

# HALTON JOINS "MARCH ON OTTAWA"

A busload of Halton County farmers joined the Ontario and Quebec farmers' protest march on Ottawa on Wednesday of last week, but they were not a part of the unruly mob that stormed the parliament buildings, broke windows and scuffled with the Mounties in an attempt to enter the House of Commons.

The Halton delegation — 46 strong, ranging in age from 17 to over 80 years, and representing nearly every type of farming enterprise in the county — was back at Major Hill Park preparing to board the bus for home when the fired-up Quebec farmers spoiled the otherwise peaceful demonstration with an outburst that will long be remembered.

Disappointed over the lack of a milk subsidy and the absence of an overall dairy policy that would ensure the farmers of a good future in their chosen occupation, the Halton group took a tiring 17-hour trip to the nation's capital to join thousands of other farmers representing seven provinces to press their demands on the government leaders. And they took the day away from their work in the midst of a busy seeding season.

But none begrudged the time or the inconvenience. "I feel our trip was worthwhile," summed up Halton Federation of Agriculture president Denzil Lawrence. "Thank you all very much for coming," he told the busload at the end of the tiring day.

The protest march, termed the biggest mass demonstration ever witnessed on Parliament Hill in Canada's history, produced several firsts:

\* It was the first time the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Farmers Union and the Union Catholique des Cultivateurs from Quebec had organized together to emphasize their long-standing demands for a better deal for the farmer.

\* It was the best-organized peaceful demonstration ever seen in Ottawa, with the exception of the events after 3 p.m. when the excited Quebecers stormed the House.

\* It showed the government the farmers felt strongly enough about their demands to take an entire day off work to demonstrate.

\* And on the local level, it proved to the farmers of Halton they can work together toward a common goal whether they operated a beef, dairy, poultry, hog or general farming operation.

"If numbers count, we did a lot of good today," smiled Mr. Lawrence as the bus rushed, the 46 tired but exuberant

members of the Halton delegation back to Milton that evening.

"We were after a little more sure future, we would like to know where we are going," chimed in his wife. "We haven't much control over the price of our products and it was wonderful to see the unity among the farmers there today, all working for the common cause."

The \$360 cost of the bus was borne by the Halton Federation and the County Milk Committee. A week earlier the two groups had called a meeting of county farmers, when 100 attended to discuss the protest march and agreed to join it. The whole march was sparked by the announcement of a new dairy policy but the farmers admitted the idea had been contemplated for years "be-



J. J. GREEN, Minister of Agriculture, and Maurice Sauve, Minister of Agricultural Development, face the crowd on Parliament Hill.

## Halton's marchers

Halton's "march to Ottawa" delegation included marshals Denzil Lawrence and George Pelletier and the following: Gordon Jefferson, Doug Robertson, Frank McGibbon, Wally Harris, William Rayner, Frank Opsteen, Mr. and Mrs. Art Plant, Glen Colbeck, Mrs. Denzil Lawrence, Mrs. William Mahon, Mrs. George Pelletier, Bruce Bawden, Walter Egger, Mrs. Clarence McCready, Miss Bessie Smith, Mrs. John Galbraith, Harold Middlebrook, Bert Davidson, Charlie Davidson, Gordon Rogvaldson, J. McCullough, Ken Ella, Floyd Pickering, Harold Biggar, Eddie Bridgen, Ray Break, Grant Williams, Tom Alderson, Vic Lawrence, Gordon Sinclair, Tom Boughton, Elmer Foster, Fred Workman and Fred Workman Jr., Martin Vanderboom, Mac Alexander, Clarence Anderson, Guy Wilson, J. E. Snow, Spencer Wilson and Mr. and Mrs. Brown.

cause of discontent over the lack of an overall agricultural policy that would enable farmers to plan their operation like any other business.

A brief prepared by the three groups in charge of the mass demonstration reviewed the lack of assistance the government has given farmers, and called for a far-reaching agricultural policy covering a variety of farming operations.

The Halton bus picked up its first three passengers at Falmouth at 5 a.m. Wednesday, and other 20 or so in Milton at 5:10 and the final 20 at Hornby by 5:15 a.m. The 39 men and seven women settled down for a long ride to the nation's capital as the bus pulled onto Highway 401.

Within an hour group marshal Denzil Lawrence was passing out name cards bearing the "marching feet" symbol. Along the route the bus passed several other busloads of farmers heading to Ottawa for the same purpose.

The group chatted amiably with each other, discussed the late seeding this year, and swapped stories on how they managed to get away for the day in such a busy season.

Tom Broughton of Bronte, president of Halton Hog Producers said he was out feeding his 350 hogs at 4:30 a.m. in order to catch the bus by 5. Feed prices are going up all the time, he was saying, but hog prices went down this year. A floor price of \$24 cut, on the first 100 hogs and a \$3 subsidy on Grade A hogs helped the small producer, but wasn't much help to him and a dozen other large producers in the county who shipped half of Halton's production of 22,000 hogs last year.

"It's time we went to the government and let them know how we feel," suggested Harold Biggar of Oakville. "It seems like they only listen to pressure groups these days. They arrived on Ottawa's

outskirts at 9:35 a.m., stopped to stretch their legs, and then headed for Major Hill park near the Parliament Buildings. The park was already a sea of humanity when the Halton group arrived, and a new busload of marchers was pulling in every minute or so. Officials used walkie-talkies and runners and a loudspeaker system to organize the groups and local marshals were in charge of every 50 or so marchers.

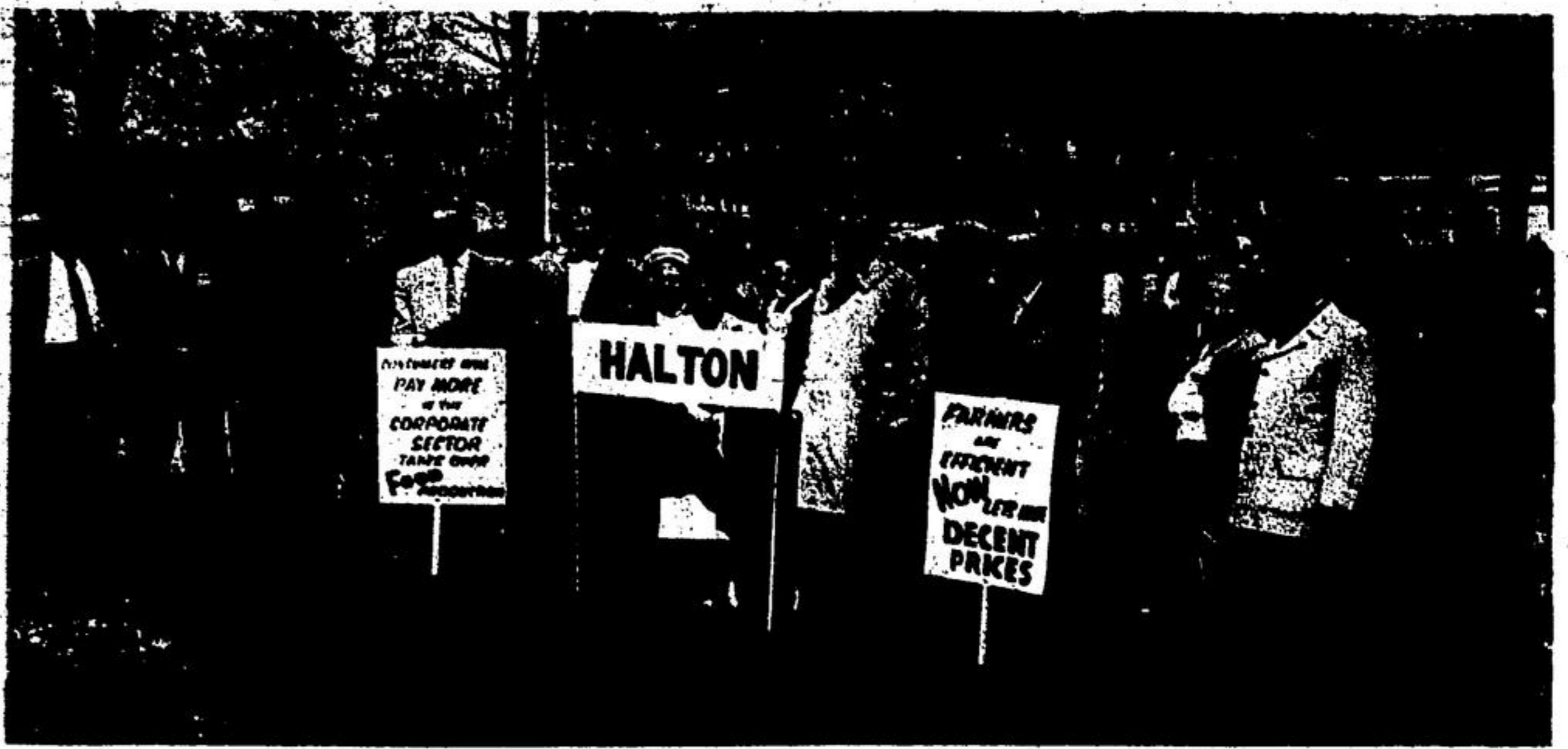
Elmer Foster was kidding Tom Alderson because Tom was dressed up. "You look too prosperous, Tom, with a shirt and tie on. You've got to look poor when you go out begging," he joked.

The Halton group, under the directions of marshals Lawrence and George Pelletier, rounded up a county banner and a couple of placards tacked to sticks. Halton's signs read, "Consumers will pay more if the corporate sector takes over food production," and "farmers are efficient, now let's have decent prices."

They busied themselves reading the other signs around the park. "How does someone who does nothing do everything wrong?" asked one sign, while another proclaimed, "farmers are tired of turning the udder check."

"A little dab won't do," said another. "Canadian producers net 25 cents an hour for their labors" and "haw out frozen prices" said others.

Several ministers, mainly from United Churches in Ontario, were seen throughout the crowd. The United Church of Canada's board of Evangelism and Social Service recently passed a resolution calling on the church to "support the farmers in their efforts to receive just returns for their product," and the numerous clerical collars in the crowd bore out the fact many ministers had taken the advice to the ultimate by joining the march.



46 HALTON COUNTY FARMERS JOINED THE PROTEST MARCH AT OTTAWA WEDNESDAY

Free milk was distributed to the marchers, courtesy the Ontario Milk Marketing Board and the County Milk Committee.

The marchers ranged in age from children to grandmothers, and about one-quarter of them were women. One stunning girl with the Kent County delegation looked like anything but a farmer's wife—she came in a form-fitting, rather short flaming pink wool suit, and wore dyed platinum hair over a heavily painted though pretty face.

But due to their early arrival, the Halton marchers had a long wait before the actual march got underway.

Photographers and radio interviewers circulated through the crowd.

## Parliament Hill scene of unruly demonstration

What started as a peaceful demonstration on Parliament Hill last Wednesday afternoon, turned into a mob scene that disgusted the Ontario marchers who joined the protest of Canadian agricultural policies.

Windows in the doors of the main entrance to the Parliament Buildings were smashed, several demonstrators scuffled with R.C.M.P., sticks were banged against the walls, insults were hurled in French and Commons guards locked

the doors to the people for the first time in Canadian history.

The unruly part of the demonstration lasted only a few minutes, but several of the marchers stayed for three hours before tempers cooled and they sulked back to their homes across the river in Quebec.

Speeches of Agricultural Minister J. J. Greene and Minister of Rural Development Maurice Sauve fired up the protesters as they stood in the hot sun in front of the capital building. With the exception of a few loud-fist-shaking Quebec farmers who crowded the official platform throughout the speeches, all was calm until just before 3 p.m. when the microphone was shut off and the officials left the stage.

Instead of heading back to their buses like the Ontario delegates, the Quebec group stormed over the platform and right up to the Parliament Building.

Waving their placards and chanting "we want \$5 milk", they marched up to the front door and looked as if they would enter the House. But guards closed the heavy oak doors, and as the crowd pressed onward, the leaders were almost trampled in the crush. When those up front realized they wouldn't get into the building, it was impossible to

retreat through the throng of thousands who blocked their way. The mess took hours to disperse.

Just three small panes of glass were damaged in the melee. A taxi was rocked back and forth. The demonstrators beat on the doors with their sticks. A handful of Mounties was almost powerless as they attempted to keep order.

The crowd sang and hurled insults in French. One man, who had earlier menaced speakers on the platform with a large mallet to which was affixed a sign reading "Sharp marche, si non???", brandished it from the R.C.M.P. Many, as they left, grabbed tulips from the gardens surrounding the buildings.

The Halton busload of farmers was oblivious to the commotion. While it was happening, they were marching back to Major Hill Park to await the bus which was to take them home.

Staff reporter Roy Downs, who accompanied the busload to Ottawa, had stayed behind to watch the mob storm the House when the Halton group left Parliament Hill. When he returned to the bus and told the Halton group about the commotion, they could not believe it had happened after what, to them, had been a peaceful demonstration on the lawn.

## Free Press Feature Page

— ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 1967

### 15,000 marchers

## Long wait for short march

Halton's delegation of farmers at Ottawa's protest march on Wednesday had a long wait in the hot sun before they got a chance to join the rest of the demonstrators for a 15-minute walk to the Parliament Buildings. They stood from 10:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in Major Hill Park before they got into the parade.

Some of the ladies had thoughtfully brought along small folding seats, which made the wait a little more comfortable. As the time went by, the public address system

blared out announcements, and greetings were waved and shouted as new county groups arrived to join in the demonstration.

At 11:30 a.m., officials from the sponsoring organizations read speeches to the assembly of 6,000 Ontario and Martimes farmers. Someone read the lengthy brief that was, at that moment, being presented to Prime Minister Pearson, Minister of Agriculture J. J. Greene and the government's agricultural committee of 11 other members.

While they spoke, Ottawa policemen, motorcycle patrols and the unobtrusive R.C.M.P. kept an eye on the proceedings. One man, thought to be an intoxicated outsider, was escorted from the crowd, but it was an otherwise peaceful morning in Major Hill Park.

"We will march off in county groups as soon as the Quebec delegation comes across the bridge from Hull," blared the loudspeaker at 12 noon. It was a sight never to be forgotten as the thousands in the park heard an outburst of singing and looked out over the river to see the Quebec farmers marching proudly across the bridge. The first group of U.C.C. members broke out in a song — "Alouette" — as they neared the park and a thunderous applause rose through the trees as the Ontario marchers greeted them with hurrahs and cheering and clapping.

It was 12:20 when the first Quebec group arrived. Behind them stretched out another 8,000 or 9,000 other Quebec farmers. They kept pouring across the bridge, laughing and shouting and waving their multi-colored placards, for a full 55 minutes.

As the Quebec groups reached the park, Ontario groups were fitting into the parade

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## Crowd disappointed Mike didn't appear

Leaders of three political parties were present when the Ontario and Quebec farmers loudly emphasized their demands on Parliament Hill on Wednesday. Just two were absent, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and Social Credit leader Robert Thompson.

P.C. chief John Diefenbaker was in the crowd, while Agricultural Minister J. J. Greene gave a speech, half in English and half in French.

Tommy Douglas of the N.D.P. and Real Caouette of the Creditistes were on the platform during the hour of speechmaking, although neither was called on for any comments. Caouette shook hands with several Quebec supporters who crowded the stage shouting his name, and at one point at the end of the

speechmaking, a handful of Quebec farmers holsted him to their shoulders.

The Halton people were disappointed the Prime Minister wasn't on hand to witness their 15,000-man demonstration.

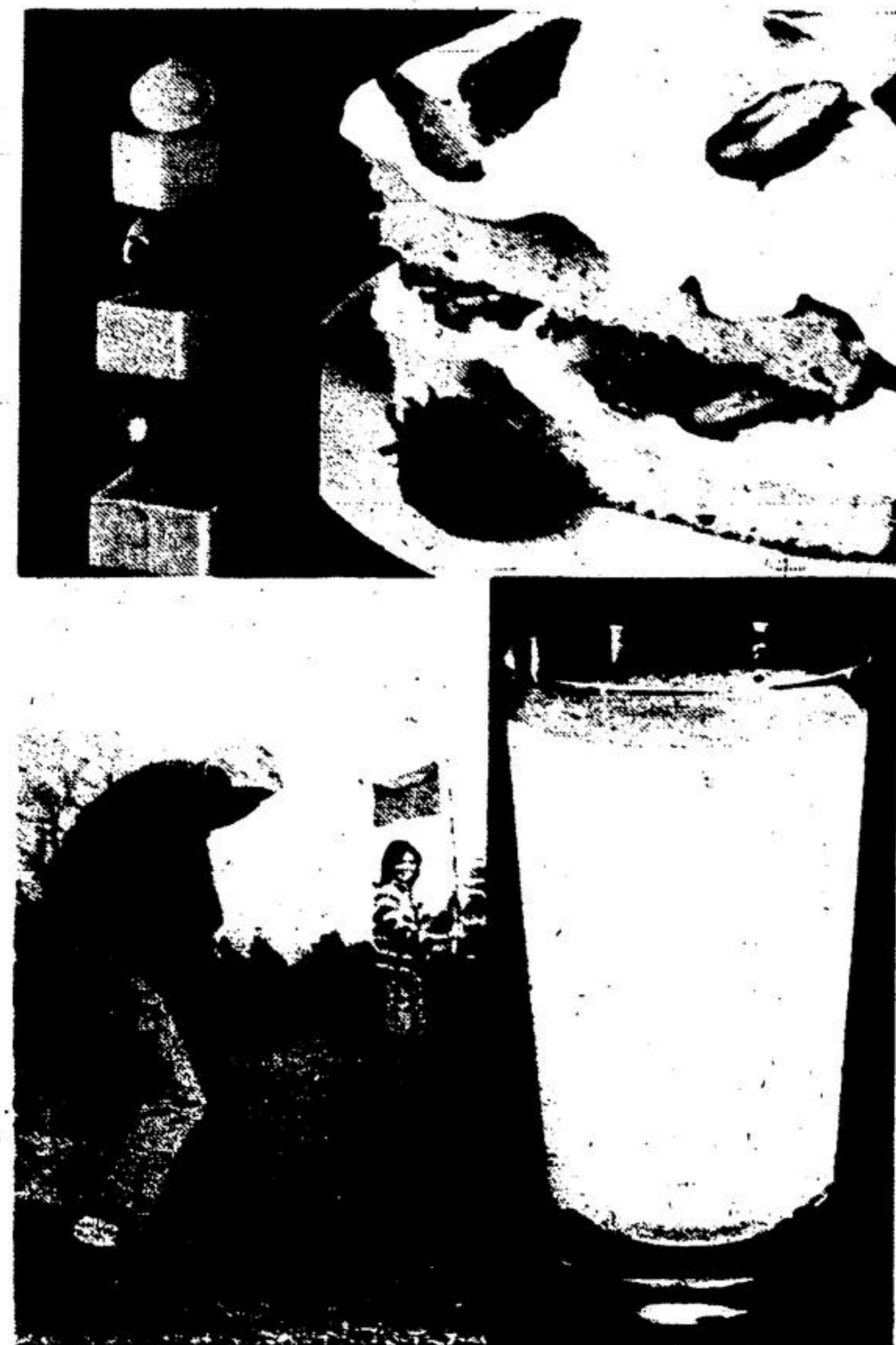
Mrs. Marion Lawrence, wife of the Halton Federation of Agriculture president Denzil Lawrence of Milton, was quite disappointed that Mr. Pearson was not there. "He knew weeks in advance that we were coming, and we left our seeding to go to Ottawa. Yet he was too busy to take a few minutes to see us."

Several others on the home-bound bus agreed with her, including one lady who said, "I'm disappointed in him, too, and I'm a Liberal."

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