

# Finding happy homes for children

By Bob Burt

Halton Children's Aid Society is one of many branches of an organization striving to find happy homes for children left homeless. In the first 10 months of this year the Society has placed 70 Halton children in adoption homes, plus 47 children from other branches of the C.A.S. At present there are 60 children in foster homes, five in group homes, four in institutions and two are in the homes of their parents. At this time last year the Halton branch had placed 57 Halton children and 31 from other places in adoption homes.

The staff of 27 consists of four working in adoptions, four working in child care, seven who work in the protection department, and three who work in the group home in Oakville. In addition there are an executive director and staff psychiatrist as well as several part time people.

Halton is in the enviable position of having more applicants for adoption than children waiting to be adopted. Dr. Gordon K. Askwith, Director of the Halton agency said there were several factors that could account for this but nobody could say why such a trend would occur.

He noted the county was situated in an

affluent area and people could afford to adopt children. He added there is a favorable attitude towards adoption here.

Another factor contributing to the trend would be the geography of the county and the lack of any large suburbs. An unmarried mother leaving her home to have a child would be inclined to go to a city where she wouldn't be readily noticed.

An agency is often criticized for asking a lot of seemingly silly questions but Dr. Askwith counters such criticism by asking the questions a father would ask if he had to find homes for his children.

Adoption applicants are interviewed in the home and at C.A.S. office, both alone and together. Although the purpose of the C.A.S. is to find a home for a child and not necessarily a child for a home, they do try to match the child with the adopting parents.

The C.A.S. has been commended many times for matching children so close in

many ways to the parents. Dr. Askwith recalled an incident when a family moved into a new district and an adopted daughter went into a grocery store just a few days after her adopted mother. The storekeeper looked up and said, "I know who you are, you're Mrs. Jones' daughter."

Dr. Askwith said a child even looks like the adopting parents after they live together for a length of time. Diet, similar mannerisms and speech would all contribute to this similarity in appearance.

A child watches the people around him and inherits their habits and mannerisms, he explained.

One of the misconceptions about adoption policies is that people think children are only adopted by older people. Dr. Askwith said there is no hard and fast rule to follow but there is a guideline, and he emphasized it was just a guideline. There should be no more than a 45 year

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Dr. G. Askwith and young friend

## The Acton Free Press.

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1968

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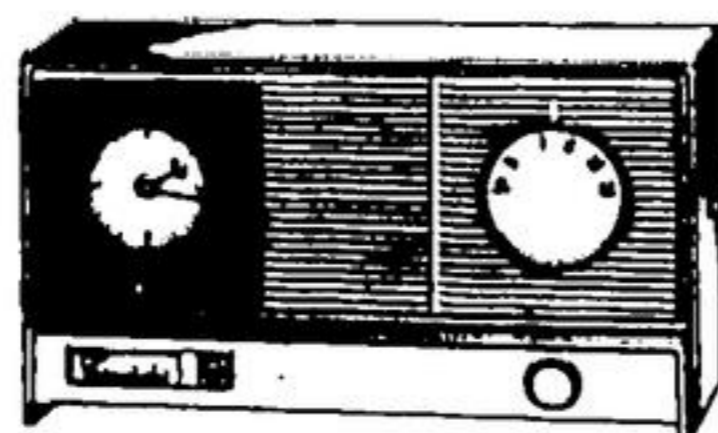
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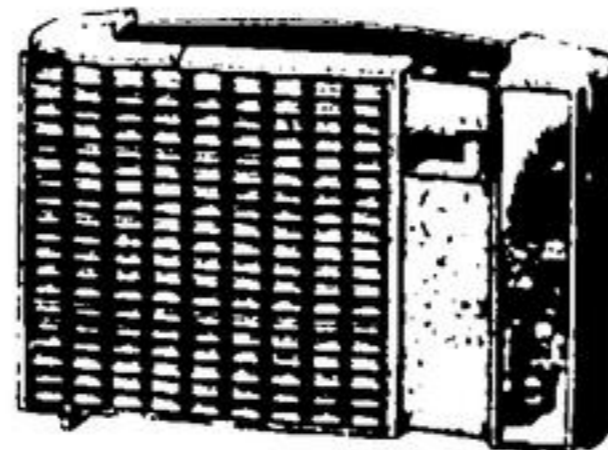
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