

'Students ready to cope culturally?'

By JOHN STEPHENS
York County Board of Education Trustee

Does the York County Board of Education prepare students for the cultural plurality that is Canada today?

The reason for the question is the release of minutes of a meeting concerning multiculturalism in York Region schools. Almost the whole meeting, it appears, was devoted to the language problems facing recent immigrant children in elementary classes.

Language assistance programs should be recognized as simply being immigrant aid. Multiculturalism, on the other hand as expounded by Prime Minister Trudeau in 1971, was supposed to be for ALL Canadians - not just non-English, non-French ethnic minorities.

He said "There cannot be a cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others."

Multiculturalism as an official policy within a framework of official bilingualism was the government's response to a widespread desire of Canadians for fundamental equality. It was a statement that all citizens should enjoy all the benefits of Canadian society irrespective of their ethno-cultural background.

It takes only a few minutes' walk along downtown Toronto's Yonge Street to recognize what the last 50 years of immigration has made of this country.

In fact a short drive along Bayview Avenue north of Steeles where a synagogue, mosque, and temple sit practically side by side, reveals cultural plurality alive in York Region and doing well.

The Irish, and the Scots, and the Welsh, are each proud of their own respective cultures, but when Canadians speak of the two majorities of this country, they lump under the label "English," the Irish, Scots and Welsh.

Regrettably, many spokesmen in Ontario, speaking to constitutional matters, are not yet prepared to recognize Canada as it exists today, but instead interpret their view of Canada as though the last 100 years had not happened.

The schools do Canada a disservice, if they do not make students aware of the cultural plurality existing in Canada today and the richness of our cultural life because of that.

Canada is, more than just a country, it is an idea. It embraces people who are different in color of skin and languages spoken; cultural likes and dislikes; ideas and philosophies, but all living together in peace and harmony.

And they all struggle together out of this variety, to define "Canadian identity" as somehow including each and everyone of them and us.

Lions select officers

STOUFFVILLE — Ed MacAloney, R.R. 3, Claremont, will head up the Stouffville Lions Club for the year, 1980-81. His new term of office will begin in September, succeeding Jim Richards, the current president.

Other officers already proposed include: Ross Garrett, 1st vice-president; Ron Rerry, 2nd vice-president; John Moffat, 3rd vice-president; John Middleton, secretary; Garry Watson, assistant secretary; Lorne Rowday, treasurer; Don Huxtable, assistant treasurer; Roy Morgan, Lion tamer; Neil Patrick, assistant Lion tamer; Paul Roney, tall-twister; Gary Hoy, assistant tall-twister; Directors: (one year) Don Canale and Don Linzer; (two years) Robert Watson and Robin Brown.

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