

S/N loses voice in school board plans

District School Board #23 will not include Native representation under Bill 160

by Mark McEachern

SIX NATIONS - The Ontario government's plan to amalgamate many of the province's school boards could result in trustees from Six Nations and New Credit losing their positions, leaving both Native communities little in regards to representation at the secondary level.

Haldimand Board of Education (HBE) Trustee and Six Nations resident Brian Doolittle says that Bill 160 will bring an end to any input from local trustees in this new school board, which will now include Haldimand, Brant and Norfolk counties as well as Six Nations and New Credit.

"If you don't have any input on policy making, there is no point in having representation on these boards", said Doolittle. "We as First Nations communities don't fit into these new boards - what we are now viewed as by the provincial government is a sector of the economy.

"It's very disheartening to see it come to this."

Doolittle has served as a trustee with HBE for 7 years and in those years has witnessed the strides made for Native students in terms of their education. But he warns that may soon disappear if their voices are no longer heard in the political process.

"It is not about representation, it is about building relationships

within their political systems and getting what's best for our kids," said Doolittle. "Bill 160 is going to leave us out of the conversation

when it comes to education."

In a letter written to Ontario Minister of Education and Training David Johnson by The

Education Improvement Commission (EIC) it was recom-

... Continued on page 2