

EDITORIAL

Catholic board misses the mark

The Halton Catholic District School Board is way off base with its ban on donations to charities that may fall foul of its interpretation of religious doctrine. The board's trustees are getting a lot of push-back on their decision, and rightly so.

Some 21,000 people signed an online petition against it. Students spoke out and the leader of the board's teachers union called the ban "needlessly divisive." Even the chair of the board, Diane Rabenda, made it clear she personally disagrees with it.

Nonetheless, the trustees forged ahead with this ill-advised measure. It bans fundraising or donations for non-profits and charities that "directly or indirectly" support abortion, contraception, sterilization, euthanasia or embryonic stem-cell research.

The ban is so broad that it catches many mainstream charitable groups in its net - including the Canadian Cancer Society (which currently isn't funding stem-cell research but has in the past and could in the future). The board and its 33,000 students raise about \$12 million a year.

No wonder one of the students protesting this decision, 17-year-old Ben Sabourin, told a board meeting: "I will not stand here and be told by this board that I am any less of a Catholic for helping sick children and cancer patients."

The trustees who voted for the ban should ask themselves a few questions. They should wonder, for example, why none of Ontario's 28 other English Catholic school boards (or the seven French Catholic ones, for that matter) have felt it necessary to adopt such a prohibition.

They should wonder about the wisdom of adopting a ban so comprehensive that it prohibits donations to an organization that even "indirectly" supports contraception or stem-cell research.

A publicly-funded school board should not be trying to ban charitable giving on the basis of a few trustees' strict interpretation of religious doctrine. Aside from being wrong, it will only fuel opposition to the whole idea of separate Catholic boards.

The Halton Catholic board has been down this rocky road before, and it has always led to a dead end. The board refused for five years to allow girls to receive the HPV vaccine in school, arguing it sent a "mixed message on chastity." And it tried to ban "gay-straight alliances" until protests forced it to change its mind.

This is another wrong decision.

CHAMPION TRACKS



Sharon Richardson photo

Campbellville's Sharon Richardson, left, and Ruth Kranendonk of Acton strike a pose with 'The King' after taking in the Elvis Tribute show at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas. The pair attended a creative painting convention that saw them paint with different art teachers and hundreds of other artists from around the world. Going away? Pack a copy of the Champion in your suitcase, snap a creative photo and email your Champion Tracks submission to cohara@metroland.com. Please include everyone's name and destination information.

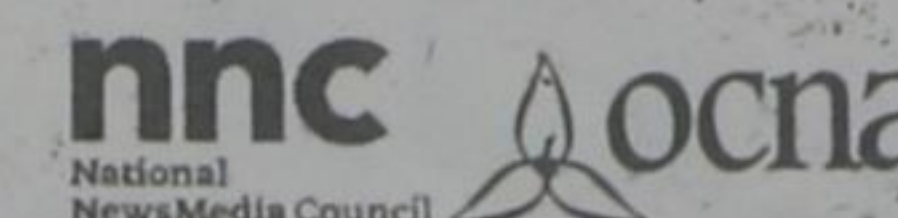
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Prisoners fed for 15.4 cents a day: annual report

A hundred prisoners committed to jail last year: Dills



MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY Column

Time Capsules are gems of information extracted from past issues of the Champion and other publications in order to provide a window into Milton's past. November 1922 Prisoners in the Halton County jail, Milton, were fed for the past year for 15 2/5 cents a day, according to the annual report just made public. Last year the cost was about 18 cents. During the year there were 100 prisoners committed, 106 males and three females; 90 were temperate and 19 intemperate,

five could neither read nor write. Of the 109 prisoners, 95 were committed for the first time, six for the second time, one for the third time and seven for more than three times. There were no deaths and no escapes...

Milton and Acton baseball juniors played the third and deciding game for the championship of the

Halton Junior League at Campbellville last Saturday before a fairly large crowd. The weather was fine, but rather cool. Acton won 15 to 4. Milton was far below the form of the previous game when Acton lost 11 to 8...

The Farmers' Club met in Milton last Saturday evening and arranged for the collection of a carload of oats to be sent to the farmer fire sufferers of northern Ontario. Two carloads of straw were promised. The Women's Institutes all over the county have been doing their full share. They have shipped a number of bales of clothing, bedding etc. Heavy shipments of similar articles and a large amount of money have been sent from the towns and villages...

"Two minutes silence" will, by the wish of His Majesty the King, be observed throughout the British Empire on Armistice Day, Nov. 11. The prime minister has received a cable to this effect from the Duke of Devonshire, secretary of state for the colonies.

- This material is assembled on behalf of the Milton Historical Society by Jim Dills, who can be reached through the society at 905-875-4156.

Letters



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