity for students in a bilingual community to receive their education in a setting which fosters mutual understanding, and which realistically reflects a desirable spirit of cooperation and tolerance in a democratic society. ESPSS students have stated that they do not wish to be separated on the basis of language, and their families are actively involved in efforts to preserve their school. We applaud and support their stance; we defend their freedom of choice.

OSSTF questions the right of elected French Language Education Council members to make a unilateral decision of this magnitude without consulting those who are

directly involved, disregarding the rights of the community which they purportedly represent. The French Language Education Council's legal mandate is to protect and promote French language education. Its resolution to eliminate the French Language Instructional Unit (which currently serves more students than the unilingual French secondary school, Le Caron) is surely inconsistent with these objectives. We believe that established democratic procedure was not followed in making this resolution, and that its effects on the community of Penetanguishene are clearly divisive.

OSSTF supports the educational and societal goals of the bilingual program at ESPSS in a bilingual community, and advocates freedom of educational choice for French-speaking students and their parents. We ask that the French Language Education Council represent all of its constituents fairly by supporting French language education at the mixed language school, and reverse its present decision to phase out French language education at Ecole Secondaire Penetanguishene Secondary School.

The Executive
District 27,
Simcoe Division
Ontario Secondary School
Teachers' Federation

Dance a success

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much for your help in making known our Sweetheart Dance which took place at the Baxter Community Centre on Feb. 21. We all appreciate it.

Almost two hundred people were at the dance and close to \$2,000 was raised for the school. The evening itself was a great success. Thanks again.

Yours sincerely
(Mrs. Dale Duffy)

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