

The Editor,  
Terrace Bay News,  
Terrace Bay, Ontario.

As a Father and Educationist, I have read with keen interest, the correspondence regarding a possible District High School, for this particular area, that has appeared in your columns.

It would appear that the members of the Schreiber High School Board have in all sincerity, decided to close the matter once and for all, through the carefully prepared letter of explanation which was carried in the columns of last week's "News".

Had all factors been fully examined thus far, I should have remained silent, but since schools are made of teachers and students, more than facilities and costs, and since, further, I have just returned within the hour from a conference of Elementary School Principals and Teachers concerning the projected "Robarts Plan" for High Schools, held in the Lakehead, I am bound to speak up. This is completely unsolicited and does not necessarily represent any one else's opinion.

The new plan put forward by the Department of Education is designed to create new opportunities in the Secondary Schools and is not compulsory. It is not the policy of the Department of Education to force any issues on local School Boards or impinge on local autonomy, Thus also, if the people of Schreiber through their elected School officials, choose to replace a small High School with another small High School at a time when such an action is virtually unknown, that is regarded as being their business and no interference will take place.

The new programme, in its entirety, is presently applicable only to the larger school plants. They will be able to offer 5 yr. 4 yr. 2 yr. and 1 yr. courses in the three main divisions (A) Arts and Science, (B) Business and Commerce (C) Science, Technology and Trades. However, smaller schools may implement as much as is possible of the new programme within the limits of their facilities. A school of even 400, could conceivably offer very soon a 5 yr. and 4 yr. course in (A) and (B), and once the programme has been in operation for a few years, aid may be extended to provide facilities in (C) to smaller schools. Present legislation does not preclude any changes in future years that might extend the entire programme to smaller District High Schools, but schools of about 200 will no doubt be denied any chance of ever partaking in the plan to any significant extent.

The letter of last week which doubts the cost of buses is referred to a former principal of a District High School, now an official of the Department, who stated that his Board, by operating their own buses, made money on their grants! This is apparently not uncommon. If contractors want 55¢ a mile and a Board can do it for 27¢ a mile, this is easily seen.

From the academic point of view a change had to be made. Only 6 out of 100 students starting elementary School complete Grade 13, and yet the entire Secondary School Programme at present is designed to serve them. Only 20 pupils out of 100 leaving Grade 8 are capable of completing Grade 13, and yet, what training have the other 80 drop-outs along the way to prepare themselves to take jobs in a highly skilled and technical world that is rapidly changing, even as they prepare for it? Neither the C.P.R. nor Kimberly-Clark has any jobs for the unskilled any more and the boys and girls of our towns with their, shall I say "pathetic", unfinished Gr. 9, 10 and 11 will have to compete with those who can show diplomas in trades and business skills, from other centres.

Now I should like to get to the crux of the whole question, and it would be well if it were fully explored before any more minute books be closed or another inch of property purchased anywhere.

At the close of hostilities in 1945-6, hundreds of thousands of war veterans doffed their uniforms and settled down to rear families, That was 15 years ago. The elementary schools of Ontario have been trying to cope over the last 9 years with a "tidal wave" of pupils. They recruited every available person into the classroom to try to give every child an opportunity for an education. A new classroom every hour was the rule for years. With the eldest children of these post-war marriages now reaching Gr. 9, and the other children behind them coming up through the grades, the "tidal wave" is about to swamp the Secondary Schools. Even now, new High Schools are going up at a feverish rate, but what about the teachers to staff them? A High School Teacher is a specialist and a University Graduate. These institutions are not, by any means, turning out a fraction of the teachers that will be needed to handle this load, Last week the "Globe and Mail" hit a new record- Eighty-seven columns of advertisements for teachers and nearly all by High Schools! And the deluge of pupils hasn't really hit them as yet!

It takes no Einstein to see that very shortly the big schools and the District High Schools are going to absorb every available qualified and well-recommended High School teacher available and there will be none left for small local schools like those in Terrace Bay and Schreiber. This "none" is no exaggeration. A District High School will have some chance, a small local High School will have none at all. No amount of money will entice a qualified teacher to move out of a larger system where he can teach his own special subjects, into a tiny school where he must go through the motions of teaching, (Con't on Page 10)