

# CAS officials disagree on blocking

## Indian vote

Globe & Mail - February 16, 1982

By YVES LAVIGNE

Officials of the Brant Children's Aid Society disagree on whether the agency is trying to stop the election of six Indians to its 28-member board of directors.

Harold Garrett, chairman of the CAS board, said yesterday that the agency has temporarily shelved plans to change its election procedures — changes which other CAS officials say would prevent a block vote by Indians who hold 325 of the CAS's 508 membership cards.

Mr. Garrett said the agency never intended to prevent a block vote by Indians.

Theodore Van Overdijk, executive director of the CAS, said last week

and repeated yesterday, that the board has set up a committee specifically to look at ways of preventing the Indians from voting en masse to elect a slate of six Indians and a non-native to the board. But Mr. Garrett said the committee had been established to examine election procedures in general.

The move was not racially motivated, Mr. Van Overdijk said, but the society wanted to prevent special-interest groups from taking over the board.

Though each man was informed by a reporter of the other man's views yesterday, each insisted he was right.

"I don't think it was to prevent a block vote," Mr. Garrett said of the

intended changes. "We believe in the democratic process and even though we feel the vote may go to a block of people this year, things will work out."

Mr. Van Overdijk took exception to that comment a few minutes later. "This was a committee set up on Jan. 28 specifically to look at election pro-

cedures in order to attempt block voting from taking place . . . preventing anyone from manipulating the membership."

Indians in Brant County, including Wilma General, a CAS director for seven years, have accused the board of racism and bigotry.

## CAS boss fighting for job

OHSWEKEN, Ont. (CP) — The manager of the Children's Aid Society office in this community on the Six Nations reserve said Tuesday he plans to fight attempts to fire him.

"I'm not going to cave in to the request (to resign)," said Lance Sams.

He said he is investigating several options, including legal action, to fight a decision by the board of directors of the Children's Aid Society of Brant asking him to resign.

The 28-member board said Sams was responsible for circulating a letter — on society stationery — urging residents of the Six Nations and neighboring New Credit reserves to vote for a slate of six Indian candidates and one non-native for the board.

"Many people thought it might be helpful to have more people from the reserve on the board," said Sams, a non-native. "What started out to be a very innocent and well-meaning attempt to increase Six Nations and New Credit representation on the board was blown out of proportion by board members."

### REVIEW PROCEDURES

The board has also formed a committee to examine election procedures, with a view to changing them before the society's next general meeting in March, in order to prevent the slate being elected by block voting by reserve residents. Seven new board members are elected each year for three-year terms, while seven are appointed from county, municipal and Six Nations councils.

Society executive director Ted Van Overdijk has said the board was "looking for ways to prevent any special interest group from taking over."

Shirley Farmer, one of the six Indian candidates on the slate and a member of the Six Nations band council, said most of the candidates were seeking election because they have been impressed by the society's operation on the reserve and want to become more involved.

A Children's Aid Society membership is available to any Brant County resident for \$1.

SUDBURY, ONT.  
The Sudbury Star

FEB 17 1982

Bowden's Information Services

# CAS Ohsweken branch opens door to community

*Expositor Thursday Oct 4/84*

## 'Gaining acceptance - important step'

OHSWEKEN — The Ohsweken branch of the Children's Aid Society opened its doors to the community

on Wednesday.

Vera Styres, branch supervisor, said the aim of the open house was "to give the public the opportunity of gaining first-hand knowledge about our programs and how they work."

Displays illustrated various programs operated by the branch. Staff members were present to answer questions.

Darryl Hill, of the Department of Indian Affairs, presented service plaques Mrs. Styres, 10 staff members, and to Wilma General, a board director. Staff recipients were Evelyn Bomberry, Irma Sault, Melba Thomas, Ida Martin, Audrey LaForme, Beth Davey, Peggy Logan, Ellen Doxtator, Carla Maracle and Karen Smith.

The branch office, which serves both the Six Nations and New Credit reserves, opened in Ohsweken in 1977.

Mrs. Styres said the branch was established "to meet the specific needs of the community." Programs have expanded "as we have grown to better understand what services we are able to provide to other Indians. Indians providing social services to other Indians is a trend that has become increasingly prevalent on reserves across Canada. Mrs. General noted that "an office staffed by native people can better serve a native population."

Mrs. Styres said that "gaining acceptance in any community is an important first step. Native people are more likely to face less resistance than somebody from the outside trying to tell native people what to do and how to do it."

Mrs. General, who is currently president of the Native Child Welfare Association, said she views the relationship between the branch and the community as family members helping other family members. "This (the reserve) is my family, and I don't want to see harm come to anyone."

Mrs. Styres said the branch has attempted "to recapture the original concept of community in which we help each other until we're in a position to help ourselves."

### Self esteem

The branch's official mandate is to administer the Child Welfare Act. It protects children through such basic services as family counselling and supervision, either in family homes, foster or group homes, or adoptive homes. Services include those to unmarried parents, adoptive and foster care families. The foster care program, for example, recruits Indian families to care for Indian children. The branch now supervises 27 such families.

Another program assists mothers with all aspects of child rearing. Although some of the programs depend on professional instruction, others sponsored by the branch rely on volunteers. These include a volunteer driver program, used clothing for infants, and a toy donation program. Volunteers also are needed to assist in the homemaker courses.

"We are always looking for volunteers," Mrs. Styres said. "If we had more volunteers we could provide still more programs."

However, the branch's three social workers identify other needs which are addressed by preventive programs. The homemaker program, for example, offers such courses as Iroquois beadwork, cooking, crochet, fitness, sexually training and family nutrition. "The courses help women cope with housewife burden, by helping them feel good about themselves and helping them maintain self esteem and self respect," Mrs. Styres said.