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Sent: Friday, October 29, 2004 12:14 AM
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Subject: [fathers_in_action] Attack on Children's Aid

October 29, 2004

Marty Beneteau, Editor
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Subject: Attack on Children's Aid

In reference to the article published October 27, 2004:
CAS rocked by man on suicide mission, by Kelly Patrick
and Craig Pearson.

For publication

Dear Editor:

You have reported on the attack on the Children's Aid Society by Jim Malone. This same Children's Aid Society has been in the news several times before this year, for the discovery of pornography inside the agency, and for street demonstrations against the policy of seizing children from their parents. Have you considered that there may be some serious faults with this agency?

Children's Aid (CAS) operates behind a wall of secrecy. Court records are sealed. A provision in the Child and Family Services Act bars publication of the name of any child involved in a child protection case, effectively banning families from telling their side in any CAS action. One of the few ways to penetrate secrecy is to speak to affected families. I have done so with over two hundred families, and have some insight into their actual operation. Their most common case is seizing the children of single mothers. Typically, the mother has no assets, she cannot get help from the baby's father, she cannot get financial assistance from her own family. While she has enough resources to house and feed herself and her baby, she is unable to hire the investigators and lawyers required to fight the Children's Aid juggernaut. Another common case is what I call the shotgun divorce. Starting either with a child abuse investigation or a domestic disturbance report, CAS, on threat of child removal, coerces one parent to initiate a divorce that neither wants. Once the divorce is a fait accompli, the remaining single parent is at the mercy of the social workers. Yet another kind of case is that where the parents are already divorced. Acting outside the existing custody agreement between the

parents, CAS takes children without warning or explanation from one parent and gives them to the other.

The force behind all of this is the quest for money. Children taken from their parents go to foster homes, contractors who get paid to care for children. All of the foster parents I have spoken to report receiving \$800 per month for their efforts. An examination of the figures published by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies shows that the amount paid to Children's Aid Societies is \$71 per child day, \$44 per day more than they give to the foster parents. That markup comes to over a quarter million dollars for an infant or toddler kept in their care until age of majority.

Foster parents enter the system for the most noble motives, but soon find they are subject to abuse as bad as natural parents. I spoke to a foster parent whose name I will not mention, but can supply privately. For biological reasons, he and his wife could not have children of their own, so they became fosters. He had a girl in his care, and at age fourteen Children's Aid suggested that he adopt her. He agreed. The foster payments stopped as soon as he made application to adopt. Since the adoption never occurred, the result was four years of free foster care. I am not in a position to audit the finances of CAS, but it's a reasonable guess that they continued to collect their \$71 a day from the Province of Ontario.

Little is yet known of what drove Jim Malone beyond the bounds of rationality. From what you have published, he appears to be a foster parent who was faced with the dilemma of a reduction in income or loss of children with whom he had fallen in love. What you have published about Mr Malone comes from the mouth of a person you describe as a "14-year-old male, who can't be named because he's a CAS ward". You say:

He [Bevan] also cautioned that the 14-year-old is a teen who "needs a lot of guidance and has had a lot of trouble in his lifetime."

You ought to do this boy the favor of publishing his name, otherwise under pretext of guidance, he could face a grim future in the worse care the foster system has to offer as repayment for his criticism of Children's Aid.

And have you considered how Children's Aid managers, such as Bill Bevan, get their jobs? They are responsible to a board of directors elected by the membership, and any adult in the community can become a member of his local CAS and participate in their election. A few years ago, several CAS opponents, including me, organized membership drives in an effort to elect directors with more family-friendly policies. In response, Children's Aid Societies across Ontario altered their bylaws. Now any member can vote for directors, but choice is limited to candidates nominated by the incumbents. These elections are as representative as those in the Soviet Union under Stalin.

Even to the most casual observer, the discovery of

pornography in the organization shows that Children's Aid is not run by the likes of Mother Teresa. This agency deserves some genuine investigative reporting.

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