

Policeman charged with excessive force

An investigation prompted by complaints from a member of the Halton Law Association has led to charges of using excessive force being laid against a Halton region police sergeant.

Sgt. Jason Fields, a long-time veteran in the area, has been charged under the Police Act with using excessive force during the arrest and detention of Gary Spalding, a George-

town resident. The hearing will be held in the first week in December.

Police launched an investigation last month into Mr. Spalding's complaint that Sgt. Fields slapped him in the face last May after Peter McWilliams, a Milton lawyer, notified the law association and the police commission of a similar incident.

Mr. McWilliams' allegation

that Murray Norris of Milton was beaten by police at an Oakville party recently came in response to an association resolution approved Oct. 18, which called upon all members to report incidents of alleged police brutality.

Mr. McWilliams simultaneously notified regional chairman Ric Morrow and local members of parliament of his client's charges.

Mr. McWilliams said recently that such occurrences are fairly commonplace in Halton, particularly when the victim is being arrested for minor violations. Victims of police brutality, he said, have the options of laying charges against the officers in question, taking civil action against them or simply filing a complaint with the police commission.

"I regret to say that I do get regular reports of such incidents," Mr. McWilliams said.

Halton police chief Ken Skerrett told an Aetion high school law class last May that the regional police are accused every week of using excessive force, adding that "no doubt it has happened." A total of 13 police officers were cited in Halton last year, he noted.

District 1 Superintendent Floyd Schwartz, Sgt. Fields' superior, had no comment about the possibility that officers under his command might be using excessive force when asked recently. He stated merely that investigations into such charges are handled by the provincial police.

Since the charge was laid under the Police Act, Halton Regional Police chief Ken Skerrett will hear the case and decide the sentence, should Sgt. Fields be found guilty. The Halton police commission must approve the sentence.

If Sgt. Field wishes, he can appeal to the commission, and if that is denied, he can appeal

to the Ontario Police Commission.

Sgt. Fields acted as contact officer for the Aetion detachment after the re-assignment during the summer of Staff Sgt. Dick Hilton.

Region rejects welfare \$ hike

Halton social and family services administrator Rene Vivian would like to add \$10,000 to the 1978 general welfare assistance budget in anticipation of increasing unemployment.

"I think the country is in a hell of a mess," Mr. Vivian told the regional community and social services committee in seeking to justify his request.

He said more people would be hired next year, but higher unemployment is also indicated.

Originally, there was \$1,329,300 set aside in the budget for general assistance, and Mr. Vivian said he tried to keep costs down in other sections.

Regional chairman Ric Morrow disagreed with the idea of putting more money into general assistance because it was available. He said he would like more evidence that the unemployment situation would worsen next year.

The committee decided not to recommend the additional money. The members agreed, however, that Mr. Vivian could make his own recommendation for the increase at the next meeting.

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Acton's separate school officially opens its doors

St. Joseph's separate school, Acton, held its official opening Oct. 30.

The opening was attended by a number of dignitaries, including Paul F. Heding, D.D., bishop of the diocese of Hamilton.

Also present were Julian Reed, Liberal MPP for Halton-Burlington, Robert J. O'Brien, chairman of the separate school board, Coun. Russ Miller and Coun. Les Dudy, who represented Mayor Tom Hill.

Pupils of St. Joseph's performed before and after the official ceremony. Grade 5 and 6 pupils under the direction of Jim McGeerage sang "It ain't gonna rain no more", accompanying themselves on xylophones and recorders. After the ceremony, Grade 7 and 8

students, under the direction of Margaret Maronese sang.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, refreshments were provided by the St. Joseph's Catholic Women's League.

The first part of the ceremony was conducted in the St. Joseph's school building, including the blessing of the building. The rest of the ceremony was conducted at Robert Little public school by permission of the board of education and the school principal. St. Joseph's will be sharing facilities with Robert Little school.

Pupils from Grade 5 to 8 at St. Joseph's will use the gym facilities at Robert Little and all the students from St. Joseph's will use the library


resources.

"There aren't many schools in Ontario who share like this," principal John Briggs said.

There are five classrooms at St. Joseph's. Kindergarten pupils have their own classroom, and the rest of the grades double up. Mr. Briggs teaches Grade 7 and 8 in the morning and Judy Lipp from Holy Cross teaches in the afternoon, while Mr. Briggs carries out his duties as principal.

"This is the first separate school in Acton," Mr. Briggs said. "We're hoping eventually to open a new school. We hope to demonstrate by opening this school that there are people in this area who want to send their children to a separate school."

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Limehouse news

By MRS. A.W. BENTON
Herald correspondent

The Women's Institute met at the home of Mrs. F.T. Brown on Thursday evening, following a conducted tour of the Gage Stationery plant on an invitation by John McDonald who welcomed the group.

Each lady received a gift of stationery after an interesting tour, and Mrs. Roughtley thanked the guides.

Mrs. Hannah and Mrs. Moulton attended training school for needlework and plan classes on Nov. 14 and 16, 10 to 4, at our Hall. Let them know you plan to attend by Nov. 9. Bring lunch, pencil, eraser, pencil sharpener, 12" ruler, scissors, thimble, and 1.5 yards each of four colours of Sayelle knitting wool to make a sampler.

Canvas and needles will be supplied each lady sharing expenses.

Mrs. Frank Brown attended Mount Union day at Ligny Hall and reported on same.

Little interest was shown in District Day there on Nov. 9.

Christmas gift boxes will be given to sick and shut-ins as usual, and the executive are to plan a Christmas dinner for members and families, members providing food. Suggestions for winter socials were discussed. A social half hour followed and the Pres. Mrs. Booth thanked the hostesses.

Mrs. Kirkwood and Mrs. Anderson were delegates to the annual Women's Institute convention last week at Kitchener.

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