

French classes, funding in public schools discussed

By Joy-Ann Cohen
of The Leader-Post

The board of education discussed enrolment and funding of its French immersion program at its weekly meeting Tuesday evening.

The program has been held at Massey School in kindergarten and Grade 1 since the fall of 1976. This year it is being extended to Grade 2 at Massey School and kindergarten at Connaught School.

French is used as the language of instruction in kindergarten for up to 100 per cent of the time, and in Grades 1 and 2 for up to 75 per cent of the time. The students in the French program learn the same skills as students attending English classes.

Enrolment statistics for this school year show that in the French immersion program at Massey School, 36 pupils are attending two kindergarten classes; 18 pupils are in Grade 1 and nine pupils are in Grade 2.

In the Connaught School French kindergarten class, 13 pupils are enrolled.

W. F. Ready, chairman of the board, said he was concerned that the demand for the program was slight and that in Grade 2 so few students enrolled that

holding a class was almost impractical.

Board member Ken Johns said if the demand is small, the board might have to offer incentives to encourage parents to enrol their children. He said French instruction should be a high priority at this time in Canada's history, when government leaders are talking about ways to keep Quebec a part of the country.

Alex Robb, superintendent of programs, said the enrolment does not reflect a slight interest in the program. Although the classes are open to pupils from all areas of the city, many parents who say they would like to send their children do not want to transport them to schools far from their homes.

The board of education reimburses parents 50 cents a day for transportation of each child.

Praised by parents

Robb said that after the first month of operation, no parent withdrew a child because of dissatisfaction with the program. Many parents have told the teachers and himself that the instruction is excellent. Students have left because their families moved out of town, or for

other reasons not pertaining to the quality of the program, he said.

The provincial government this year boosted grants to the school board for pupils in the program from \$84 per student to \$200, Robb said.

Massey School has also received \$15,000 of a possible \$30,000 grant from the federal department of the secretary of state for resource materials such as tape recorders and overhead projectors. Many of the tapes and books bought under the grant are in French.

Ready said he wanted more information on how much the French classes cost compared with English classes, and whether the additional expenses are covered by the grants. If they are not, and the government thinks the classes are important, it should provide more funds, he said.

J. A. Burnett, director of education, said there is a problem in co-ordinating French immersion classes in this city with those in other cities. For example, a family recently came here from Ottawa, where the child was enrolled in a French immersion program. In Regina, he could not continue in the program, because he was beyond Grade 2.

Farm input focus

A conference aimed at encouraging development of economic policies and public attitudes which lessen Canadian dependence on foreign suppliers of farm chemicals starts Monday in Winnipeg.

The Canadian Agricultural Chemicals Association is holding its three-day 25th annual conference at the Fort Garry Hotel.

An association spokesman said the conference will focus attention on the common interests of food producers and those who supply them with input products such as fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides.

Representatives of all sectors of agriculture are expected to attend.

The spokesman said it is dangerous for Canadian farmers to depend too much on foreign suppliers for farm inputs.

Problems to be dealt with include tariff policies, chemical registration and control procedures and other economic and political issues facing the Canadian industry.

Speakers will include Ron Daighesh, Saskatchewan deputy minister of agriculture, and Roy McKenzie, director of the farm services division of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

Other speakers include Gaetan Lussier, federal deputy minister of agriculture, Douglas McTorie, head of the agricultural division of the Royal Bank of Canada, and D. H. Pound, chief commissioner of the Canada Grains Commission.

Lussier and Pound will also speak at the semi-annual meeting of the Canada Grains Council in Montreal Oct. 25 and 26.

Toronto to draft

Regina's new zoning bylaw, to be completed by the end of 1977, will be prepared by IBI Group Ltd. of Toronto for \$45,000.

The consulting firm was selected from 27 applicants seeking to develop a zoning bylaw regulating residential, business, commercial and industrial development in the city.

Saskairie raffle aid approved

In a break from its traditional practice of refusing to allow students to sell raffle tickets for campaigns, the board of education voted Tuesday evening to allow high school clubs to sell, on a voluntary basis, raffle tickets in support of Saskairie.

The approval was granted because of the special nature of the project. Saskairie is an outdoor education centre on the southern slopes of Moose Mountain. It is designed primarily for the use of students from Grades 5 to 12. Plans call for winterized facilities to accommodate up to 96 students, the establishment of a small mixed farm, and the acquisition of equipment and resource material for a wide variety of outdoor programs.

Construction on the site began in 1975, and is not yet complete. Saskairie is being built by the Prairie Lore and Living Society, a non-profit organization incorporated in 1973 to promote outdoor education in Saskatchewan. The

Harvesting virtually stops

Continuing cool, wet weather brought harvest operations to a virtual standstill across the province last week, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool said Wednesday in its weekly crop report.

The report said harvest operations have fallen behind last year's progress because swathed crops are not maturing or drying. Farmers are beginning to take off tough grain to prevent further grade deterioration.

Pool agents say farmers are bringing out grain dryers to cope with the wet conditions.

Only about 80 per cent of this year's crop is swathed, which is well behind the 1976 rate and combining was virtually nonexistent last week.

Farmers were able to combine only about nine per cent compared to 22 per cent in the same week a year earlier. About 40 per cent of the harvest is completed.

This is about four days behind last year when 54 per cent was in the bin by this stage. Although harvest is almost done around Estevan, in the north only 10 per cent of combining is complete.

Production estimates remain unchanged from a week ago with total wheat production of 412.5 million bushels

expected. Heavy frost across Saskatchewan the first two days of September is expected to significantly damage late seeded cereal and oilseed crops. Early seeded crops should not suffer.

Worst hit is the northeast and northwest where up to 30 per cent of wheat crops will be downgraded to utility grade as a result of frost damage.

Early seeded fall rye crops are reported to have germinated well and are progressing favorably.

School board denies cable loan

The Regina Cablevision Co-operative, with its licence already approved but unable to operate because of the dispute between Sask Tel and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), will not be getting any additional money from the city's separate school board.

The board, a member organization of the co-operative, turned down the request for funds at its regular meeting Tuesday night.

Board chairman Jack Goetz said the board didn't have the power to grant the

request, and trustee Gerald Kleisinger said he doubted there was any money left in the budget.

In its letter to the board, the co-operative said its board of directors, in view of the long delay in becoming operational, had decided to make the original loans interest-bearing at a rate of eight per cent per annum effective July 17, 1977, which was the anniversary date of the original loans.

The group was asking for additional loans from the member organizations repayable within the first year of operation with interest at eight per cent.

Extension for teacher

A one-year extension has been granted to the department of national defence for the services of Regina teacher Daniel Lundine.

The Regina separate school board unanimously approved the extension to Aug. 31, 1979, for Lundine, who has been

teaching at Baden Intermediate School in Germany.

Trustee John Lipp said he had visited the school and talked with Lundine during a trip to Europe last spring, and found that school officials were pleased with Lundine's work.