

Russell Board "dictatorial" — Parents

Parents of children attending St. Joseph's elementary school may ask the provincial government to intervene in a dispute with the Prescott-Russell Separate School Board.

Branding the board "dictatorial" in designating Grade 1 at St. Joseph's next fall "French immersion", Charles Verge said Education Minister Bette Stephenson may be asked to reverse the decision.

Mr. Verge, president of the St. Joseph's parents committee, suggested it isn't worth talking to the board because it doesn't consider the wishes of the community.

"The board must think we're stupid because it's being very dishonest about this whole thing", the committee president stated.

Mr. Verge produced a copy of a letter addressed to the board March 29 in which the committee expressed its satisfaction with this year's French immersion kindergarten at the Russell Village school and indicated that parents felt their children could

handle regular French Grade 1 in the fall.

For this reason, the committee requested in the letter that Grade 1 remain as is: regular French. The committee also asked for a meeting to discuss plans for Grade 1 and other points of interest.

Next, Mr. Verge showed a copy of a reply dated April 19 signed by Jean Leveille, director of the board, advising the committee that placement of students throughout the United Counties separate system was under review.

Mr. Leveille pointed out that the next board meeting would be held May 17 and invited the committee to let him know if it intended to make a presentation to trustees.

"We make note of your comments and we assure you that they'll be taken into consideration", Mr. Leveille wrote.

The next document in the series is a note dated April 26, signed by St. Joseph principal Gilles Ra-

cine, and sent home with students. It informed parents that the board decided that French immersion rather than regular French would be offered in Grade 1 next September.

Mr. Verge said he was "disgusted" that the board would invite parents to discuss the issue than decide well in advance what it was going to do. He insisted parents have a right to be heard on the education of their children.

In its March 29 letter, the committee indicated a preference for keeping St. Joseph French rather than making it a French school for English children in order to encourage better understanding among all community residents.

The school should be for general admission rather than exclusively for anglophones, the committee insisted. (The board is transferring children from

French-speaking families to St. Jean school in Embrun.)

The committee also asked when the board intended to implement promises to pave the school yard and provide a cafeteria and a library at St. Joseph's.

Russell parents last year began to fight the board's plans to restrict St. Joseph's to anglophones but so far it's been a losing battle.

R.A. shake-up

Thompson tells his side

Dan Thompson said he had no idea "a few administration problems" would lead to his dismissal late last month as manager of the Russell arena.

"I never received notice of anything wrong, nothing, no notice, no direction," he told the Castor Review.

The Russell Recreation Association voted 4-3 not to renew Mr. Thompson's contract, citing administrative concerns.

The "few administrative problems" he was aware of related to slowness in obtaining approval for provincial grants for arena projects, Mr. Thompson said.

"Some grants weren't coming through. I guess I may not have been pushing hard enough," he said. However, he added that he obtained approval for all but four of 16 grants he applied for as arena manager during the past two years.

The approved grants were for a general run of projects such as \$1,500 for a new hot water system and \$300 for a new door. A separate \$3,000 grant application for a different water system is one of those yet to come through, he said, attributing the delay to the general slowness of bureaucracy.

As manager and member of the South Eastern Ontario Arena And Recreation Association, it was Mr. Thompson's job to keep the recreation association informed of available grants and to pursue them.

"There have been problems where grants have been budgeted for on my advice and have

been slow in coming through. It means the association has to cut back in certain areas or increase revenues temporarily," he said, adding that any of his administrative failings were because he was forced to devote too much time to maintenance, a claim denounced by association president Jack Chaters.

"I'm the only one in my regional directors association who had to paint, mop floors, drive the Zamboni and many other things," he said. "I told the association last year that administration or maintenance would eventually have to suffer."

Inexperienced help resulted in his being called to the arena "a number of times to correct things at late hours."

"It was a damned if you do, damned if you don't situation."

He said he was aware of a reported move on the part of some members of the public to support him.

"If the public goes out on a limb for me, I'll go back," he said.

The dismissal hit Mr. Thompson at a bad time. He and his wife Leslie — they have one boy, a year-and-a-half old — were on the verge of ratifying purchase of a new home in Russell. They are living in Carlsbad Springs.

"I had to cancel the deal," he said, adding he would be at a May 2 recreation association meeting to discuss the dismissal, (the meeting was too late to be reported in this issue of the Review).

"I don't know which way to turn," he said.



Budding scientists

Jamie Bohan and Scott Patterson, both Metcalfe Public School students display the projects they earned them recognition at the recent regional science fair. Jamie was a first prize winner in taxidermy while Scott received an honorable mention for his project on volcanoes.

Parents angered by Board

Parents fighting staff cuts at Osgoode Township High School were angered early this month when the Carleton Board of Education declined to act on a motion that two extra teachers be retained at the school.

"Instead of giving us a yes or no, the board referred the matter to an internal committee," Carol Parker of Greely reported. "We doubt that our motion will be approved."

Presented by trustee Kay James of North Gower on behalf of the Osgoode High ad hoc committee, the motion urged the board to approve two additional teachers for the school in order to guarantee students the same educational opportunities available elsewhere in the board.

The motion also called for a staffing policy pertaining to isolated schools — including Osgoode — designed to ensure equality of education.

Declining enrolment at the Metcalfe school prompted the board to reduce by four the staff complement of 45 teachers. However, principal Wyatt MacLean has since been granted one full-time teaching position from the board's limited pool of extra teachers. Osgoode's net teacher loss now stands at three.

As the situation now sits, teacher cuts will lead to a reduction of the minimum credit requirement at the school to 28 from 32 over the four-year program. Parents insist this will place Osgoode students at a disadvantage when competing for employment or admission to post-secondary institutions.

"We object to the board's attitude which is unfair to the smaller country schools," said Mrs. Parker, a member of the ad-hoc committee. "There's no way any students should be prevented from getting all the possible options."

Mrs. Parker said the committee is looking for feedback on the issue from other concerned parents. She can be reached at 821-3313.

Hee Haw star headlines Russell Fair

Gordie Tapp, star of the popular Hee Haw television show will headline the entertainment at this year's Russell Fair.

Mr. Tapp's appearance at the fair was confirmed at the regular meeting of the Russell Agricultural Society April 19, at the Russell Agricultural hall. He will be accompanied by Johnny Burke and Eastwind who won the Best Song award for their recording of Wild Honey at the country music presentations in Regina last year.

The Toronto rock band Shooter will also be performing at the fair which will be held Aug. 3, 4 and 5.

Fair organizers will sponsor a field crop competition for silage corn and hay. Entry forms can be obtained from competition committee Chairman Jack James, or society secretary George Young.

Prize money for some cattle classes and heavy horses has been increased this year and two additional classes have been added to the sheep show, Barry McVey, Agricultural Society president, said.

Among the traditional fair events will be the Russell County 4-H Championship Show. Cattle shows, hunter and jumper horse shows and heavy horse shows will be organized under the direction of Mr. Eric Campbell, Mrs. Marg Wand and Mr. Clelland Hamilton, respectively. The heavy horse pull will again be organized by the Ottawa Valley Horse Pullers Association.

The Western Horse Show will be directed by the Shilo Riding Club. The Sheep Show will also be held under the direction of Jack James, Committee Chairman. The board of directors at a prior meeting decided to replace the big Tractor Pull which we have held for the past several years with a Mini-Tractor Pull. This offers all the excitement of the big pull except on a smaller scale.

This year the Saddle and harness show will be held on, under the Direction of Miss Pat Rodney of Ottawa. For the entertainment of the young people the directors have contacted the Ottawa Valley Shows Midway. This midway has attended the Metcalfe Fair for the past several years.

Naomi Eadie is the President of the Russell Agricultural Society ladies section and under her direction Doris Graham is Chairperson of Domestic Science; Mona Saunders — Handi-Craft; Edna Curry, Ada Latour and Mary Heymans — Flowers.

Junior School Exhibits are handled by Denie Achereekte and Dorothy Kinkaid along with the co-operation of the Schools. This year there are hopes for a pet show at the fair. Further information will be published when available.

If there is any exhibit or event anyone would like to see included in the fair, organizers would be pleased to hear of it and will endeavour to make room for it in the program, if possible, Mr. McVey said.

Last year the Agricultural Society handled \$60,500 in receipts used for payment of prizes to exhibitors and entertainers at the Fair, Administration Costs of the society, betterment of the Agricultural Society grounds, purchase of new equipment and construction of new buildings.

Although the fair is a three day event, preparation for the next fair starts the first day following the last fair. "Fairs are for people and this is where the community comes into the picture. Without your support we cannot survive," Mr. McVey said. "Mark your calendar now to attend one day or all three days. We are proud of our Fair and feel that we have something to offer everyone. See you at the fair."

Embrun Co-op sales up

The Embrun Co-operative (La Co-operative Agricole d'Embrun, Ltee) reached sales of \$6,821,819 in 1978, according to the annual report recently published.

This represented an increase of about \$1,300,000 over 1977.

The Co-op paid \$5,629,778 for goods sold, representing a margin of 17.5 percent between cost and eventual selling price. Net savings for the year before income tax were \$82,846, compared to \$220,209 in 1977.

The Embrun Co-op paid an I.G.A. service fee of \$37,380, up about \$11,000 over the previous year. Cost of Gold Bond Stamps came to \$61,770, an increase of about \$18,000 over 1977.

Advertising, including the Embrun I.G.A., came to \$38,327, up \$15,000 over the previous year. Working capital at the beginning of the year was \$480,424, ten thousand more than last year.

The Co-op has assets of over a million and current liabilities of about \$500,000. Working capital at the end of the year had risen to \$571,504.

The Co-op is authorized to issue 2,000 shares at \$25. Only 976 shares have been issued. During the year 140 new members were admitted and 9 members withdrew. Forty-three percent of the Co-op's sales were transacted with non members.