

Hate-speech law under attack

► Appeal in Toronto scrutinizing Section 13 of Human Rights Act while private members bill seeks to repeal it

A section of Canada's human-rights code that protects against hate speech on the Internet is under attack on two fronts just as three accused neo-Nazis in B.C. face charges of vicious, racist assaults.

An appeal got underway in Federal Court in Toronto this week scrutinizing Section 13 of the Human Rights Act, which says it's discriminatory to spread hate messages online.

The case pits human-rights advocates against defenders of free expression.

Meanwhile, federal Tories are seeking to kill the provision via a private member's bill in the House of Commons.

But those who keep an eye on incidents of hate and the so-called white-pride movement are worried if those provisions of the act are killed, Canada could see more incidents like the setting on fire of a Filipino man on a Vancouver street.

Police recently announced the arrests of two men in their 20s and a 30-year-old in connection with that assault and three oth-

42% Statistics Canada found Canadian police forces reported a rise of 42 per cent in hate-based incidents in 2009, as compared to 2008, and more than half were based on race. The year before, there was a 35 per cent jump. The figures are the most recently available and were released in June.

ers against minorities in Vancouver. Investigators allege the trio are members of Blood and Honour, a white-supremacist group linked to violence around the world.

All three suspects have provincial court dates on Dec. 23.

"Even after individual members are arrested for these kinds of degenerate crimes, they have a persistent ability to attract new recruits," said Richard Warman, who is one of three parties in the appeal case and contends Section 13 must stay intact.

The Internet now disseminates the racists' rally-

ing call, he said.

"That's why it has to be a constant concern not just for police, but the community and the government as a whole," he said.

Warman has used the provision on 15 occasions to mount successful complaints, mostly against people accused of agitating online for ethnic cleansing.

But his record was turned on its head in 2009, when the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled in favour of a right-wing extremist webmaster.

The tribunal, which only handles cases referred to it by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, found Marc Lemire exposed homosexuals and blacks to hatred and contempt by publishing an article entitled "AIDS Secrets."

But the tribunal also ruled it was unconstitutional to penalize him.

The commission is seeking the appeal.

Eight other groups are participating as interveners, including B'Nai Brith Canada and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Warm. Hat



► Senior Joe Royer tries on a toque donated by the Hudson's Bay Co. as part of the Greater Vancouver Community Services Society's (GVCSS) Christmas-care-package program.

KENDRA WONG/FOR METRO

400 Christmas care packages delivered

The GVCSS and volunteers from SFU's Young Women in Business program distributed 400 Christmas care packages to elderly, mentally ill and disabled people at the Oppenheimer Lodge yesterday. Care packages included soup, coffee, mugs, socks, shampoo, a robe and Purdy's Chocolates.

Vancouver less trusting of cops: Survey

Vancouverites have trust issues with their police force, according to a new report.

The report found only 65 per cent of local residents trust the Vancouver Police Department, compared with Toronto's 78 per cent and Montreal's 80 per cent.

The Community Trust Report surveyed 1,502 people in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver to assess trust in six categories: rela-

tionship, stability, innovation, vision, practical value and competence. Nick Black, vice-president of Concerto Marketing Group — which conducted the survey with Research Now — said trust in the VPD is markedly lower than the usual high-70-percentile enjoyed by major institutions.

"What we found were that three major drivers

were contributing to that lack of trust — competence, relationship, and vision. People were saying that (the VPD) weren't great to deal with," Black said.

But part of the lack of trust may be that Vancouverites hold their police force to a higher standard, said David Eby of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

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