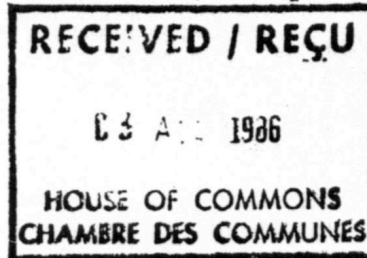




2 April 1986



Ms. Sheila Copps, M.P.
Room 442-C
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Copps:

I refer to your letter of 13 February 1986 regarding the education provided by the Department of National Defence (DND) for the dependants of Canadian Forces personnel.

Elementary and secondary education in Canada is a provincial responsibility under the Constitution Act 1867. This responsibility is delegated by the provinces under enabling legislations to regional, district or municipal school authorities on a territorial and jurisdictional basis. The financing of such education costs is met by the responsible public school authorities from local revenues derived from the school portion of taxes levied by the responsible taxing authorities on real property and from provincial revenues allocated as school grants for the provision of public schooling in Canada.

While Crown lands are not taxable, DND recognizes its obligation as a landlord to arrange for educational facilities for children of military and civilian personnel residing at defence establishments in Canada. This covers all phases of education within elementary and secondary levels in conformance with provincial standards and the applicable provincial legislation. Accordingly, facilities are arranged by or on behalf of this Department for children residing at a defence establishment by the following methods shown in order of precedence:

- a. Under the Municipal Grants Act 1980, through payment by Department of Public Works of an annual Grant In Lieu of Taxes (GILT) to the municipality in which the defence

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establishment is located to cover the provision of schooling for children residing at the defence establishment. Acceptance of the school portion of GILT also imposes the obligation on the municipality to provide free public schooling to such children to the same extent that public schooling is provided by the municipality to children of local tax-supporters.

- b. By payment of non-resident school fees to a municipal school board for the attendance of children residing at the defence establishment.
- c. Under a capital assistance agreement, where DND shares with a municipal school board on a proportionate per-capita basis the cost of constructing and operating a new school or addition to an existing school when sufficient accommodation for dependant children from the defence establishment is not available in the municipal school or schools.
- d. By establishing a DND Dependants School at the defence establishment and by appointing a DND Dependants School Board to administer the school in accordance with applicable provincial legislation and to follow the authorized provincial curricula.

Dependants Schools were initially established in the late 1940s and in the early 1950s at those locations where defence establishments with permanent married quarters were distant from populated areas or where local public school facilities could not absorb the large numbers of new students occasioned by an influx of married military members accompanied by their families. In many locations, the situation has changed considerably over the last 30 years, particularly where communities have greatly expanded around those once-remote defence establishments and where student populations have considerably decreased.

In light of these changed circumstances, an evaluation is being conducted to review the basic rationale

of the dependants' education programs. The evaluation will focus on urban and semi-urban areas in Canada where the Department continues to operate or maintain its own schools. The Evaluation Team is visiting sites across Canada and will meet with local military authorities and with DND Dependants School staff; parents will be asked to complete a written questionnaire, and where time permits, local municipal schools will be visited. The final tabulation of the data now being collected by the Evaluation Team is to be presented to Departmental senior officials in the fall of 1986. Should the Department conclude that changes are indicated as a result of the data presented, all concerned parties, including the parents, will be fully consulted.

Although the Department recognizes that the relocation of military families can be a disruptive factor in the education of dependants, there is no reason to believe that this results in learning difficulties and/or psychological problems. Given the increased mobility of Canadians, many municipal schools are quite accustomed to easing the adaptation of transient students. Only one-third of DND school-aged dependants live at defence establishments and would therefore be eligible to attend DND Dependants schools; there are approximately 30,000 school-aged dependants of service military members who reside in local communities near defence establishments, and the education of these children is, of course, the responsibility of the appropriate municipal school boards.

With regard to the situation in Calgary, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) currently provides education to the dependant children residing at Canadian Forces Base Calgary in the Currie Elementary and Sir Sam Steele Junior High Schools under an agreement with DND dating back to 1956. The City of Calgary has applied for, and will receive, the education portion of the GILT from the Department of Public Works beginning 1 July 1986. On receipt of the GILT payment, financial responsibility for the provision of these education services will be transferred from DND to the City of Calgary and the CBE. This responsibility includes the determination of the schools the children are to attend.

Reports of a 19 November 1985 Calgary Board of Education public meeting state that the Currie Elementary

School, which most of the Base pupils attend, will be kept open. While the Sir Sam Steele Junior High will be closed, affected students will attend the King Edward Elementary and Junior High School in the 1986-87 school year. This school is less than two miles from Base Calgary.

Departmental policy has always been and will continue to be that, wherever possible, children residing at defence establishments shall be educated in schools provided by local municipal authorities. The Minister of National Defence was authorized by Order in Council PC 1271 in 1947 to enter into agreements with the education authorities of provinces and municipalities in which schools on defence establishments are located. By 1950, agreements had been reached with nine provincial departments of education. In subsequent years, these agreements were expanded wherever possible, and the degree of support provided by Provincial Ministries of Education to DND Dependants Schools continues to vary from province to province.

Since 1960, DND consolidation has resulted in the closure of a number of defence establishments and their DND Dependants Schools and, in addition, there have been several DND Dependants Schools closed (usually at the secondary level) where declining enrolments did not permit the offering of a sufficient range of optional courses. There have been very few schools turned over to municipal school boards since 1960, however, the following information is provided for your interest.

In British Columbia, elementary and secondary educational facilities are provided to dependant children residing on Crown lands under an agreement whereby the province assumes responsibility for the administration, operation and control of DND Dependants Schools or for ensuring that the required facilities are made available at local municipal schools. The agreement does not include the DND Francophone School operated at Chilliwack as a private school.

The Victor G. Brodeur School at Esquimalt was completely turned over to the local school board in 1985. In addition, there are three DND Dependants Schools at the defence establishments of Comox, Esquimalt, and Holberg which are operated by the local school boards in accordance with the above-mentioned agreement.

In Saskatchewan, in 1966, an agreement was reached with Moose Jaw School District Number 1 to assume responsibility for the provision of education at the DND Dependants School. In Quebec, in 1966, an agreement was reached with the Commission Scolaire de la Baie des Ha! Ha! to provide qualified teachers in sufficient numbers for the operation of the Dependants School located at Bagotville. In Nova Scotia, agreements with local school boards dating from 1957 have resulted in the school boards providing the educational services for the DND Dependants Schools in Cornwallis, Greenwood and Shearwater.

With the exception of the Calgary Schools and the Victor G. Brodeur School, which have not been DND Dependants Schools per se since 1956 and 1985 respectively, in all of the arrangements mentioned above, DND reimburses local school boards the costs incurred to provide the education services to DND dependants. This Department has retained ownership of and responsibility for the school buildings, and there are various terms which permit the cancelling of the agreements; accordingly, these schools are not considered to have been turned over to the municipal school boards.

I trust this information will be of assistance, and I can assure you that any decision on the future of DND Dependants schools will be made in the best interests of the children and of sound fiscal responsibility.

Yours sincerely,



Harvie Andre