

# Report considers debt in four-county region

The municipalities in the four-county Central Ontario Economic Region had, in 1964, a total net debenture debt of well over a billion dollars.

The exact figure is \$1,130,989,552, according to 1964 municipal figures, published in 1965 by the Ontario Department of Municipal Affairs, the latest available at the time of the study. The tax and debt study was performed by the newly organized Central Ontario Regional Development Council.

The figure was the equivalent of 5 per cent of the gross provincial product.

Of the amount, Metro Toronto was responsible for more than half, or \$613,470,855. Metro Toronto and the municipalities within its area were responsible for over two-thirds of the figure, \$972,047,796, the study indicated.

The region consists of Halton, Peel, York and Ontario Counties and Metro Toronto. The total debt for all municipalities and counties of the region was 21.13 per cent of the total taxable assessment of the total region. Excluding county government debt, the debt was 20.82 per cent of the region's taxable assessment. The Provincial total of municipal net debt for purposes of comparison was 16.73 per cent of Ontario's total municipal taxable assets.

The highest per capita debt among all 69 municipalities of the Central Ontario Economic Region was to be found in Oakville. The figure for the community was \$394.06 per resident. Metropolitan Toronto was second with a per capita debenture debt of \$357.11. In third and fourth places were Toronto Township and Vaughan Township with \$352 and \$322.07 of municipal debt per resident respectively. However, averaging the debenture debt per capita, taking all of the Metropolitan Toronto municipalities together, produced a figure of \$565.84.

Although Oakville had the highest per capita debenture debt in the entire economic region, a comparison of its total debenture debt to its total taxable assessment base indicated that debt constitutes only 15.86 per cent of the assessments. This is regarded by the Ontario Municipal Board as a relatively healthy figure.

Only the Metro Toronto geographical area, Oakville, Metropolitan Toronto, Toronto Township and Vaughan Township were over \$300 per capita debt in the region.

The lowest per capita debt, outside the figures compiled for the counties, was Caledon East. This Village of 663 inhabitants had the lowest debt figure in the four-county region, at \$16.96 per resident. Mimico was in second place for the entire region with \$39.75 of municipal debt for each of its 18,584 residents. Swansea was in third place with \$51.33 per capita debt following in fourth lowest place for the region by Forest Hill at \$58.86.

Of the 69 municipalities in the area of responsibility of the Central Ontario Regional Development Council, only 14 were under \$100 in per capita debenture debt. None of these is in Halton County. Seven of them are in Ontario County, two in Peel, four are in Metro and only one in York, outside Metro—that is East Gwillimbury Township with a per capita debenture debt of \$88.21.

In examining taxation the figure used was the total levied by population. The highest per capita taxation figure for the four-county region was found in Leaside. Here each resident had an average annual tax bill of \$234.10. Toronto was in second place with a tax bill of \$221.76 for every resident. New Toronto was next at \$221.72. Forest Hill followed at \$198.45 in theoretical tax billing for each resident within this municipality.

Highest township tax levies, according to the analysis were in Etobicoke Twp. (\$172.65), North York (\$160.72), Toronto Township (\$153.55), and Scugog Township (\$150.32).

Lowest per capita taxation was found in Caledon East. Caledon East, it will be noted, also had the region's lowest debt figure. Caledon East residents, on the average, pay only \$58.32 each, in municipal taxation. East Gwillimbury was next lowest in per capita taxation for the region at \$70.02. Esquesing Township was in third place at \$70.29 followed by Cannington at \$70.48 in fourth place. The lowest per capita taxation in York County in the Metro Toronto area, was in Mimico at \$112.42. Long Branch, at \$119.89 and East York at \$122.02 followed.

According to the Ontario Municipal Board, safe municipal borrowing limits are exceeded when total municipal debenture debt goes beyond 25 per cent

of total municipal assessment. Closest in the four-county region, according to the CORDEC study, to this 25 per cent level was Stouffville, whose debt was 24.53 per cent of total assessment, according to the figures examined.

Toronto Township had debenture debt rated at 23.01 per cent of its total taxable assessment and had the second highest figure for the region. The village of Bolton with a population of 2,075 was the fourth highest figure for the region at 21.20 per cent. It lost third place to Vaughan Township, where debenture debt was 21.38 per cent of a total assessment base. However, the Metro Toronto area, a non-administrative unit, considered solely for the purposes of comparison, had a total debt as compared to its total assessment, of 22.40 per cent.

The highest percentage among Halton County municipalities can be found in Burlington at 17.34 per cent with Acton at 16.30 per cent. In Ontario County, Uxbridge (18.35 per cent), Ajax (18.10 per cent) and Whitby (16.12 per cent) had the highest ratios of debenture debt to total taxable municipal assessment. In the County of Peel the predominant municipalities were Toronto Township (23.01 per cent), Bolton (21.20 per cent), and Brampton (18.61 per cent).

In York County, excluding Metro, Stouffville (at 24.53 per cent), Vaughan (at 21.88 per cent) and Aurora (at 17.29 per cent) had the highest debenture percentages.

Only two Metro Toronto municipalities had a total debenture debt of over 10 per cent of their taxable assessment. However, the metropolitan Toronto area for purposes of comparison, had a debt total 22.40 per cent of its assessment.

Metro Toronto was highest at 14.14 per cent, Scarborough second at 11.99 per cent, and Etobicoke Township third at 8.55 per cent.

Least in debt of all regional municipalities, relative to their tax base were the municipalities in Metro Toronto. Mimico led the region at a mere 1.61 per cent followed by Forest Hill (1.80 per cent) and Caledon East (2.72 per cent).

The communities with the lowest relative debt in their respective counties were Nassagaweya Township at 6.97 per cent, Scugog Township at 3.21 per cent, Caledon East at 2.72 per cent, Mimico and Forest Hill at 1.61 per cent and 1.80 per cent respectively—leading the region and York outside Metro, Georgina at 5.09 per cent and North Gwillimbury at 5.22 per cent.

Highest total figures on a county basis (Metro, Toronto, and York taken together) were repeated for York County, where the average per capita taxation was \$173.62 and average per capita debenture debt was \$544.54.

## Nassagaweya Twp. discusses control of education costs

A Thorold resolution calling for provincial government to provide at least 80 per cent of municipal education costs was endorsed by Nassagaweya Township Council at their meeting on Monday, and the motion sparked a lengthy discussion on education's rising costs.

Councillor Ross Gordon feared local councils and schools boards would lose control of

the money, if the province took over a larger share than the approximate 53 per cent it now pays. Reeve William Coulter warned "if all the control was given to the Province, they will come back on us and say they are going to control development too."

Councillor Mrs. Anne MacArthur felt the local elected representative had little control over education costs anyway. "They tell us how large to build our schools, and they tell us how to spend our money," she claimed.

After further discussion, the resolution was endorsed and Halton M.P.P. George A. Kerr was to be notified.

Halton County, at \$133.91 per capita taxation, and \$384.24 of individual debenture debt respectively, was the second of the four counties, followed by the County of Peel at \$128.24 per capita taxation and \$325.25 per capita debenture debt. Ontario was the lowest in the economic region, where per capita taxation averaged out at \$122.51, and where per capita debenture debt was found to be \$221.33.

The regional total population was 2,281,376. The average regional per capita taxation was \$165.02 and the regional average debenture debt was \$497.93.

The corresponding Provincial figures for all municipalities in Ontario, with a Provincial population of 6,342,396, were: per capita taxation \$127.69 and per capita debenture debt \$313.

Departing from traditional municipal fiscal reporting, the Central Ontario Regional Development Council averaged the taxation and debt figures on an administrative county basis. Separated municipalities were excluded and the counties' own debenture debt figures, as reported, were used. County expenditures are generally less expensive and this is reflected in the averages.

Halton County Government has the lowest per capita taxation figures at \$110.30. York County is next highest at \$130.06, then Peel County Council \$13.45, and Ontario with the highest figure at \$16.52.

Peel County Government led in the size of its per capita debenture debt at \$49.06, followed by Halton at \$34.19, York at \$31.97, and Ontario at \$17.11.

Material used in the development of the Report can be found in the Ontario Department of Municipal Affairs' 1964 Annual Report of Municipal Statistics. This is the latest complete compilation of these figures available.

Copies of the complete from the Municipal Offices of any member municipality in the four-county economic region, or the offices of the CORDEC, letter, P.O. Box 506, Station O, Toronto 7, Ontario.

## Manor W.A. will attend convention

A discussion on the auxiliaries convention to be held in London September 26, 27 and 28, was held at the September meeting of Halton Centennial Manor Women's Auxiliary. President Mrs. S. Allen presided over the meeting.

The auxiliary will have a delegate at the convention for the three days, and a carload of ladies will attend the sessions on September 27.

The president informed the Auxiliary that about 60 residents had enjoyed the recent bus trip the auxiliary sponsored. Hobby craft will open for the fall and winter season on September 22 and it is hoped as many ladies as possible will come out each Thursday to help.

The October meeting will be preceded by a pot luck luncheon.

## ARDA grants are available for enlarging small fields

Farmers in Halton County handicapped by small fields, unsuitable for the use of modern farm machinery, may now receive assistance under the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act.

Under the joint Federal Provincial agreement, farm operators will be able to receive financial assistance for the removal of fences to enable economic use of large fields which lend themselves to mechanical equipment.

Many farms were laid out in small fields, separated by stone and brush fences, which are now impractical under modern farming procedures.

Under the plan the Federal Provincial ARDA pay 40 per cent

of the cost to the farmer of hiring heavy equipment and operators, for the removal of stone, stump and brush fence rows up to a maximum grant of \$500 per farm.

Farmers wishing to participate in the proposal can obtain an application form from the Agricultural Office, Milton. The ARDA grant will be paid on presentation of a certificate that the work has been carried out.

Over 30 per cent of the drownings in Canada last year resulted from boating mishaps. Red Cross reminds you to think...

### Demonstration

Larry Gardhouse and Verna Thompson, representing the Halton 4-H Beef Club, competed in the 4-H Inter-County demonstration at the C.N.E. on September 2. They demonstrated and discussed the Beef Feedlot of the future. Their feedlot of 20 acre farm with all the feed grown on the farm, consists of three silos and a pole barn. Corn silage, haylage, and high moisture corn were their feeds used to fatten the steers.

This Competition was won by the Guelph 4-H Club, with the Halton team placing in the "A" group.

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Wood and coal are probably the most economical fuels to buy—but they're also the least efficient. And sooner or later you'll get tired of slaving over a dirty furnace—then what?

You can choose between a liquid fuel or so-called "flameless" heating. Or natural gas. All of them claim to be the best. Who should you believe?

Initial installation costs are higher for liquid fuel equipment than for gas. A gas unit has fewer moving parts, needs less maintenance and therefore lasts longer. In order for "flameless" heating to compete in operating cost, it requires extra-thick insulation throughout the home.

If your home had extra-thick insulation, no matter what kind of heating system you use, you'd naturally cut fuel costs. With extra insulation or normal insulation, a gas heating system means lower fuel costs by far. You never have to order natural gas—it's always there. A good, old-

fashioned Canadian snowstorm can't stop natural gas from heating your home. Storms can stop trucks. They can also knock out power lines—and very often do. Unless you have your own generator, "flameless" heating can give you the cold shoulder, just when you need a warm house. Let's face it—nothing is as dependable as natural gas.

With modern gas heating there are no hot and cold "layers" of stale air. Dust and dirt particles can be filtered from the air and humidity controlled. Wouldn't you rather have a heating system that took care of these vital functions?

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