

# Halton CAS celebrates 75th anniversary with re-enactment

A re-enactment of the historic inaugural meeting of Halton's Children's Aid Society and a keynote address by one of the province's early child welfare leaders will highlight the Agency's 75th annual meeting tonight (Wednesday).

The event will take place at Knox Presbyterian Church on Milton's Main Street - where the seeds for the region's present child care system were planted on the night of February 15, 1914.

Costumed volunteers will play the roles of J.M. Denyes, who served as president of the Halton CAS board of directors from 1914 to 1937, and other officers elected to serve on the inaugural board. The brief dramatic presentation will highlight the Agency's early objectives in the days when abused and

neglected children had no place to turn for help. Indeed, prior to the founding of a CAS in Halton, it was not uncommon for ragged, hungry "gutter children" to roam downtown alleys - sometimes being housed among tramps and vagrants in the County Jail when space was unavailable in area orphan asylums.

The keynote address will be delivered by H.H. (Scotty) Dymond whose service to children in need of protection spanned over three decades commencing with his 1946 appointment as Superintendent of the Renfrew County CAS. He subsequently served as Executive Director of Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) from 1962-1978.

The Scottish-born Mr. Dymond acknowledges his introduction to

the plight of the abused and neglected children entailed a kind of "baptism by fire." His early years in Canada were devoted to a busy career in the retail food industry in Peterborough and Renfrew. Were it not for a post-war twist of fate, Mr. Dymond might well have lived his life oblivious to the needs of the province's hurting children.

"I happened to be with the federal government's War Time Prices and Trade Board when I was approached by Canon William Henry Matthew Quartermaine, an Anglican priest who was one of the founders of the child welfare system in Ontario. Renfrew County was looking for a good administrator to run its fledgling CAS, and they thought I might be up to the challenge."


One of Mr. Dymond's earliest assignments was to find homes for 13 siblings under the age of 14 - including two sets of twins! This was at a time when foster homes were at a premium and CAS officials had to go searching, often literally door-to-door, on a moment's notice. Fortunately, the amicable and forthright Mr. Dymond had soon persuaded a number of families to open their doors to one or more of the homeless youngsters.

It still bothers Mr. Dymond that some of the siblings had to be separated, and he subsequently became a strong advocate of foster care and adoption policies that promoted keeping sibling groups together.

By today's standards, the obstacles that confronted early child welfare workers seem insur-

mountable. Those early challenges and the child welfare reforms and strides they prompted will be highlighted in Mr. Dymond's keynote address at the Halton CAS's 75th annual meeting.

The CAS annual meeting will be preceded by a Past Presidents' Dinner in Milton at which former Halton CAS board presidents and executive directors will be honored. The annual meeting, which is open to the public, will begin at Knox Presbyterian Church on Main Street, Milton at 7:30 p.m. and will be followed by a reception at 9 p.m. Those attending are encouraged to add to the flavor of the 75th anniversary celebration by coming dressed in period costume. There is no admission charge. Further information from Heather Smith, 844-8211 or 378-2375.



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