

Committee to recommend closure of Alton School

THROUGH THE ARCHIVES

Caledon Citizen

April 25, 1984

A review committee set up to evaluate the continued use of the Alton Public School by the Peel Board of Education has recommended that the school be closed as of June 1985.

The declaration was made by committee chairman, R.D. Barber during a meeting held on April 17 at the Alton Townhall.

The recommendation of the committee of review and analysis for the Mayfield family of schools goes the Board's management council for a vote at a full Board meeting on May 7.

A second following recommendation is that the present attendance areas for Caledon Central and Belfountain Public Schools be expanded to take in the Alton area.

Mr. Barber and his committee faced about 50 area residents opposed to the closure of the school on the grounds that students from the village would benefit from attending a school closer to their houses.

The attendance at the school has steadily declined since 1969 when the Board was formed just over 100 students to an enrollment of 41 during the 1983-1984 school year.

The report to the management council cites a lack of program opportunities for students in the area as a prime reason for the recommendation to closure.

'It has become increasingly difficult in a 'two teacher school' to provide, in addition to regular instruction, the expected programs in music, art, withdrawal, gifted, Grade 4 French, library, etc.,' says a report's rationale.

'As well, the lack of gymnasium and the social advantages of wider peer interaction are referred to in the report. The possibility of reducing to only one teacher simply aggravates the situation.'

A resolution from the Alton community argued in support of Alton members of the committee Bob Cox and Betty Starr that the school should remain open, stating that the school is a valuable asset to the community and is 'stepped in local history.'

The resolution went on to state that it would be in the best interest of the village and the surrounding area to keep the schools open.

In addition, a resolution passed by Caledon council on January 23 had been forwarded to the committee, outlining Alton as a 'restricted growth settlement with a mature state population of 1,530' and indicating that a 90 lot subdivision at Alton Estates was forthcoming, put forward council's view that the school should not be closed.

'I think the timing is unfortunate,' said area councillor John Alexander. 'A school would be an attraction to people buying homes there.'

The committee's report argues that their projections for the state development show that there would not be a significant addition in the kindergarten to Grade 5 levels which the school serves.

Additional arguments for closure also include the costs of physical operation of the school, wages for staff, busing costs, revenue that could be realized by sale of the school, and a more efficient use of the school budget.

Area residents will have an opportunity to make their objections known when the full Board meeting is held in Mississauga on May 7.

CICA Trade Fair parade will march to the piper's tune

The streets of Bolton will be filled with the sound of Scotland May 5 when the Ranger Pipes and Drums march through town in the Caledon Industrial Commercial Association Trade Fair Parade.

Formed in Weston, Ontario in 1948, the Rangers are now a 19-member pipe and drum core, with 12 pipes, four side drums, two tenor drums, and one bass drum. They wear the MacGregor tartan.

According to George Pate, secretary of the Rangers, the band is a group of pipe and drum enthusiasts, who are proficient on their instrument as soloists.

In the Ranger's core the oldest member is in his 60's; the youngest member is a 12 year-old drummer.

Members join the band as an opportunity to play the drums of pipes more often and improve their skills within the band and as soloists.

?Within a lot of endeavour, a new piper could hone the skills to play in a parade in five years,? said Mr. Pate.

?Playing in the Rangers is a matter of time and effort which can be very rewarding.?

The Rangers are very busy throughout the year performing at different functions.

The band plays about 20 parades a year. Added to that, it entertains at hospitals, senior citizen homes, rallies, meetings, weddings, and diner parties.

After November, the band stops performing outside because their costumes provide little protection from the weather. The Rangers always play in complete Scottish dress.

When preparing for a function like the CICA parade May 5, the pipe leader, Mel Johnston, selects the songs to be played and pass this information on to the drum leader, William Algie, and the rest of the band.