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SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 14-36

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SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 14

(First Session, 1968)

PARENT - TEACHER CONSULTATION

DISPOSITION

Tabled	To Committee	Accepted as Read	Accepted as Amended	Deferred (to Session)	Rejected	Noted not Considered

PARENT - TEACHER CONSULTATION

At its 35th session, Council adopted a motion that a full system of consultation between parents and teachers be developed.

The Education Division of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development agrees that consultation should be provided, preferably at different intervals, to allow parents time to consider plans proposed for the education of their children. Such a program is advantageous not only to the parents and children involved, but also to the Department in planning and selecting pupils for specialized courses.

Last year, parental consultations such as those proposed were held at Pangnirtung and Frobisher Bay. It was found that many of the parents who, during the first interview, had expressed the view that their children should not undertake prevocational courses at Churchill, had changed their minds by the time the second interview took place. It is important, therefore, to develop a more complete and detailed program of parental interviews in all communities at the earliest possible date.

The Department plans to develop a fully integrated approach to this matter. In particular, superintendents, adult educators and school principals, as well as selection and placement officers, are to be involved in the development of the program. A successful program of parental consultation necessarily depends largely upon the local school principal or teacher in charge. Where there is a rapid turnover of staff, some difficulties must be expected particularly in the recruitment for pupil residences. Frequently, a principal who has had interviews with parents during the school year leaves at the end of June, but children usually are brought to the various residences at the end of August. At this time, there may be no educational officer in the community, or there may be a new and inexperienced principal. This often leads to misunderstandings and difficulties. Parents often make a last-minute decision, of their own volition, to send their children to another community where more specialized schooling is available. The Department does not wish to turn these children away, but emphasizes that proper consultation with the parents may not have taken place.

The recent trend toward urbanization is a factor assisting the Education staff in providing for full parental involvement. In the past it was often difficult to reach those parents living in small camps and isolated settlements. Most parents now are available at nearly all times of the year, thus facilitating a better rapport between educators and parents.

The Department is attempting to plan courses far enough in advance to allow time for those concerned to learn all details of proposed education programs. Last year in the Eastern Arctic, selection of pupils for courses at the Churchill Pre-Vocational School began in January for school opening in September. It is estimated that 85% of the pupils in the Keewatin Region who enrolled in the Churchill School last September, were aware of plans which were being made on their behalf by March 1. It is hoped that this percentage can be increased this year and that parents can become more directly involved in decisions made on their children's behalf.

Plans are underway to produce a film on the educational services available to northern children. It is hoped that a visual presentation will help clarify the programs provided, and will also help overcome some of the difficulties in communication between Eskimo and Indian adults and Departmental officers who have to explain the scope of the services.

A full consultation program will involve all education programs to some extent. In particular, it will affect selection of children for special academic courses, for the various vocational and trades training programs (both in and out of the Northwest Territories) and for pupil residences. While recognizing the difficulties of distance, staff turnover and limited supervision, the Department is committed to a policy of full consultation and expects its staff to implement this policy as completely as possible.