

Fisher says . . .

School boards should co-operate

... on funding issue

The chairperson of the Halton Boards of Education says more co-operation is needed between the separate and the public school systems about the extension of public funding issue.

Mrs. Betty Fisher said she fears that people may become embroiled in self-interest and will not take an interest in society as a whole.

"It could be a major disaster in Ontario education and the relationship between Catholics and non-Catholics if we don't settle down and use our brains," she said.

Accusations of non-cooperation on both sides have been reported in the media in the past month over the construction of a \$10-million Catholic high school slated for Oakville.

The separate school board has been given a tentative go-ahead from the assistant deputy minister of education, Duncan Green, with the stipulation they get a letter of agreement from the Halton Board of Education.

Mrs. Fisher said the separate school board did not give their board enough time to see whether they had a school available making a new school unnecessary.

When first approached, Mrs. Fisher said she told Father J. R. Miehm, chairman of the separate board, that one of the three Oakville

high schools would not be available until 1988.

The separate board, however, needs the new school by 1986. Mrs. Fisher told them that a partial school would be available by 1986 if the separate board would consider sharing facilities.

The idea was rejected, she said, and she was asked to write a letter for a Dec. 20 deadline saying the Halton Board of Education had no school available. Mrs. Fisher said she was unwilling to write the letter without the approval of the board's trustees and it was impossible to get a report together in such a short time, so she asked for an extension until January.

Father Miehm suggested instead that he and a delegation present their point of view to the board at the Dec. 13 meeting.

He told trustees that the separate school board was not interested in the phase-in proposal saying there were difficulties such as the two different administrations, two different class schedules, and two different dress codes. There is also mass for the separate students in the morning.

Mrs. Fisher said she does not see those problems as "huge hurdles" and they can be easily worked out. It comes down, she feels, to whether or not the separate board wants a new school or an old school and to the problem of having Grades 9 and 10 Catholic students in the same school

with students of a differing philosophy.

"I think those are the crunch points," she said. "But when it comes down to it, we didn't have time to look at it."

"There has to be a lot of considerations looked at before you could say yes to what would be done and we didn't have the time."

Mrs. Fisher said if given more time, the Halton Board of Education staff could have looked at finding a way to have a school open by 1986. She maintains that sharing facilities is workable.

"It is a must. It would be a greatest cost to the taxpayers when a new school is built which another remains empty."

Both viewpoints have not gone to the Implementation Commission for a final decision.

"I would like the government to put the implementation aside for one year until all the commissions have reported."

Mrs. Fisher said she support Catholic funding by everyone must work together for the good of all.

A good decision, she contends, cannot be made with task forces reporting in October after implementation in September.

"It's got to be the most ridiculous and ill-conceived idea it could make for a very costly mistake and a lot of people could get hurt in the process," she said.

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