

At school board meeting

Councillor objects to 'bias'

A meeting held to inform councillors of six local municipalities on school funding issues, did not give any information to Councillor George MacDonald, the Midland representative says.

The meeting was held in Midland council chambers last Thursday night. It was set up by Tay Township in response to a Simcoe County Board of Education letter from Chairman Joan Jensen, asking municipalities to oppose

the pooling of commercial and industrial taxes for distribution by the province instead of by municipalities. The board represents the public schools.

In the letter, the Simcoe County board opposes

pooling of commercial and industrial assessment.

It is now collected at the local level and used primarily for public school funding. The difference is made up by provincial grants to the

separate schools.

MacDonald objected to what he considered to be the public school system bias in the meeting.

A videotape shown, from the Ontario Public Education Network,

made the point that the public school system is open to all, regardless of financial status, race, or religion. It further noted "There's no question that the additional cost of extending funding to separate secondary schools has added urgency to the government's financial problems."

MacDonald noted at the meeting that, as an elected representative, he represents both public and separate school supporters. He cannot support any action that does not include both groups.

In a telephone conversation, he notes, "They were disputing the separate school funding, to which OPEN is opposed. They were saying if the separate schools weren't getting funding, they (the public schools) would get more funding."

"They should not be coming out strong against separate schools. The two systems are recognized in Ontario," he added.

All provincial funding should be considered, according to MacDonald.

"All transfer payments and education grants are not what they should be," he says. He noted the province is putting more responsibility on municipalities to raise taxes.

He agrees municipalities should be objecting.

"I would not shy away from going to Queen's Park at any time," MacDonald says. If the ad-

ministrative directors from both school systems came to town hall and said, "Let's go rattle the sabres at Queen's Park," he says he would go along with it.

Gail Kingsley, provincial councillor of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, responded to the objections MacDonald made at the meeting, "We aren't in any way trying to take anything from any school system," she insisted.

She said the public system was promised it would not be affected by separate school funding. She added "If we're to have two systems, there has to be dollars there for both systems."

Simcoe board trustee Wendy MacKenzie assured MacDonald, "We are not throwing barbs at the separate school system." Nor at the provincial government.

They want to present "a clear message to the public and separate systems and government that they are held in high esteem." Education's loss of priority with the provincial government is what is "disturbing to us," she noted.

Midland Mayor Ted Symons, who chaired the meeting, said the tape was shown "to hear the OPEN position and get information. We weren't going to draw any conclusions. There's more to be pumped into the equation before you and I make up our minds," he said.

Government proposal would raise taxes, boards insist

A provincial government proposal to pool commercial and industrial assessment of education taxes would raise property taxes, education groups say.

A panel of two Simcoe County school board members and a Penetang Secondary School teacher issued the warning at a meeting in Midland council chambers last Thursday.

Gail Kingsley represented the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation and assistant director, Bill Truelove came on behalf of the Simcoe County Board of Education, along with trustee Wendy McKenzie. Twenty North Simcoe councillors and staff turned out at Tay Township's invitation.

Tay set up the meeting in response to a letter from Chairman Joan Jensen of the Simcoe County Board of Education.

The letter warns the provincial government is after municipal taxes: the payments businesses and industries make towards education.

Municipalities collect these taxes, which now go mainly to the public school system. The separate school system is supported to a larger extent by provincial grants.

Under the proposal, the province, not the municipalities, would collect and distribute the funds. There's no guarantee municipalities would get back as much

as they put in, the groups say.

Kingsley said the provincial share of public education spending shrank from 55 per cent of total costs in 1975 to only 36 per cent in 1987.

In addition, the provincial government spent 15.1 per cent of its budget on education in 1975 and only 10.4 per cent in 1987.

Midland Mayor Ted Symons said the meeting was "not intended to be a province-bashing session." Although nothing is inevitable but death and taxes, at least "death doesn't get any worse every time the legislature meets," he joked.

He wondered how much is known about government plans.

Kingsley said a government report recommended local school boards lose their control. All funds should go to the province for distribution.

"It doesn't say how," she noted, "That's the problem. We don't know how it (the money) will be sent back."

Pat Armstrong, deputy reeve of Port McNicoll said needs, such as garbage, are competing with education.

"If education gets a bigger slice of the pie, where are you going to request it be cut from other areas?" he asked.

Kingsley said education isn't taking money from other areas; other areas are taking money away from education. "That upsets me," she said.

Midland Councillor Bob Jeffery said they need to say no, they're not going to stand for it. "If we don't, it's going to be a very Black day in this

area." "Excuse the pun," he added.

MPP Ken Black was not at the meeting. MPP Al McLean said he came "to find out why I'm get-

ting 30 letters a day over this pooling issue."

McLean said the key issue is to increase the percentage of provincial education funding.



Wool working

Elmvalle 4-H member Marcella Desroches is taking part in the Working with Wool course now in its third week. She is shown knitting, one aspect of the comprehensive study of sheep and their products.

Simcoe Centre WI meet

by Louise Wanless
Special Report

A board meeting of the Simcoe Centre Women's Institute was held Jan. 29 at the OMAF building in Elmvalle with Eva Tuck presiding with 19 present including Muriel Usher, secretary, Cora Sweeney, treasurer, the district directors of 11 of the 13 branches and Susan Leuty, rural organizations specialist.

Fun day will be March 9 in the Lions Club hall on the 7th concession of Flos Township and begins at 12:30 p.m. with a pot luck luncheon. Each member is asked to bring their own cutlery and mug and \$1 to defray expenses and each branch is asked to bring a draw prize valued from \$2.50 - \$3.

There will be 10 minutes of entertainment

provided by each of seven branches: Pine Ridge, Waverley, Allenwood, Minesing, Van Vlack, New Flos and Centre Vespra. Everyone is welcome.

The district will have a tea room at the Elmvalle Maple Syrup Festival April 8 and it will be upstairs at the Flos-Elmvalle Public Library. In charge are Saurin in the a.m. and Pine Ridge in the p.m. The hostesses are Edenvale from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Weybridge from 1-4 p.m.

Eva mentioned what a great success Home Day was Jan. 11 at the Continental Inn. The program was excellent and well attended. Susan Leuty was the lucky winner of the draw for the Royal Doulton figurine. Ethel Foster and Marg Baker were the chairpersons for the day.

WI publications were

on display as was a new book Cooking Collections available from the W.I. office for \$12 plus \$1.65 postage.

ACWW's 19th triennial conference is to be held in Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 22 - Oct. 1. This year ACWW is celebrating its diamond jubilee (60th birthday).

On the nominating committee for the district executive 1989 - 90 are Minesing (chairman), New Flos and Pine Ridge.

The district annual was discussed. It is to be hosted by Centre Vespra May 25 in the new Anglican Church in Midhurst. It was agreed to have the theme suggested by FWIO, "Women in the Environment."

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Minesing is to be in charge of the "In Memoriam." If there have been any deaths in your branch,

please contact Charlotte Merrett, RR 2, Barrie, L4M 4S5, telephone 737-2062 and give some information about the deceased.

Also contact Nora Knuff if you know of someone who has been a member for 50 years.

The cost of the noon luncheon is \$7 and each branch should let Bernice Patterson, 5 Lawrence Ave., Anton Mills, telephone 726-1223, know how many of their members are planning to attend (at least one week previously).

The roll call is to be answered by "A suggestion or hint women can use to protect the environment." Each branch is asked to bring the following: Pennies for Friendship, a donation to the Loaf of Bread project and \$1 per person to help ACWW celebrate its 60th anniversary (one cheque

made out to the treasurer will suffice if it is accompanied by a note designating how much to go to each) and a list of the branch officers to be given to the secretary.

The district would also like a donation from each branch to help cover the expenses of the DA. This may be sent in beforehand.

There will be a workshop on the environment and Susan Leuty offered to help with this.

The new WI sign was put up at the end of December and may be seen on Highway 27 at the south entrance to Elmvalle.

The month of June has been chosen WI month and at that time all branches are encouraged to hold special meetings, parties etc.

Tiny pays

Penetanguishene is the last member of the North Simcoe Waste Management Association to approve \$227,167 in levies and legal costs from Tiny Township.

The money is the result of a provincial court decision in 1987 that the township was still a member of the NSWMA from Sept. 1985 to Dec. 1987.

The previous Tiny council (before the Nov. election) maintained it had withdrawn from the NSWMA in 1985, but the association argued that wasn't the case and Tiny had to pay its share of the costs.

Under the new council, Tiny Township agreed to drop its appeal to the Ontario Supreme Court in return for no interest (about \$24,000) being charged for the delay.

Because the NSWMA isn't under one jurisdiction, all municipalities involved must each accept the motion individually. Penetang is expected to do so at its Feb. 27 council meeting.

NSWMA secretary Yvon Gagne said Tiny would still be welcomed back if it pays its share of the expenses from 1987-1989 (about \$150,000) when they officially left the organization.

"If Site 41 is chosen over Tiny's objections (in the upcoming environmental hearings in March), they'll have to buy back in, in order for them to have a place to put their garbage."