

March 20, 2007

To the Commission on Post Secondary Education

Section 2 of the provincial act recognizing the equality of the two official linguistic communities in New Brunswick states ---The Government of New Brunswick shall ensure protection of the equality of status and the equal rights and privileges of the official linguistic communities and in particular their right to distinct institutions within which cultural, educational and social activities may be carried on.

When the two community colleges in the Restigouche –Chaleur area were first established they were bilingual institutions, offering approximately the same number of courses in both languages and had professional staff from both language communities. Over the years as the Education Department adopted the principal of duality, the Department of Advanced Education followed suit. The two colleges in our area were declared francophone institutions. The student body and the professional staff of these institutions are almost exclusively Francophone, which is only right in order that they fulfill their role as designated Francophone institutions.

The Restigouche Chaleur area, according to the provinces own statistics, is approximately 40/60 ratio English/ French.. The 60% of the population has access to two community colleges while the 40% has access to none. This fact is a glaring disregard of the Language act as stated in section2 passed in 1981 and consolidated in 1998. The Province of New Brunswick gives all appearances of breaking its own law.



The province has designated Restigouche Chaleur as a socio economic region and has even set up a special development fund.. for the region. Education and development happen together. It is not good enough that the nearest community college that an Anglophone can attend is in the Miramichi which is 50 km from the geographical center of the province.

Recently the Francophone community college in Campbellton has agreed ,with assistance of the Enterprise Restigouche, to try offering selected courses in English in Dalhousie. While this is a welcome effort ,it in no way satisfies the conditions of the language act. Meanwhile, the Anglophone community college of Miramichi has advertised a business program for the Bathurst area starting this fall. Another welcome effort but again not good enough . Neither of these initiatives can be seen as satisfying the conditions of the language act.

If the province is to follow its own law there are three possible solutions.

- (1) One of the two community colleges located in the Restigouche Chaleur area would become an Anglophone institution.
- (2) Both the community colleges in our area become bilingual. That is an equal representation of both language groups among staff and students.
- (3) A new Anglophone community college is established in a central location to serve the Anglophones of the Restigouche Chaleur area.

The first and second solutions, while meeting the conditions of the language laws ,would be a step backward for our Francophone community and I don't think anyone wants that to happen, so really there is only one solution. AN ANGLOPHONE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ,centrally located to serve the north of the province.

If the government decides that the time is right to follow their own law then I hope they consider that Dalhousie is the ideal location for such an institution. The Anglophone population in the area is located in the Bathurst area and then beginning in Belledune runs along the bay to Dalhousie then along the river and up to Robinsonville and Upsilquich. This is a distance of near 150 km and that would place Dalhousie exactly in the center allowing easy access for the highest number of our students.

Hopefully our leaders will make presentations to the post-secondary education commission which will be holding hearings in the near future. Perhaps then the commission will recommend that this inequality be corrected

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'James L. Blanchard', written in dark ink.

James L. Blanchard