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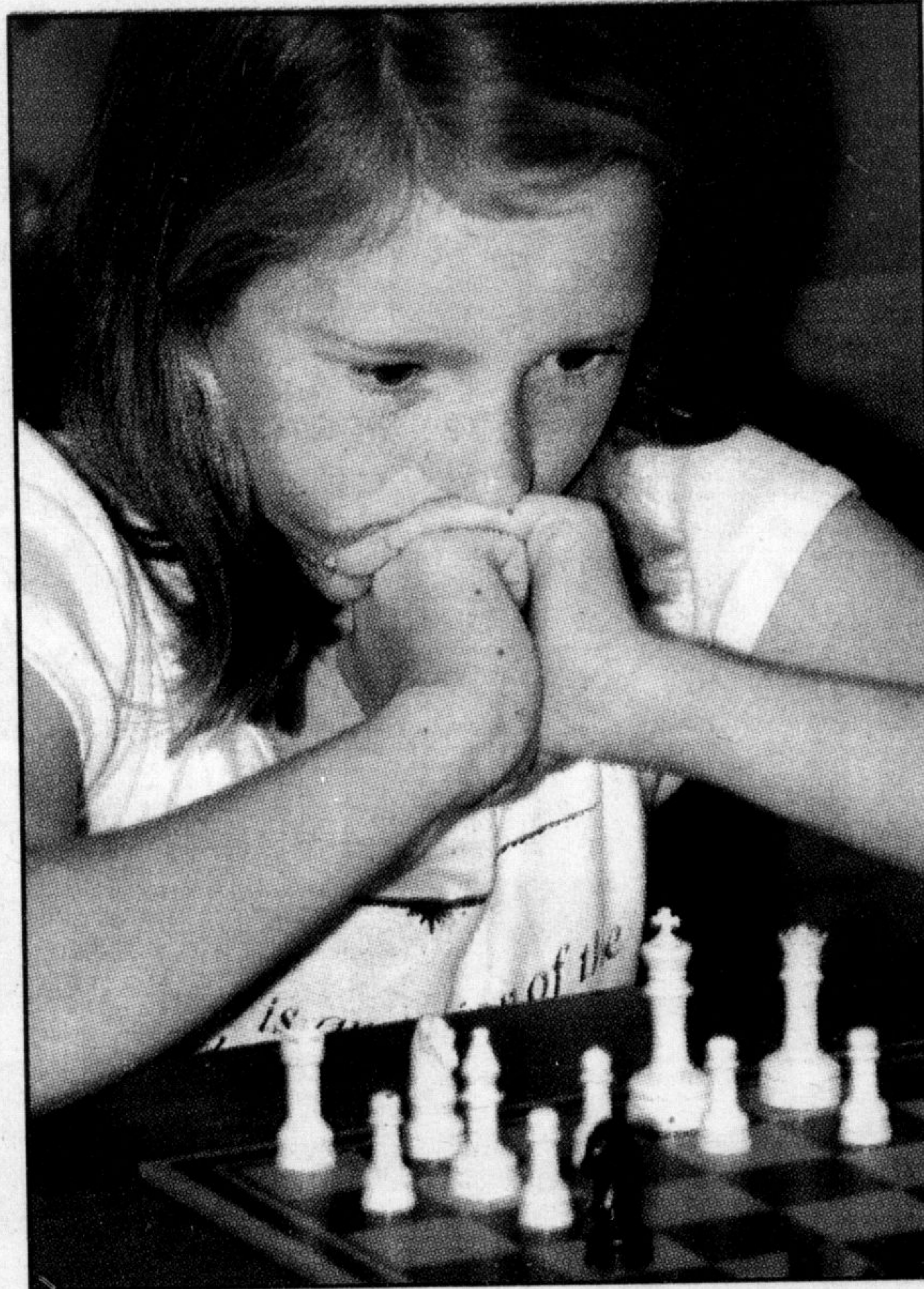
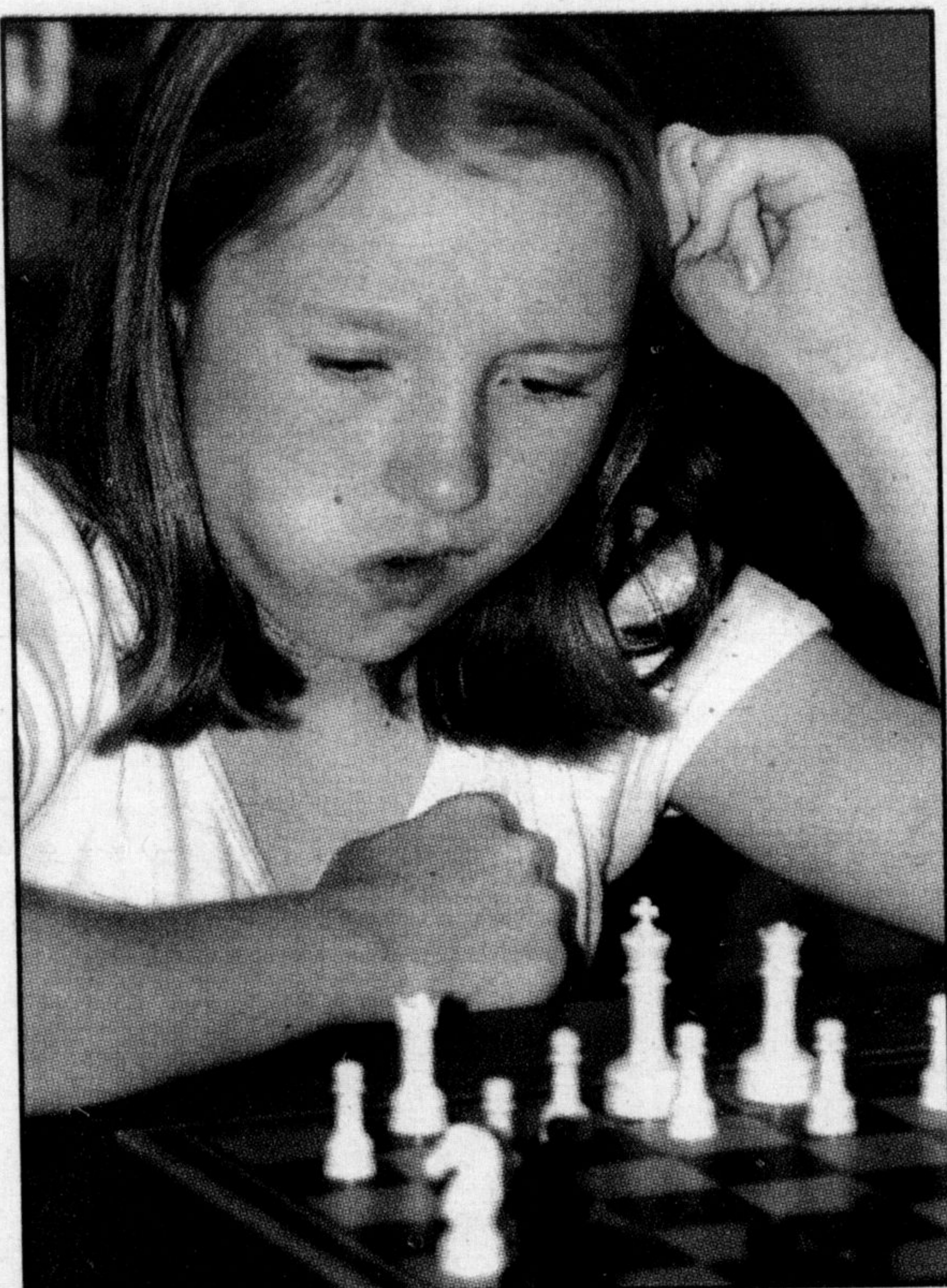
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Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

✓ Going through the (e)motions

W.I. Dick Middle School's Elissa Whitman, 11, goes from a look of calm to concern during second-round competition in the Halton Elementary School Chess Championships at her school Wednesday. A total of about 80 students from grades 1 to 6 took part in the event.

✓ Bill 74 undemocratic, public school trustees tell Premier Harris in letter

By TIM WHITNELL

Special to The Champion

The Mike Harris Conservatives are ramming undemocratic legislation down the throats of educators and something should be done about it, say the majority of trustees with the Halton District School Board.

To voice their displeasure with the controversial Bill 74, the board voted 6-2 recently to send a strongly-worded letter to Ontario Premier Mike Harris and Education Minister Janet Ecker.

Bill 74 is intended to amend the Education Act. Among other things, the legislation calls for the mandating of previously voluntary extra-curricular activities by teachers.



"The minister in Toronto can sit in his office and fire any board employee for non-compliance of the bill."

ERICA ANDREW

Several trustees also expressed concern about the lack of public consultation on the bill and that it gives unilateral power to the minister of education to fire teachers or trustees in certain circumstances.

Milton Trustee Erica Andrew, a former head of the Halton unit of the elementary women's teachers' federation, suggested the board send a letter to the government.

"I have an open letter to the citizens of Ontario from the Ontario Public School Boards Association. It calls the legislation a Draconian measure," she said.

"The minister in Toronto can sit in his office and fire any board employee for non-compliance of the bill," added Ms Andrew.

A defiant Ms Andrew said it appears the attempt to make after-school activities part of a teacher's job description evolved out of issues in Durham Region.

The two school boards in that region are in the

• see BILL on page 12

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