

Duignan sits on fence over police oath

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

North-Halton MPP Noel Duignan isn't about to jump on the bandwagon of Burlington Tory MPP Cam Jackson's campaign to have the provincial government reinstate the oath to the Queen in the Oath of Allegiance sworn by Ontario Police.

Mr. Jackson has started a province-wide petition ordering the government to respect the province's traditional association with the Queen.

Despite being unaware of the petition, Mr. Duignan said the issue doesn't affect him either way. He is just as happy to have a police officer take an oath of allegiance to Canada as he is for the officer to swear allegiance to the Queen.

Sitting on the fence, Mr. Duignan said he understands both positions. "I respect the British heritage the oath of allegiance to the Queen represents, but I also respect the opinion that swearing allegiance to Canada is the same as swearing allegiance to the Queen," he said.

Calls received at his constituency office in Milton on the oath issue slightly favor Ontario's police swearing an Oath to the Queen, said Mr. Duignan.

Surprisingly, Mr. Duignan said the change in the oath would never have happened had it caught the attention of cabinet before being approved. It just slipped through amongst a load of regulation changes being considered at the same time, explained the MPP.

Halton Regional Police spokesperson Sergeant Carey Smith said Thursday the position of Halton Police Chief James Harding is he stands by the government's position believing an Oath change doesn't compromise loyalty to the monarch.

Chief Harding sat on the task force that recommended the Oath be changed. Chief Harding won't contradict the task force's recommendation because he was

a member, said Sgt. Smith.

Only last week, the governing body of the province's police service boards, reversed its decision of a year ago and now wants the New Democratic Government Party to reinstate the Oath of allegiance to the Queen.

No one from the Halton Police Service Board could be reached at press time to comment on the decision.

Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller is one person who is upset over the change in the oath.

"I am not very happy with the change. That's our heritage and it bothers me when people try to take it away," said Mayor Miller.

Leader of Ontario's Progressive Conservative Party, Mike Harris, states in a press release that the NDP's decision to change the oath has more negative repercussions than only undermining Canada's heritage.

"The NDP decision is also dangerous because of the precedents it sets. If Bob Rae can get away with thumbing his nose at the proper role of the Monarchy in the system of justice, what will be his next target," writes Mr. Harris.



Kidney Kids campaign

The Georgetown Lions Club is doing its part to ensure that youngsters suffering from kidney failure also have a chance to experience the joys of summer camp. Last Saturday, members of the Georgetown Lions Club were out in force collecting change from caring community members in a "Kilometre of Coins drive". All money collected

will be used to send youngsters suffering from kidney failure to Kidney Dialysis vacation camps. In the photo above, Vi Norton, of Georgetown, donates to the campaign while 'The Kidney' (Risa Cashmore) acknowledges its approval. (Herald photo)



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