

# Ratepayers soon to pay full shot for education

B 63/17

Provincial Government money for education for the Oxbow School Division No. 51 has been reduced from \$1,394,676 in 1988 to just \$514,000 in 1995, a 64% cut back, prompting Pat Ford, president of the Division's School Board to suggest that by 1997 there will be no money at all from the Provincial Department of Education for the Division.

There were only thirty ratepayers at the annual meeting of electors for the Oxbow School Division held in Carnduff's Elementary School, Tuesday June 6th, many of whom were board members and teaching staff.

Due to the reduced funding, ratepayers share of the nearly six million

cost of education has risen from \$4,047,165 in 1988 to \$5,647,224 in 1995, or from 68 mills in 1988 to 83 mills this year.

Because of amalgamation last year of the Director of Education and the Secretary Treasurer positions, between the Oxbow Division and the Arcola Division, substantial savings were realized in Administration expenses. The Division is hard at work to effect savings in other areas -- Instructions were fractionally higher - But plant operation and maintenance held even - Pupil transportation saw substantial savings - Debt charges were slightly higher - special projects and payments to other school systems, for tuition, transportation and other

fees, were both less than the previous year.

The total amalgamation of the Arcola & Oxbow School Divisions is still in the planning stage and work is progressing slowly. The meeting was advised, in response to a question from the floor, that the amalgamation process will include a number of public meetings for input and information.

A concern was raised, from the floor, regarding questionable courses of study offered in some areas on sex and sex education. It was explained that in the Oxbow School Division No. 51 that parents and/or guardians are given the opportunity early in the school year to review the studies being offered and to raise

questions of concern. The Division schools are very much aware of and abide by community morals, was an explanation given.

Division Director, Tom Chell, in his report noted that Division enrollment this year is at 1108 and projection for five years down the road is at 991. Regarding school closure policy it was noted that 40% of the 880 schools in the province are considered small and the government is planning school closures with considerations such as the average number of students attending over a five year period, proximity to other schools and the need for extensive renovations and repairs.

Principal Art Keating, of Carnduff Elementary School, gave a brief

overview of curriculum and instruction issues detailing a five year plan on updating each course so that grade one to twelve students will be offered the best, newest programs in subject material. It's an extensive detailed effort at a cost of \$70,000 per year.

Both Tom Chell and Art Keating stressed the importance of providing a flexible, dynamic set of study plans for our students, stressing their belief that the community wants the money spent on "educating our kids." Tom Took great pride in the accomplishments of many of the Division's 1994/95 students -- such as --- **General Proficiency Awards to: Andrej Verity, Carnduff, Shane Griffin, Carnduff, Jason Morris, Oxbow, Sheri Jacobson,**

Oxbow; **Governor General Medals to: Jason Morris, Oxbow, Andrej Verity, Carnduff; IOOF of Assiniboia Lodge #1 to: Marty Seymour, Carnduff, Monica Wilson, Carnduff; Wylie Scholarship to: Heather Carson; Wascana Scholarship to: Andrej Verity, Carnduff; Stevenson Memorial Scholarship to: Chad Sichel, Carnduff; National Debate Winners: Adam Ringguth, Oxbow, Rhonda Fedak, Oxbow; National Special Olympics Winner: Ryan Bast, Oxbow Competed in Nova Scotia last summer and came home with two gold medals, two silver medals and a bronze medal.**