

Letter To The Editor

School Board Trustee unhappy over bussing contract

The following letter was received by the "NEWS" from Rev. Father Winslow of Manitowadge. Father Winslow has had to resign his position as Trustee due to his transfer to Thessalon, Ontario and he wished to publicly announce that certain remaining issues need to be aired to the public.

The following is titled "Ongoing Concerns with The Lake Superior Board of Education".

Old Haunts are Returning:

Early in the tenure of this Board, decisions were made which reversed the erroneous decisions of the previous Board concerning the closure of the Schreiber

Campus of the Lake Superior High School and the disposal of Board Owned Teacherages. These decisions received much public approval as the initial decisions were made with little or no concern for their social and/or educational implications. However, with the concern for people demonstrated by the majority of the members of this Board, these issues were put to rest for the time being.

Now, after almost two years of work, some members of the Board are beginning to make noises concerning the sale of an apartment building in Manitowadge. Could this be the tip of the iceberg that will eventually lead to

the return of the ill-fated suggestion of selling our Teacherages with no concern for the social or educational implications? Further, could it be that as soon as some feel the climate is right, the issue of the Schreiber Campus could return?

Some individuals have been heard to make comments concerning the money we could have saved if the closure had been effected. Are the early decisions of the Board really safe?

Taxation

Taxation has long been a problem with the Lake Superior Board of Education. According to Provincial Equalization Formulas, any tax increase over the Board Area results in a great

discrepancy.

For instance, this year the average Manitowadge Property Tax will increase \$80 while the same average Taxpayer in Schreiber will only experience a \$38 increase. Marathon and Terrace Bay will be increased roughly \$44 and \$48 respectively. While this problem is not insurmountable the effort being honestly expended at either the Board of Municipal level is minimal.

Further, when it came to passing a tax increase of about 15 per cent for this year, many members of this Board had no problem voting in favour of it, despite the total effect on the Manitowadge taxpayer and the fact, as was shown by the Director at that budget meeting, that the budget could have easily been cut to an 11.5 per cent increase. This latter figure would have meant an effective 6.6 per cent increase with the balance representing the paying of the cost of the Board's share of the Manitowadge Elementary School Repairs.

Can such decisions and actions be considered to be those of a Board which is truly concerned about the overall effect of its procedures upon the citizens of the communities it represents? The public should make serious moves to call upon its representatives on the Board and the Town Council to truly represent their interests

concerning unreasonable or unnecessary taxation!

Economics vs. People

As was the case in the Schreiber and Manitowadge situations which led to many of the current people running for, and being elected to the Board, many members are once again moving to base decisions merely upon economics and expediency. Little or no consideration is given to the social effects of decisions upon groups or individuals in the towns.

The latest example of this has been in the awarding of the bussing contract for the whole Board to a single supplier from Geraldton. Although the contractor to whom the contract was awarded is probably a very fine individual who is probably competent in his work, the contract was given despite the years of service to this Board of many other individuals. For instance, the current Manitowadge contractor, Mr. George Gray has given several years of service to this Board without one complaint having been lodged against him. Further, Mr. Gray set up this service at the request of this Board and made bussing his sole business so that he could properly service this Board.

The Lake Superior Board of Education, including some members from his home town, had no problem with summarily dismissing Mr. Gray. The words this Trustee heard were such as, "We must sacrifice him to get a single contractor," or "His buses are too old," etc.

These reasons were given despite the fact that this Trustee was told by the Chairman of

the Transportation Committee, before the tender was put out, that only bidding on a portion of the routes would not result in any penalty.

Further, when members commented on the age of Mr. Gray's bus, the Chairman of the Transportation Committee did not see fit to reveal that Mr. Gray had offered to supply a newer bus if such were to be a determining factor (although such information is now being released as though the trustees had been told about it).

Of course, the trustees were not told of Mr. Gray's comments that this Board had asked him to set up his service in the first place. Thanks to the efforts of the Manitowadge Chamber of Commerce and the intervention of Mr. Jack Stokes and other political figures along with the graciousness and astuteness of the Geraldton contractor Mr. Trottier, it would appear that Mr. Gray will keep his business through subcontract from Mr. Trottier.

However, the people of Manitowadge should be very concerned that it was even possible for a small local businessman to be crucified for no valid reason by this Board. Further, the people should be very concerned about the ulterior motives of some members of the Board in matters such as these.

Excessive money was authorized in this matter despite a time of tight money when the Board was bold enough to raise taxes for education by a whopping 15 per cent. Again, can the taxpayers sit quietly by, while such decisions are being

made? *It's your money.* Do you just want to fritter it away?

Father Winslow went on to say that he was very concerned as to who his replacement on the Board would be. "There will be some here who say my replacement is none of my business. However, as long as I am in office, I will continue to be concerned that the Manitowadge taxpayer is properly served. Further, I know that there is quote a move among those who don't believe that a trustee should be primarily concerned with the taxpayer's needs, to ensure that the runner-up to our number three public school trustee be appointed to replace me on this Board."

"Mr. Alex Eymann was less than 1/10th of one percent behind Mrs. Cole at the polls. Further, he represents a similar line of thought to that of the outgoing trustee who was elected by the taxpayers of Manitowadge. Also, this individual who took the time and had the concern to run for the office in the last election and was defeated by the narrowest of margins is still available."

"In the view of this Trustee, this Board would be literally 'spitting in the eyes of the the Manitowadge taxpayer' if it attempts to select any other person to sit in this Trustee's place. It is up to the citizens to insure that they are properly represented on the Lake Superior Board of Education."

In ending, Father Winslow stated that he ran on a platform of

continued on page 13

THANK-YOU

Niemi - The Family of the late Elmer Niemi wish to thank their relatives and friends who helped them by their many acts of kindness during the loss of their dear husband and father.

Our sincere and grateful thanks to those who sent flowers, cards and food, and gave their support in so many ways.

Special thanks to Dr. Wilkes and the staff who provided medical assistance. Our thanks also to Reverend Bigelow, the organist and choir of St. Andrews United Church, and to those who served as pallbearers. Your thoughtfulness will always be remembered.

Joan and Eric Niemi

THE CANADA EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

FOR STUDENTS

IS NOW OPEN

To help students find work and to service employers seeking help throughout the summer. For more information, please contact:

Veronica Leybourne at 825-3740

or drop into the Multi-purpose room in the Recreation Centre

**MON. to FRI. - 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

Canada



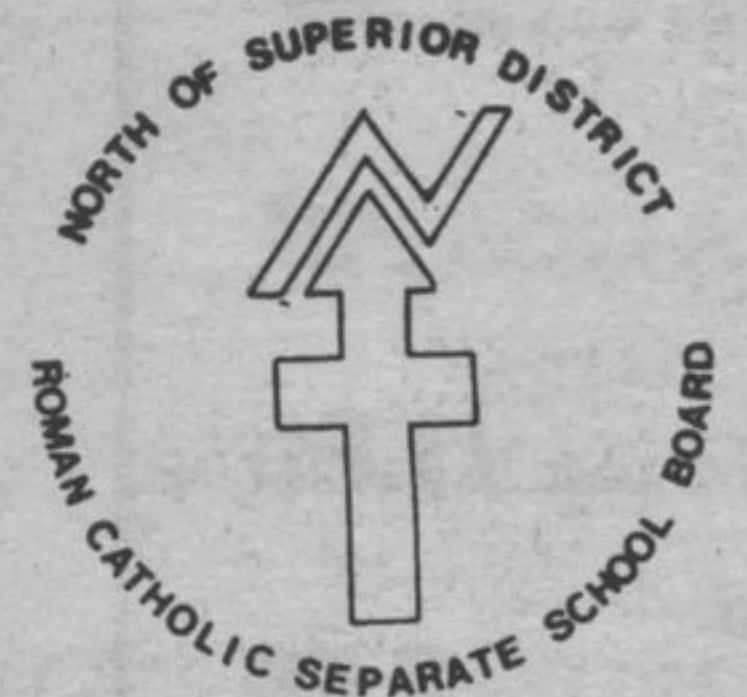
Employment and Immigration Canada

Céline Hervieux-Payette
Minister of State (Youth)

Emploi et Immigration Canada

Céline Hervieux-Payette
Ministre d'État à la Jeunesse

The North of Superior District Roman Catholic Separate School Board



Due to a resignation, the North of Superior District R.C.S.S. Board will be appointing a trustee to represent the community of Schreiber. Interested persons who are:

- separate school electors
- Canadian citizens
- eighteen years of age or over
- resident within the jurisdiction of the Board are invited to contact:

David C. Fulton
Business Administrator
North of Superior District R.C.S.S. Board
P.O. Box 610
Terrace Bay, Ont.
P0T 2W0 Telephone: 825-3246

J. Bunkis
Chairman

P. M. Gillen
Director of Education