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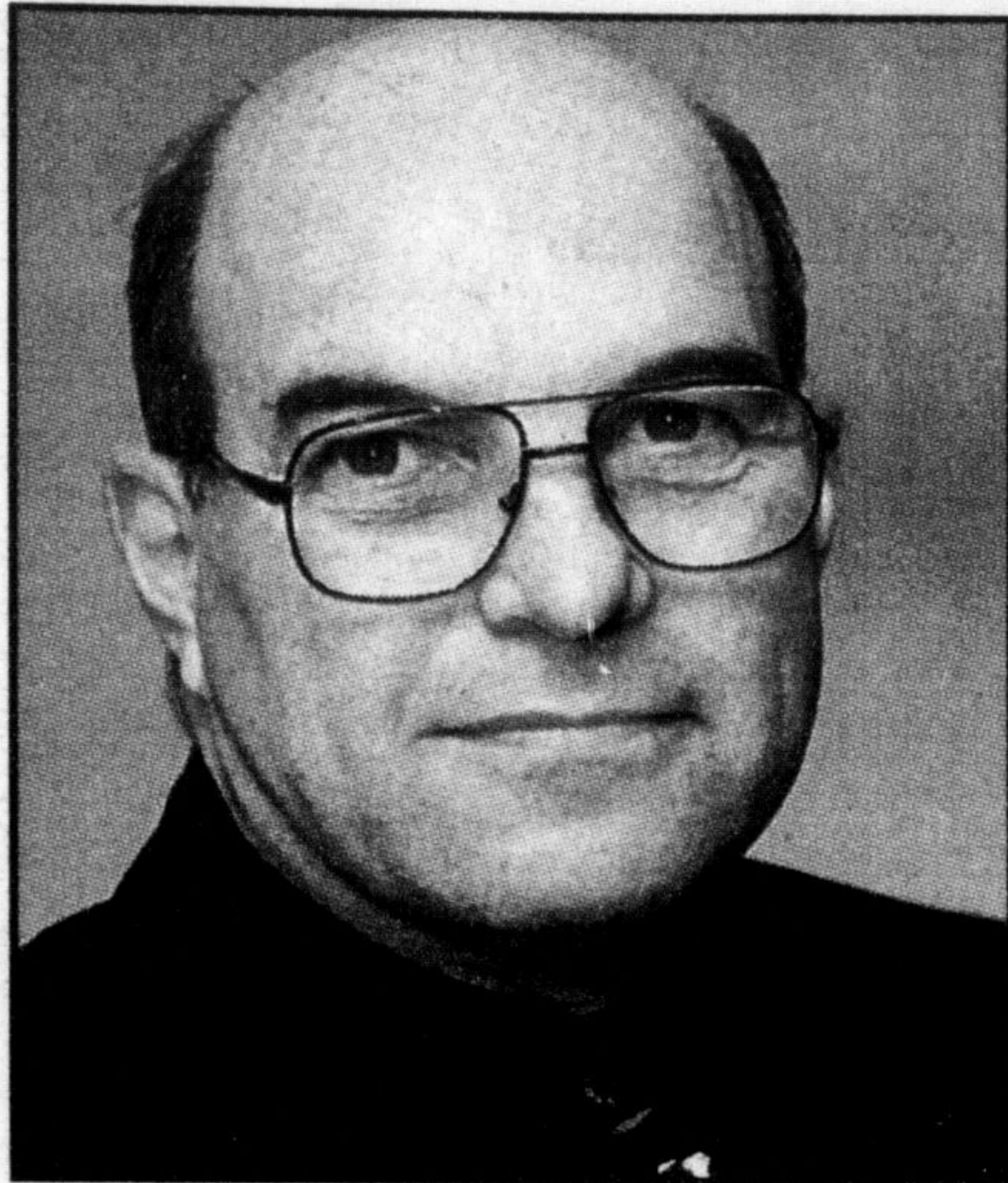
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Joe Deoni

## Deoni puts off his trial

Catholic school Trustee Joe Deoni — who faces fraud charges — put off setting a trial date last week while he obtains court documents.

In Ontario Court (general division), Mr. Deoni's lawyer asked the judge to give him time to receive transcripts from his recent preliminary hearing.

Crown Attorney Brian O'Mara didn't object and the judge agreed to grant the request.

Mr. Deoni, who was acclaimed in 1997 to the position of Milton school trustee (English) for the Catholic District School Board, was ordered to stand trial following a preliminary hearing March 25. He has elected a trial by jury.

He was charged last March with fraud over \$5,000 following a two-month Halton Regional Police investigation.

He will now return to court June 7 to set a trial date.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

## Bear care

Three-year-old Victoria Smelko listens to her teddy bear's heartbeat during a visit to the Wellness Fair's Teddy Bear Hospital Saturday at Milton Mall. The concept behind the teddy bear hospital was to show children various aspects of medical care so the hospital environment would be less threatening should they visit. See page 8 for more photos.

## Welfare plan moves into private realm

By KIM ARNOTT

Special to *The Beaver*

The Tories' mandatory work-for-welfare program is expanding to the private sector in Halton.

Under the new scheme, announced Thursday by Minister of Community and Social Services Janet Ecker, businesses that hire welfare recipients will be given money to cover training and supervision costs for up to six months.

"This expansion is going to help more people get back to work, it's that simple," said Ms Ecker while making the announcement. "We're responding directly to requests we've received from municipalities and people on welfare for more opportunities."

Halton is only the third community in the province to expand the Ontario Works program into the private sector, but Ms Ecker said all communities across Ontario will be taking part by the end of 1999.

Regional Chair Joyce Savoline said Halton decided to expand its workfare program because of the success experienced so far with Ontario Works. Since June 1995, Halton has seen a 55 per cent decline in welfare recipients.

"We've worked very hard at ensuring our formula is a successful one by focusing on the client," said Ms Savoline.

So far, six companies have stepped forward to take part in the program, and Halton is looking for additional interested employers.

Halton staff will help match companies up with appropriate welfare recipients, who will be paid a market wage for their work and will be added to the company's regular payroll.



Janet Ecker

The employer will receive money to offset the costs of training and supervision of the employee for up to six months.

Ms Ecker said the expansion of the program will create opportunities for individuals who require on-the-job training to qualify for a specific position.

Under the program rules, welfare recipients will not be allowed to replace current workers or fill vacancies created by layoffs.

The province has budgeted \$46 million to pay companies involved in the program. Each employer will negotiate an individual payment, depending on the training and supervision requirements of the position provided.

"Halton is very proud to be one of the first sites to implement the Ontario Works program in this company's regular payroll." • see WIDENS on page 9

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- M&M Meats (Rural) • Pizza Hut (P)
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- Sears • White Rose (P) • Zellers



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