

Group home under attack, Indians, Metis dragged off....

(Continued from page 1)

but, he says, they never stated which ones they didn't agree with.

On January 6, Stanley says, he received word from the Ministry that staff made allegations against the home, and was invited by him to come and investigate.

Ministry investigators interviewed only Stanley and his wife Grace who is administrator. None of the present staff, nor any of the residents, were spoken to, he says.

A few days later, Stanley says, ministry staff came and dragged off a 14-year-old Indian boy. He was screaming he didn't want to go. Stanley does not know why the boy was taken or to where.

On February 8, the day before his 16th birthday, Brad General was approached by a probation officer and told to pack his bags, in spite of an Ombudsman's office request that he not be moved.

Finding his life once again ripped apart, Brad resisted, resulting in four policemen being called to

control him. He was taken away in handcuffs. From there he was taken to the Syl Apps Training Centre in Oakville, where he was urged to admit he had been beaten while in the Acton home. Brad refused.

The teenager's next stop was the Dawn Patrol group home in Hamilton. He left shortly after and has been on the run ever since.

In a telephone conversation with this newspaper, from Toronto, Brad admitted he was scared. He was hungry and cold and had no place to go, but could not return to Hamilton. He wanted to return to Acton, but knew he would just be taken away again. He did not know what lies in his future.

Sheila Bell, 16, who lives in the Stanley's Milton home, has joined Brad.

"I'm afraid to come back," Sheila said. "They are kicking out the others (Indians and Metis) and I'll be next," she told this newspaper.

Both Brad and Sheila have been in trouble with the law. Brad admits he is on probation "for a bunch of stuff", but would not elaborate. Sheila has been

charged several times with car theft, and her Children's Aid Society profile lists her as in need of help to overcome violence, anger, manipulateness and drinking abuse.

But in her year-and-a-half with the Stanleys she has not gotten into trouble with the law, and is straightening herself around.

Abandoned when nine months old, Sheila has been sent from one foster home to another. "I'm tired of being sent from place to place" she cries. "David's place is my home—I don't have any other place to go."

She has been told she will be placed in an apartment when she is 17 years old in July, but she is afraid they will come for her now. She doesn't want to go anywhere, she sighs.

"The allegations against Dave are lies," Sheila bursts out. "He is a good guy." In all her time with him Sheila says there has never been any evidence of child abuse. "Sometimes someone has to grab and hold onto us if we're freaking out, but that's

all," she says. "There is no abuse."

"Dave has never hurt anyone."

Sheila says her native rights as a Status Indian are being violated. Her heritage gives her the right to live wherever she wants to live, she says.

Sheila thinks it is "fishy" how every child taken from the Stanley group home has been an Indian or Metis. She hinted at discrimination on the side of government officials.

Tired of the fear of being taken away, and tired of being sent from place to place, Sheila and Brad approached a Toronto newspaper last week, and gave their entire story to them. As a result, Stanley has been inundated with members of the media wanting the full story. He explains it makes it sound as if he is complaining, when in fact, it was the teenagers who stirred up the media hornet's nest. He fears the publicity will not help in his fight to retain his licence.

Stanley charges that personal grudges against him by Ron Coupland of the Halton Children's Aid Society has resulted in him not getting any children from this area in his home. He has to rely on other Societies around the province to send him children. These societies in turn can decide when they want to remove a child from his custody.

The latest to be taken from his home was yesterday (Tuesday) when Society officials had to chase the boy around the home before taking the nine-year-old away. Stanley says he heard rumors of his impending removal but nothing else.

In each case, Stanley says, he had not been forewarned the children were being taken. Director of Child Welfare for this area, Ron Childs, and Brad's official guardian, says Stanley had several days notice of the move.

Stanley says the entire situation points to discrimination against Indians.

He notes the children being taken away from his homes are Indians and Metis, the whites are not involved in any of the battles.

Even though Stanley has been unofficially told the charges against him are for child abuse, he does not know for sure. He finds that thought absurd.

"Why would I spend \$200,000 on the building and renovations to start the group home, only to turn around and beat up the kids and risk losing my licence. It makes no sense."

Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed explained he has been aware of the situation for some time. Now, he says "as a result of protest from two young people removed, the Ombudsman is conducting two investigations into the removal."

Although he has heard of allegations against Stanley and the home, he is not aware of the nature of the charges and the operation. He explained that is privileged information and he will be updated when the Ombudsman's report comes back.

Reed stressed though that the licence cannot be revoked without a fair hearing, at which time testimony of various people would be heard. The charges have to be proved before the framed piece of paper can be removed from the office wall.

"This whole thing is very distressing," Reed says. Reed says he sees no evidence of prejudice, and has been given assurance from the ministry that no

more children will be removed from the home by them. However, he pointed out, if the children are put there by individual Children's Aid Societies, they can be pulled out.

Reed emphasized there have been no reports to his office about misdemeanors as long as the home has been opened.

Childs pointed out Brad was moved because he had been there a considerable amount of time, and plans for him to be moved were made months before the charges came up.

Childs explained Brad is a training school ward. The director would not reveal the source, nor the complaints against the home, but merely stated the ministry is investigating.

Childs said while Stanley had foster children in his home in Milton, he did not open the Acton operation until November. Stanley denies this.

Stanley points out his staff is highly trained. He himself paid for his staff to take an intensive control technique program which is a course in holding techniques so no one gets hurt.

All of his staff have post secondary education in either child care or recreation, with some being former probation and parole officers. Two staffers, Rusty Browne and Brent Racette are Toronto Argonaut football players.

Racette explains that the professional athletes' presence at the home gives the youths someone to look up to and respect. Plans are to take the children to games this summer and to introduce them to various players. "We want to give them a unique learning experience," he said.

Stanley pointed out the damage to the careers of Racette and Browne should they be accused of child abuse, but the pair know the allegations are false and everything will be straightened out. They are not afraid for their careers.

Carolyn Stanislav, 16, is a former resident at D and G Care Ltd. She telephoned the Free Press from Buffalo to say she has been on the run since July and now, thanks to Stanley, her parents and her social worker, she is ready to come back to Canada and face the consequences of her trouble with the police.

She left Stanley's operation after getting in trouble with the police. She headed straight to Georgia, but last November only got as far as Buffalo. Now, she is ready to come home.

In her 14 months with the Stanley's Carolyn said, she was never struck, hit, or abused in any way. "I was yelled at, but never hit," she said.

When she heard of the trouble the group home is in, she had to step forward and defend her friend. All her life she was moved from foster home to foster home, and was placed in a maximum security detention centre after running away from a foster home. When she got out, she had a choice of going to the Burlington Youth Centre or to the Acton group home. She chose Acton.

"It was happier with Dave (Stanley) than in any other group home," she said, and just cannot believe the allegations made against him.

As the battle continues over who is right and who is wrong, Brad lives in a stairwell, and Sheila only comes home to sleep. She won't stay around in the day in case they come for her also.

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Students have a \$927 heart

Acton High School students proved they have a heart.

Students raised \$927 recently for Have a Heart Week, and plan to purchase two wheelchairs for organizations in town, who can distribute them to needy people. They easily soared over their goal of \$800.

Proceeds from the school's November dance, and the sale of Christmas roses all went into the kitty, as did monies raised this month through the raffle of two heart boxes of chocolates, (won by Diana Kilmer and Laura Spalding), and cinnamon hearts in the jar guess (won by Patti Stone), a bake sale, and the sale of carnations to be given to a sweetheart or a favorite teacher.

Even the high school cafeteria got in the act by donating all money from coffee bought on Friday. Proceeds from the Valentine's Day dance also went into the fund raising drive.

Any extra money after the purchase of the wheelchairs will be given to a needy organization.

Chimney fires

Acton firefighters spent the good part of Friday fighting chimney fires.

Their first call was to the Hill home at Crewson's Corners, with the David Craig home at RR 2, Acton their second chimney call of the day.

Fire chief Mick Holmes says in both cases there was no damage.

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Legal wrangles postpone appeal

Legal wrangles will postpone the crown appeal of the sentence given to a Burlington driver responsible for the death of three Hamilton female cyclists the summer of 1980. Killed in the accident was a former Acton resident, Lorraine Robertson (nee Lavigne).

Richard Valente was fined \$200 and had his license suspended for a year last summer by a county court judge sitting as a justice of the peace, said crown attorney Jim Treleven. Treleven appealed the sentence to provincial court.

But Valente's lawyer, Noel Bates, maintains that since the judge held the rank of county court judge going to provincial court is a step down.

He has applied for judicial review for an order prohibiting the matter from going before a provincial court judge, said Treleven.

The application will be heard by a panel of three judges.

Since no date has yet been set for the review and because it must be heard before the appeal, it is virtually impossible for the appeal to go ahead as scheduled February 25, Bates is on holiday until March 1.

Charged on July 3, 1980 with dangerous driving, Valente had been committed to trial in county court, but the judge accepted his plea of guilty on the lesser charge of careless driving.

Bruce named to ALSBO committee

Acton's representative on the Halton Board of Education, Arlene Bruce, has recently been named to the salary committee of ALSBO (Association for Large School Boards of Ontario).

Bruce attended her first meeting on Saturday. The appointment will afford her the opportunity to gain provincial perspective to ALSBO and education.

Esquering school board trustee Betty Walker is the board's representative to the curriculum committee of ALSBO while Georgetown trustee Betty Fisher is the curriculum chairman. Both Fisher and Walker have held these posts for some time.

Liberals (Continued from page 1)

have lost repeatedly. She feels Peterson will come across better with voters than the past two leaders. She can't understand why "a real gentleman and good all-round fellow" like Bob Nixon was never elected premier and admits she never really got to know Smith, though she had nothing against him.

Mrs. Lawson and her daughter left the convention feeling quite "confident" about the next election and with the party "looking in pretty good shape, better than we have for a long time."