

QUEBEC FEDERATION of PROTESTANT HOME and SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Views on School Transportation July 1967

INTRODUCTION

The Quebec Federation of Protestant Home and School Associations (hereinafter referred to as "Quebec Federation") is pleased to present the views of its membership on school transportation.

Our membership is composed of 17,000 families, both teachers and parents, in approximately 150 local associations in English Protestant schools across the Province.

PROCEDURE:

The following background details are furnished in order to make clear the fact that when Quebec Federation speaks, it can only do so after consulting its membership.

Business is conducted at the Annual General Meeting by the delegates from each school, who comprise the governing body of the organization. For the purpose of submitting this Brief, the opinions of every affiliated association in the Province were solicited.

Local groups making submissions referred to a major difficulty in presenting their views. Between late April and June, the majority of the local associations change their officers, and during this transition, because of the new people involved, it is difficult to get the type of information which Quebec Federation asked for.

PAST POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the years 1956, 1959 and 1962, Quebec Federation at its Annual General Meetings have by resolutions formed the following policies regarding school buses:

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1956: Quebec Federation supports action to enforce the laws of the Province concerning:

- 1) Proper marking of school buses
- 2) Other traffic passing these buses while children are entering or leaving them outside the towns.

1959: Quebec Federation believes that Section 36, Article A of the Quebec Motor Vehicle Act which requires that all highway traffic outside the boundaries of municipalities shall come to a full stop when either approaching or passing a stationary bus - is so comprehensive that effective enforcement is not likely to result under the most favourable circumstances. We therefore support amendment of this law to make it applicable only to school buses.

1962: WHEREAS during the past year there have been several serious traffic accidents involving children embarking and disembarking from school buses

WHEREAS the present law requires a motor vehicle to make a full stop when approaching a school bus from either direction when that bus has stopped for loading or unloading of passengers

WHEREAS such safety precautions may not be adequate in some instances

BE IT RESOLVED that Quebec Federation recommend to the Provincial Government that a study be made of the school bus loading and unloading safety precautions and that consideration be given to the establishment of safe and clearly marked unloading zones for school buses and that school buses be permitted to stop only at such designated zones.

Following the filing of our intent to present a Brief to the Commission of Inquiry on School Transportation, a questionnaire (Appendix A) was sent to each of our 150 local associations throughout the Province to obtain a cross-section of opinion to bring to light any current views or concerns regarding the use and operation of school buses, as related to English Protestant Schools.

Since at least 50% of the local associations are on the Island of Montreal, these replied that public transportation was used, and there was no further comment. However, two notations were made in connection with buses chartered (mainly from the Montreal Transportation Commission) which result in the following recommendations:-

1. Schools or school boards should be required to provide monitors on buses on charter when transporting students from one school to another for inter-mural sports, and/or other like events, and that these buses should not be permitted to carry more students than there are seats on the bus. (It is felt that in today's city traffic, the driver's attention must be completely on the task of driving and that buses used for the purposes set out above must not be crowded by students standing, and without proper supervision, to avoid distracting the driver).
2. It is recommended that buses chartered for the purpose of transporting students to and from school in the morning, at noon and in the afternoon hours (particularly with reference to the Montreal Transportation Commission) should be clearly marked both back and front. It has been noticed recently that some buses have a small board in front - "Ecolier" - but frequently no

notice is at the rear of the bus to warn following traffic that this in fact a school bus, and that special alertness is necessary.

With regard to the response from our off-island associations, which are mostly rural, we are pleased to note that in general it is felt that the buses meet the requirements of size, seating and safety equipment, and there are sufficient exits. Maintenance is in the hands of the operators, but monitors seem to be lacking. Quebec Federation regards this as a serious matter and

recommends that monitors be required on all school buses.

The ages of drivers of the buses appear to vary greatly, the general consensus of opinion is that these drivers are very solicitous about the safety of their passengers, and almost all have had annual medical check-ups. However, only 50% have taken approved school bus driver instruction courses.

It is recommended that the successful passing of an approved school bus driver instruction course be required by all those driving school buses.

Almost all locals reporting were in favour of greater use of school buses outside of regular school hours not only in cultural and educational pursuits but also for recreational and athletic events and dances. This pre-supposes that common sense is exercised in the selection of the events and the distances to be travelled, and that proper supervision will be maintained en route and that fully qualified operators are employed, especially where night driving is involved.

Very few of those reporting felt that more extensive use of school buses for extra-curricular activities would materially affect revenues of local private bus operators.

Respectfully submitted,

DOROTHY FRANKEL
President.

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