

Regional ball of yarns

Darcy does, then doesn't

By the editor

The story of regional government is starting to unwind like a ball of yarn with snarls and burrs.

Will Halton and Peel unite in holy wedlock, or will the two counties go it alone?

According to press reports from the different municipalities who have met with the minister of municipal affairs, the Hon. Darcy McKeough, there is some difference of opinion.

After a three-hour meeting with Oakville council, McKeough said he had made no definite decision on whether to proceed with regional government in Halton and Peel. "No decision will be made until April 1," he told newsmen.

But Burlington councillor Wessel Gall said that although Darcy McKeough prefaced his remarks by stating no final decision has been made "it looks to me like Burlington is definitely going into a Peel-Halton region."

According to a timetable set out by Mr. McKeough, a formal announcement will be made in April, legislation will be tabled in May and an election will follow in September, Gall said.

Then in stepped Energy and Resources Minister George Kerr. He called Gall's statement "unfortunate". Mr. Kerr said he doubts there will be a regional government in Peel-Halton for another 18 months or two years.

Kerr said if Darcy McKeough mentioned Burlington in the same breath as Peel-Halton it was only as a basis for tentative plans, a position he has maintained since Burlington was included in his draft proposal for a Peel-Halton region.

Almost 90 per cent of Burlington voters who showed up at polls in December said they preferred Peel-Halton to Hamilton. The plebiscite was 17,300 to 2,400 against joining the steel city. This was against the recommendations of the Steele committee, which preferred Hamilton.

Further reports from Burlington's meeting with Mr. McKeough also indicate voters from Peel and Halton will go to the polls Sept. 28 to elect a regional government. Legislation uniting the two counties has been drafted and will be introduced to the legislature soon.

According to reports the bill contains a major surprise, increasing the number of seats on the regional council from 21 to 26, in order to double representation of the northern rural municipalities including the Acton region.

Southern Halton representatives are dismayed to find the Acton region may have two seats for a population of 10,000 while Burlington, who has 80,000 people, may only get four seats. Under the old plan Acton would only get one.

Seating arrangement for the Halton-Peel hook-up? Mississauga with 150,000 would have seven seats; Burlington, 80,000, four seats; Oakville, 55,000, three seats; Brampton, 67,000, four seats; Georgetown, 22,000, two seats; North Peel, 13,000, two seats; Milton, 12,000, two seats; Acton, 10,000, two seats. Orangeville is considered to be left out.

Reports also indicate Burlington is upset about having only one spokesman for 20,000 people while Acton, which will include most of Nassagaweya and part of Esquesing will get one for 5,000.

The victory then in the battle for representation by population and area would thus go to Reeve Anne MacArthur and Nassagaweya council and has already brought charges McKeough is catering to the rural area.

But Darcy, not to be outdone, stepped into the fray again on Monday and denied a decision had been made to include Burlington in the Halton-Peel hook-up or that legislation was prepared.

So you lay your bets on the horse you think will come in first. Personally we are betting on a Halton-Peel wedding with Burlington a reluctant bridesmaid. But we doubt if Hamilton will dance at the wedding to the McKeough reel or the Kerr stomp.

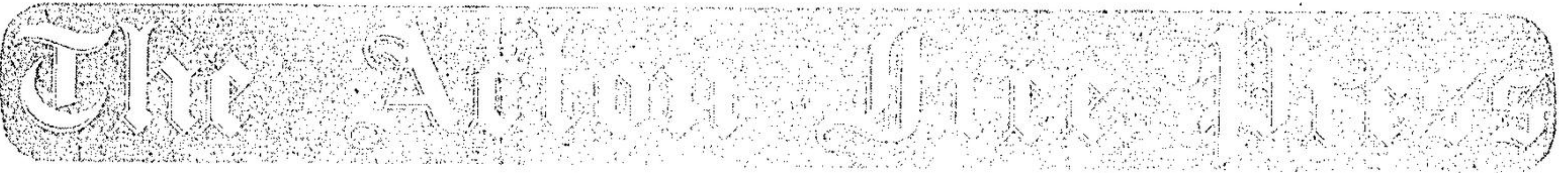


The town's clock strikes out . . .

The Free Press camera was on hand to see the old post office clock lose face as workmen removed hands and then took the glass and let it fall on the debris which clutters up the bottom of the building. With faces gone and Roman numerals missing, the old post office tower



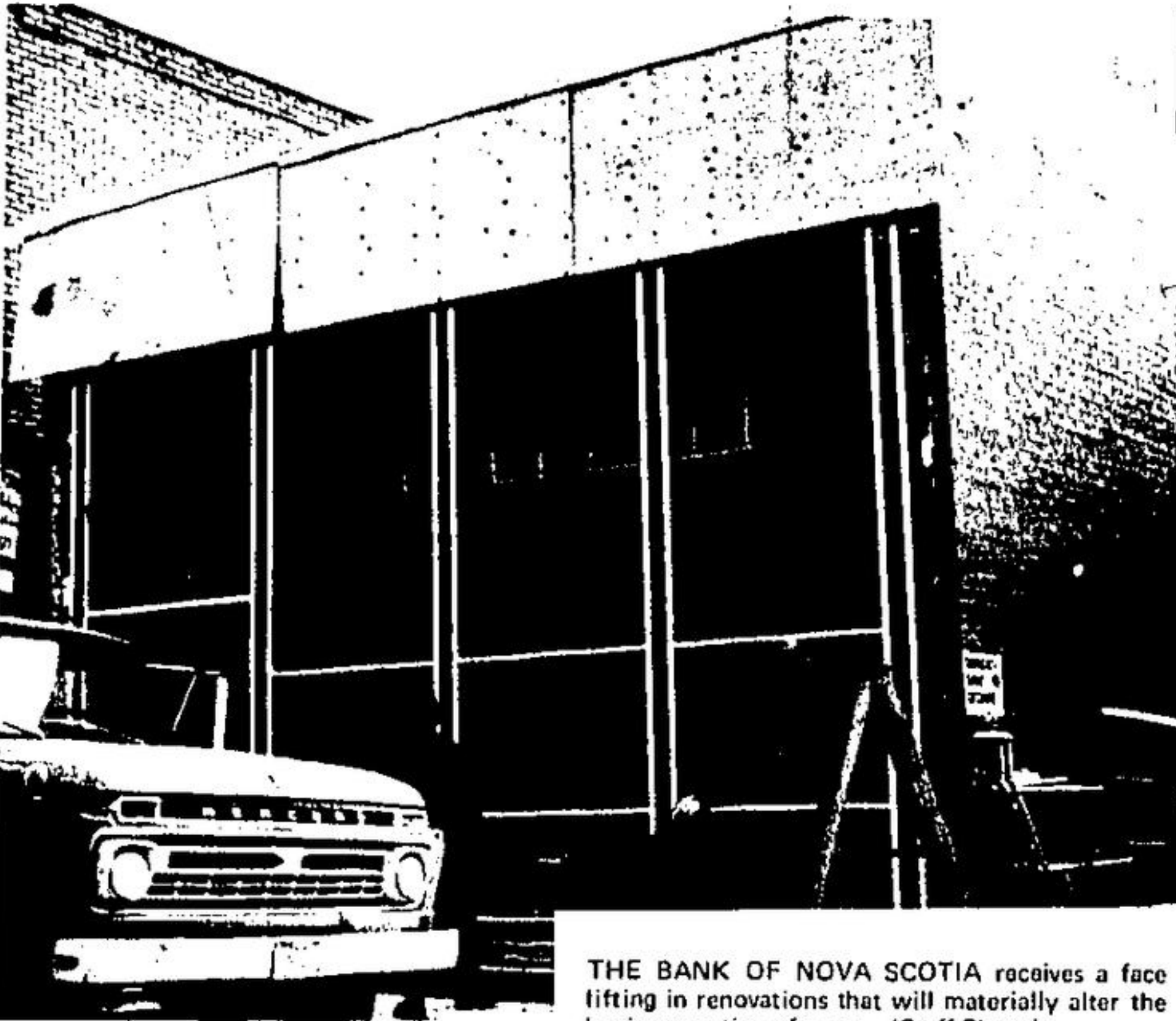
looked like a huge bird house with entrances leading to an empty nest. Wreckers expect to have the well-built brick structure almost completely levelled this week. The town fathers hope to have a new clock in the business section soon, supplied by a bank. Turn inside for the story.



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THE BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA receives a face lifting in renovations that will materially alter the business section of town.—(Staff Photo)

New banks, additions alter face of Acton

The emphasis will be on money as changes in Acton's business section transform the town's main street.

Acton's two existing banks will soon be joined by two new ones. But it is the brand new building that will be constructed at the corner of Mill and Willow streets for the Toronto-Dominion bank that will change the town's face most.

Wolfond wreckers from Guelph are well on the way to finishing the demolishing job on Acton's old post office, a landmark in the business section since 1913. The tall tower that housed the town clock is down this week and business is no longer overlooked by the Roman numerals on the face.

Soon a new modern bank will spring up at this historic corner and transactions will be done in bills that carry likenesses of prime ministers of Canada when the country dealt in shin plasters and coins that were heavy with silver.

A few yards east and the Bank of Nova Scotia is undergoing a face lifting that will completely transform the once plain structure. It is getting a new face with huge bright windows that should give the bank an airy look when combined with the new addition on the rear and a new interior.

Almost directly across the street, in the former Morris Pharmacy, workmen have started on a \$55,000 reconstruction program for another new bank — the Imperial Bank of Commerce. An extension to the rear of the building is planned to supplement existing space.

Plans are also being made to construct an addition on the newest Acton bank — the Bank of Montreal — on the west corner of Mill and Willow Sts. The addition will completely fill the remainder of the property and help alleviate crowding in the busy bee-hive.

Further down Mill St. Hinton's 5c to \$1 Store is getting a new front. Carpenters are also busy in the former McLeod antique store modernizing the premises.

East on Mill to almost the railway tracks a new supermarket is under construction at the corner of Mill and Fellow Sts., where the tennis courts used to stand in conjunction with lawn bowling greens. It is expected the new

undergoing alterations to improve facilities. Builders soon hope to remove the large house at the south corner of Main St. S. and Church to make way for five new stores and connecting apartments.

The flurry of activity, especially the presence of two new banks, has precipitated much speculation that something big is in the offing for Acton or the district which would require the presence of much money, hence the banks.

Others merely shrug and accept the inevitable — that the small town will eventually disappear due to pressures from the city and Acton will grow larger and faster than most residents want it to.

Pollution feared

Nixes jetport in Halton

There will be no super jetport in Halton, if Halton Region Conservation Authority has its way.

"We are trying to conserve some of the things we think are important, trying to build a clean environment," chairman Barry Humphreys of Burlington told the authority Saturday. But if the federal government allows a rumored jetport for super jumbo jets in Halton it will bring in "some of the worst pollution factors ever imaginable," he added.

Authority members agreed to meet with the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, whose chairman Tom Beckett is also against a jetport in this area, to draft a joint protest.

Humphreys said the location of the proposed jetport is still shrouded in secrecy but leaks in the press "put it in this Authority's area." Vice-chairman Allan Wright, also of Burlington, said "the jetport would destroy everything we are trying to do."

Member Don Coverdale, East Flamboro, said it would be less expensive to expand the Malton airport than build a new one. Nassagaweya Reeve Mrs. Anne MacArthur, on hearing the airport would take up 40 to 50,000 acres, exclaimed "that's the whole of Nassagaweya" and Esquesing Reeve George Currie joined in by admitting there wouldn't be much left of his 66,000 acre township if the jetport went in there.

The Authority will also ask the neighboring Credit Valley Conservation Authority if it is interested in joining the protest. But an immediate meeting of the executive committee with Hamilton was approved.

Give no trouble licence granted

One of the last items of business conducted at Nassagaweya Council Tuesday night was the renewal of a licence.

After an hour of rapping sand and gravel pits and their methods of operation, council renewed the licence of Halton Crushed Stone Ltd., situated on the Sixth Line.

"They haven't given us any trouble," said the reeve as she signed the motion which allows the renewal to take place.

Will appeal acquittal

Halton crown attorney Douglas Lattimer announced last week that he intends to appeal a provincial court acquittal of a dangerous driving charge against an Acton man involved in a motorcycle fatality last fall.

Daniel Harkley, 22, was acquitted in court in Milton on February 9 by Judge Michael Cloney.

One of the cyclists, Leonard Valey, died in the crash on Highway 7 at Ajax Engineering plant.

Dan Harkley was in hospital for several months. He claimed he was not the driver when the motorcycle was in collision with a car.

Eyewitnesses were uncertain which of the men was the driver.

MERL HARRIS has a joint byline in the last issue of The Ontarioan, a publication from the University of Guelph. He helped write a full-page story on the current shut down of the paper.

Ask more teeth in dog control

One Acton resident wants more teeth in the canine control by-law so town dogs will have less bite.

Chuck Wright, Churchill Rd., told council Tuesday he and his wife were afraid to walk their dog along Longfield Road now, following attacks by a large pooh from that neighborhood. The last one sent his pet to the hospital with broken ribs. It was the second occasion his dog had been injured and the fifth time it was attacked by the same dog.

Mr. Wright proposed an amendment to the by-law to define a vicious dog. "That dog has an antipathy to my dog and there's nothing I can do to stop him when he attacks. By-laws don't make much difference.

There is no control over a large number of dogs in town."

Mr. Wright said he and his wife always attempted to exercise control over their own pet. They felt things were getting out of hand when it wasn't safe to walk streets for fear of dogs.

Deputy Reeve Tyler backed up Mr. Wright. His dog is never out of control, he said. There was also another complaint from Poplar Ave. where a dog ripped all the laundry off a clothes line.

"We have a by-law. It's a case of enforcing it," said Councillor McKenzie. The mayor thought maybe something new added to the by-law would help control the dogs.

"In England they say every dog is entitled to one bite," Mr. Wright testified.

"Why don't you carry a large club," the deputy reeve asked solicitously.

"I was carrying one," replied Mr. Wright, "and I broke it over the dog's back." But trying to fend off a dog on slippery ice, he told Mr. Tyler.

Council promised to look into canine control matters and see what they could do.

Chairman lauds Y's Men's meet

Acton Board of Parks Management and Recreation Committee chairman Peter Marks has praised the Acton Y's Men's Club for the job they did in organizing the recent snowmobile races on Fairy Lake.

At Thursday night's regular board meeting, chairman Marks said he appreciates local service clubs accepting the responsibility of organizing such events, since it helps the board offer a better recreational program.

The horn blows at midnight - children jump out of skins

"I've seen my children literally jump out of their skin when a train went by. We've got to get something to control the horns on those trains."

Ernie Parker, a Mowbray Place resident, speaking to council Tuesday night, said that and a lot more about the noise of C.N. trains during the night. He said the problem has increased since the railway saw fit to close station facilities in Acton.

"Those of us who dwell in the area and particularly the properties backing on the railway line are now suffering unadulterated hell," a brief he wrote to council stated.

The amount of rail traffic has increased and some of the goods trains "miles long" are so heavily loaded property vibrates. But the worst part is the blasting of the horns. "It's unbearable."

Pollution control and noise control go hand in hand, the brief declared.

Council didn't agree. They sympathized and promised to write and find out what they could do about it.

Mr. Parker also complained about the speed of the trains. "Fifty-five miles an hour is my guessmate," he said. They used to shunt a lot at nights but since the station has been closed out there has been less shunting but goods trains thunder through at a "pretty good clip."

"They start at the dump crossing and blast all the way up," he said. "It's bad enough through the day but in the middle of the night when you're trying to get a decent sleep it is positively indecent."

Mayor Les Duby recalled Mr. Parker had been to council with similar complaints about two

years ago. He said council had been reluctant to pass any anti-noise by-laws because of the experience of other municipalities who attempted to control noise.

Councillor Earl Masales felt speed could be controlled. He related a personal incident where he followed a freight doing 60 miles an hour approaching Acton. "If they are going through town at high speeds," he concurred, "they are sure going to hit the horn hard."

"I live in close proximity, too," said councillor Greer, "but some engineers keep the noise down, others make it noisy."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Parker.

Tyler wants answers Acton dental problem

Acton's deputy-reeve Ted Tyler is still not satisfied with the Halton County Dental Service and their treatment of dental problems in his area of the county.

At Friday's county council meeting, he asked "If we have a problem in Acton then we'd like to know what it is."

He was referring to the recent uproar caused when Dr. Samuel Green, head of the dental service, was alleged to have made certain statements regarding poor dental health in the Acton area.

At Friday's meeting, the deputy-reeve claimed, "I'm not trying to nail Dr. Green or Dr. Hunter (Halton's acting Medical Officer of Health) to the wall, all

Some engineers are thoughtful. But others bear down.

Well, if I had the choice of being hit by a train or hearing a whistle, I'd sure rather have the whistle, deputy Reeve Tyler said.

Mr. Parker extended an open invitation to anyone who wants to sleep at his house for a night to get first hand information. He got no takers. He said he represented seven households.

Council will send a letter asking how they can control the noise and if there can be an alternative to whistle blowing. The mayor praised Mr. Parker for the method of his presentation.

I want answers."

Warden Allan Day told Mr. Tyler a letter of apology had been sent out by Dr. Hunter on behalf of Dr. Green but he replied they don't want apologies, they want action.

Mr. Tyler told county council at its earlier meeting that Dr. Green, in the press interview, had claimed the teeth of the children in Acton were in poor shape and that oral hygiene in the north of the county left a lot to be desired.

At Friday's meeting, Mr. Tyler revealed he had been doing some studying on his own and found Acton's water to be naturally fluoridated with a count of 1.2. If fluorine, a chemical which

(Continued on Page 3)

Half-price sale here

Nobody knows better than the Free Press the value of advertising sales. We deal with it every week and hear of the successful results from merchants.

But for the first time the Free Press is holding a sale of its own — one of those popular two-for-the-price-of-one sales. What is being sold is advertising — and any merchant who buys a quarter page ad gets a half page instead, same price. A half page blossoms to a full page for the half-price rate.

It's in time for Easter Specials, and quite a few merchants are already planning their ads for the special issue on March 18.

Details? Read the advertisement!