

Province considers funding private schools

BY PATRICK CASEY
Staff Writer

Two weeks after a United Nations human rights committee cited Ontario for discrimination because it funds only public and Catholic schools, the provincial government may now fund all independent schools.

A confidential cabinet document leaked to the Toronto Star last weekend points to a proposed plan to extend education funding to private schools.

Although it gave few details, the existence of a working document comes as no surprise to Keith Landy, chairperson of the Canadian Jewish Congress' Ontario region.

According to Landy, the UN decision is the impetus behind the Jones' renewed discussion of a topic that has been high on his group's agenda for 25 years.

"The discrimination is there. We live in a multicultural soci-

ety where this funding is provided in other provinces, and it has not led to the sky falling," explained Landy.

"The fact that the government is dealing with this matter this way leads me to believe the fight is not over yet. We certainly trust they would recognize Canada's obligations at the United Nations a lot more seriously than some other Third World countries. When a committee of the UN makes a ruling like this, you simply do not ignore it.

"The government should simply direct the funds to the school of the parent's choice," he added.

Additional funding would be welcome relief to parents of children attending Holland Marsh District Christian School in Bradford, where 310 students between kindergarten and Grade 8 have Christian themes interwoven with the Ontario curriculum.

"Parents want to choose the type of education for their children. This should be affordable and should be a right for anybody that is a Christian," said principal Henry Lise, adding tuition is \$7,400 a year at the 56-year-old school.

"The least the government could do is not force parents to pay (public or separate) school taxes and have that money go to support the school of their choice. With those funds, we could provide a speech-therapy program like the public board has, but we are not funded for and a computer lab to replace the stand-alones in the classroom.

However, the provincial government denies it is even considering extending public funding to private schools. "The

Ontario government is committed to providing an excellent public education system that is open to all students regardless of religious or cultural backgrounds," Rob Savage, an aid to Education Minister Janet Ecker, said in a statement.

Despite a denial from the Education Ministry, Claire Laughlin wonders how the government would fund more than two school systems, especially since money is already critically short.

The first vice-president of York Region's Catholic teachers union, Laughlin insists this could be the first step on the road to charter schools, where parents receive a voucher to be used toward their child's education.

"A parent could wish to set up their child in a computer school and would receive \$4,000. But when they go to enrol the student, they find out it actually costs \$10,000," she said.

"If you have the money, you're in like Flynn. If not, you go to a school that accepts just \$4,000. And one thing this government has shown is they are quite prepared to leave the have-nots in the basement and not support them.

"Parents would have to give up something, just to get enough money to send their kids to school," she said.

"The government would perpetuate the crisis in education by bringing in a complicated fiasco.

And public board chairperson Bill Crothers said it's awfully tough to change a system established in the Constitution Act of 1867 that requires Ontario to fund the Catholic school system.

"The government's position and most people in public education would say education would be stronger with just one school system," said Crothers. "This would be harmful to the public education system, but also harmful to the whole purpose of education.

"We are trying to bring everybody together, not trying to divide them. This would fragment everyone."

But equal funding for all private and religious schools would only terminate a terrible miscarriage of justice," said Dr. Seymour Epstein, executive director of the Toronto-based Board of Jewish Education.

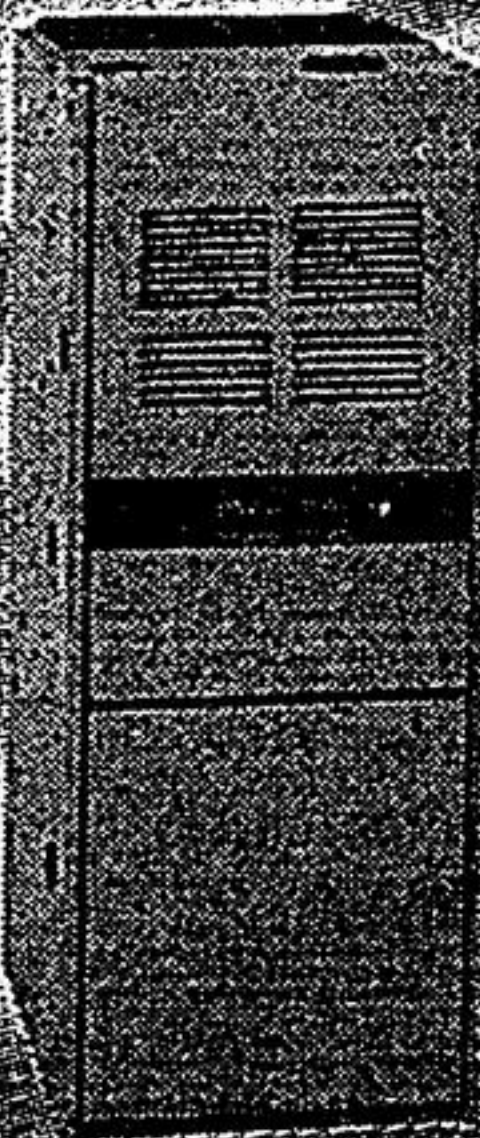
"This would make a major difference if the government realized its error and extended its funding," said Epstein, whose board provides secular and Jewish studies education to more than 11,000 students.

ENBRIDGE
Home Services

Will your
furnace
survive the winter?

Call the Heating
Installation Experts

Avoid the hassle of a breakdown



Call by Dec. 15/99 and, with the purchase of a furnace, you will receive

**100 Bonus
AIR MILES®
reward miles**

- payments as low as \$46/month*
- no payments/no interest for 3 months!

1-800-266-3939

www.enbridgeservices.com

We fully back all our products and services.



**\$20 = 1 AIR MILES®
reward mile**

Carrier

Comfortmaker
Air Conditioning & Heating

*Some conditions apply. Subject to credit approval. Sample monthly payments of \$45.68 are based on a standard gas to gas furnace installation in the amount of \$2,054.00, with no down payment, borrowed at 10.25% per annum, for a term of 60 months, with a 3 month deferral. Total amount to be repaid is \$2,603.76. Cost of borrowing is \$549.76.

™ Trademarks of AIR MILES International Holdings N.V. Used under license by Loyalty Management Group Canada, Inc. and Enbridge Services Inc.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING #2

**CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE (Y.R. 25)
FROM WOODBINE AVENUE (Y.R. 8) TO HIGHWAY 48**

The Regional Municipality of York is presently undertaking a study to determine the improvements required to Major Mackenzie Drive from Woodbine Avenue to Highway 48 in the Town of Markham. This study will address the emerging transportation needs in this corridor. The study is following the Class Environmental Assessment process for Municipal Road Projects.

A first Public Consultation Centre was held on Wednesday, May 26, 1999 to describe the problem and obtain public input into evaluation of solutions. Input received has been considered and a preferred solution has now been identified.

A second Public Consultation Centre will be held to present the preferred solution and the alternative road designs for public review and comment. The Public Consultation Centre (PCC) will be held as follows:

DATE: December 7, 1999

TIME: 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Town of Markham,
Anthony Roman Centre (Municipal Offices)
Canada Room
101 Town Centre Boulevard, Markham
(Hwy. 7 and Warden Ave.)

A brief presentation will be made at 6:45 p.m. which will then be followed by a public viewing of all materials presented. Representatives from the Region of York and DS:Lea Associates will be available to answer questions.

Please note that there is an opportunity at any time during the study for public input. Input received will be considered in finalizing the selection of the preferred road design.

Upon completion of the study, an Environmental Study Report (ESR) documenting the project will be available in the public record for a thirty-calendar day period for public review and comment. The public will be notified of the ESR filing at the appropriate time through a similar newspaper notice.

Please direct any comments or questions you might have on the project to:

Alla Dinerman, P.Eng.

Roads and Highways Group

DS:Lea Associates Ltd.

251 Consumers Road,

North York, Ontario,

M2J 4R3

Tel: (416) 490-8887, Ext. 243

Fax: (416) 490-8376

Email: adinerman@lca.ca

Dino Basso, P.Eng.

Transportation and Works

Region of York

17250 Yonge Street,

Newmarket, Ontario

L3Y 6Z1

Tel: (905) 764-6345 Ext. 5090

Fax: 905-836-4590

Email: dino.basso@region.york.on.ca



Anida Doherty
Regional Advertising Manager



Alex Poff
Advertising Consultant



Mark Clarke
Advertising Consultant



Alex Skowronski
Advertising Consultant



Jim Gesang
Advertising Consultant

Book'em.

We'd like to introduce you to the

Most Wanted sales team in your

community. As advertising

consultants for the TELUS/Locator™

Phone Book, they're a big part of

the local scene, and they're in touch

with your needs as an advertiser.

The TELUS/Locator Phone Book

gives you an extremely cost-

effective way to reach customers

locally, with superior quality and

guaranteed delivery backed by over

90 years of TELUS advertising

experience. You'll be hearing from

your sales team soon, or you could

give them a shout right now for

inclusion in the next book. It's a free

call, wherever you're located.

Call 1-888-204-1835

by February 17, 2000

to get in the next Markham

TELUS/Locator Phone Book.

TELUS

York Region