

# Region benefits are long-term — Kerr

If the citizens of Acton were asked to vote today on whether they wanted regional government or not, regionalization would probably be voted out, Halton West MPP George Kerr admitted to a crowd of 100 in Acton Tuesday night.

But give the system five years and most of the people will be in favor, he told a special meeting of Acton Rotary Club held to discuss the question "does a smaller community really benefit from regional government?"

"I say without hesitation that future generations will

thank us for having the courage to deal with Halton's needs on an overall basis, Mr. Kerr said. "I know there are still problems and difficulties, but I'm proud of what has been achieved here in a little over a year. I think you will all be proud of the region."

100 guests

The MPP, Halton Regional and Halton Hills councillors formed a panel to answer questions from 100 Rotarians and invited guests, following a beef dinner at the Legion Hall. There were plenty of questions — three hours of

them — following brief summaries by the panelists of their roles in the regional system.

Tuesday's panel included Regional Chairman Allan Masson, Regional committee chairmen Dave Coons of administration and finance, Jack Raftis of public works and Mary Munro of planning; Halton Hills Mayor Tom Hill, acton representative on Halton Hills Council Les Doby, and regional treasurer Don Farmer. Only Halton's treasurer escaped the barrage of questions from the audience.

For the most part, the politicians defended the regional system and stressed it was necessary to replace the century-old county council system with a more modern, all encompassing style of government. The audience, however, demonstrated much less enthusiasm and used the forum to voice a long list of complaints and reflect the growing feeling that Acton in particular is losing more than it is gaining from the system.

Dissatisfaction

When the meeting ended, Rotary's chairman Fred

Dawkins summed up "If nothing else, we have substantiated there is widespread dissatisfaction over regional government." But regional chairman Allan Masson, who said he enjoyed the free exchange of ideas, said he still feels there is "a great deal of misinformation apparent."

Mr. Dawkins said regionalization means a transfer of power away from the local level and many people resent this loss.

But Councillor Raftis said it appeared a lot of the concern voiced at the meeting in-

olved local problems, not regional difficulties. He suggested the Halton Hills Council should meet in Acton frequently — perhaps once every two months — to give Acton residents a better chance for input.

Planning

Vic Bristow, formerly a member of the local planning advisory committee, wanted to know why it was disbanded. The people on the committee were experienced and "were just starting to get our teeth into planning" when it was dissolved. Regional planning chairman Mary

Munro admitted she wasn't aware Halton Hills had such a committee but noted all local planning boards were dissolved by Bill 151, the bill implementing Halton Region. That was a provincial decision, not Halton's, she said.

Acton is not getting much benefit from the Halton Hills parking authority because two of the three members are from Georgetown and don't appear to care about Acton's problems, merchant Paul Nielsen charged. Mr. Kerr thought it would be too much to have one authority in each municipality but urged the Acton people to convince the Georgetown members they need some attention.

Ms. Jackie Welsh charged there "is a lot of buck-passing" over local problems and cited a problem over a minor variance at the committee of adjustment to a higher level of government, she wondered. "Your problems are mine," replied Councillor Doby.

Why no vote

Esther Taylor wanted Mr. Kerr to say why the provincial government didn't allow a vote of the people "before it decided to ram regional government down our throats?" The MPP said the answer was simple: "There wouldn't be any regional government."

In a more serious vein, Mr. Kerr said a vote was considered but legislators were worried that arguments for regionalization would have been overshadowed by an emotional anti-region campaign. "Most people really don't like to change," he reminded her.

If the voters rejected a region it might postpone some necessary municipal reforms, he added. "You will have to trust us."

She then prodded Mayor Hill to list the advantages of regional government for Actonians. "Garbage collections here," she reminded him, had been cut from twice a week to once

Continued on page 2

## The Acton Free Press

One Hundredth Year — No. 15

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 1975

Twenty-Eight Pages — 15 Cents

### Majorette contest this Saturday

Georgetown Majorette Corps is holding its first non-National Baton Twirling Association Majorette contest on Saturday, March 8, at Acton High School.

Majorettes from all over Ontario will participate in the competition with NBTA judges in such classes as modelling, strutting, twirl and championship.

Mrs. Bonnie Dyer of Guelph, who instructs the Georgetown Majorettes will run the contest with the help of parents and the Georgetown Optimist Club. The contest will start at 8 a.m. and run to late afternoon.

Spectators are welcome. Organizers point out it is an all-Halton Hills event since the Georgetown Majorettes have members from Georgetown, Acton and Esquesing wards.



FRED DAWKINS introduced panel and fielded questions at the Rotary club meeting Tuesday, arranged to bring together the people and the politicians. Left to right Mayor Tom Hill, Dave Coons, regional councillor, Burlington; MPP

George Kerr, Mary Munro, regional councillor, Burlington; chairman Fred Dawkins; region chairman Allan Masson; Don Farmer, regional treasurer; councillor Les Doby. Not shown: Jack Raftis, regional councillor, Burlington.

### Quotable quotes

A few quotable quotes from particulars in last night's special Acton Rotary Club meeting on regional government:

"It was a shotgun wedding—Acton was dragged screaming to this unholy marriage"—Esther Taylor, describing the merger of Acton, Esquesing and Georgetown to form Halton Hills.

"There is widespread dissatisfaction here in town about regional government"—meeting chairman Fred Dawkins.

"I know you miss the town hall being on Main St. and you don't like having to go to Georgetown to deal with civil servants and pay your taxes"—guest speaker George Kerr, MPP.

"Regional government is here, we have it, and there is no point in complaining any longer"—regional councillor Mary Munro.

"It is an emotional time"—Halton Hills councillor Les Doby.

"You've got to convince me regional government is a good thing"—Vic Bristow, former member of Acton's advisory planning committee.

"If it does have to be regional govern-

ment, let's make it one-tier"—Mrs. Kelly, complaining from the audience about a committee of adjustment problem.

"You're paying too much"—garbage collector Don McIntyre, to Halton Hills Mayor Tom Hill who said his private garbage pickup service cost him \$50.

"Halton County asked the government for regional government, it's on the record, it wasn't foisted on us. We told Queen's Park what we wanted"—regional chairman Allan Masson.

"We're suffering"—merchant Wayne Moss, describing the cutback in works services apparent to businessmen since the introduction of the region.

"People are calling me to complain about poor service from the region, and it's not even my fault"—Halton Hills works department dispatcher Ron McKnight.

"Is it any wonder the people up here are frustrated?"—former Acton works superintendent Alf Doby, describing escalating sewer and water service charges since these services became a regional responsibility.

### \$68,300 to fix Acton arena roof

The lowest bid for renovations to Acton arena roof came in at \$68,300 and was submitted by Welcon Ltd. of Guelph.

Halton Hills council awarded the contract to Welcon Ltd., on the recommendation of the recreation director, the town engineer and consulting engineers

Morrison, Hershfield, Burgess and Higgins.

The town upped the performance bond from 50 per cent to 100 per cent, and will pay the difference in bond charges themselves.

The consulting engineers will be asked to give a price to supervise the renovations.

## 1000 look for work only 10 jobs open

Since the beginning of December the number of Halton Hills residents out of work has doubled.

According to Jim Pappas, counsellor for Georgetown and Acton Manpower, there are now close to 1,000 people in Halton Hills looking for work.

"When I came to this office in December I had one file covering both men and women in town who were without work. Now I have two full file cabinets," Pappas explained.

Not many jobs

Not only are there a lot more people out of work but there aren't many jobs open for them.

"Right now we only have about 10 jobs open in town," Pappas said. He pointed out most of them are for skilled workers but there are a few for general factory labor and foremen.

He said his office noticed a big increase of unemployed people in December and January but have noticed a slight decrease in the number of unemployed in February.

"We aren't sure if the February decrease is real or not. Residents who apply for Unemployment Insurance fill out Manpower registration

forms which are sent to the Manpower office in their community. These are mailed to us so the decrease might be due to the mail strike. If they are held up in the mail then this isn't a real decrease because these people are still out of work even though we haven't got their forms yet," Pappas explained.

He is also worried about the "drastic decrease in the amount of vacancies reported to us by employers," Pappas added this decrease became "very marked" in February.

"I hope things improve and we can get more of these people back to work," Pappas said.

He joked that things better not get any worse because he is running out of file space for people's registration forms. He said he couldn't predict when things will improve or if they will improve.

"We will have to wait and see what happens in the auto industry and other industries. I can tell you one thing; if things don't get better, then students coming onto the market in the spring will be really hard hit," Pappas said.

He said he had no information right now indicating the job market will improve.

Pappas admitted traditionally things improve



MPP GEORGE KERR debates a point with Bill Denny and Charles Leatherland at the Legion hall Tuesday. He defended regional government to a group of 100.

### Brodigan plans 31 estate homes

An estate type development of 31 homes on 96.7 acres of land on Lot 32, Con. 4, was proposed to Halton Hills planning Board by Mike Brodigan of Windland Associates, Tuesday night.

Mr. Brodigan said the lots were a minimum of 2.5 acres

each, and 4.9 acres would be left as open space.

He described the land as half bush, half farmland at present.

The planning board said it would be considered when the guidelines for estate developments were established.

### First meeting of committee

The recreation advisory committee held their first meeting of the year on Thursday, with two new people there.

John Ross Cooper, the new recreation co-ordinator and Pam Sheldon, a newly appointed member were present along with Brendan Aherne, Pete Papillon, Gil Malcolm, Ed Wood, Barry Insoe and Diane Spielvogel, last year's members.

A recommendation was made by Mr. Aherne to ask Doug Collison to request to Halton Hills council to purchase certain pieces of land in town as soon as they come up

for sale for park land.

Mr. Malcolm was to contact the people on Churchill Rd. regarding an ice rink.

The Charlie Thompson memorial award for the most athletic person of the year was also discussed. It is hoped the award can be revived in the town.

Mr. Cooper, a newcomer in the town, was in agreement with Mr. Malcolm concerning a sign on Main St. pointing to the arena. "My first time in Acton, I drove right past the street several times before I finally found it," Mr. Cooper said.

### Budget delay

Members of Halton Hills finance committee are working towards the 1975 Halton Hills' budget but they are delayed by the same obstacles as last year—the Region and the Board of Education.

Councillor Harry Levy, chairman of the finance

### George grins through quips

Although George Kerr's resignation from the cabinet as Solicitor-General following allegations of impropriety wasn't specifically mentioned at last night's Rotary Club dinner and regional government discussion, there were a couple of jokes alluding to the subject.

The Halton West MPP took the jokes in his stride—as a matter of fact one of them was his joke on himself.

Chairman of the discussion period Fred Dawkins said the menu originally planned for the evening was a seafood dinner, but on Feb. 19 he received a letter stating Mr. Kerr has "recently developed an aversion of anything with a water connotation." The audience roared with

laughter but Mr. Kerr just beamed his usual big, wide grin.

When he rose to speak and offer a defense of regional government, the MPP said "I'm getting used to being the defendant these days. At least I am very pleased to hear there are no plans to fill in Fairy Lake."



NEW CONSTITUTION engages the interest of the new board of directors of Acton Murray Memorial Y.M.C.A. at their annual meeting. Seated centre is president Helen Van Sickler; with her are first vice-president the Rev. Len Ewing and second vice-president Hilary James. At the back are treasurer Dave Hunter, past president Ross Ribey and secretary Bonnie Bottomley.

## New constitution approved for Y

A new constitution and new by-laws for Murray Memorial Y.M.C.A. were unanimously approved and passed at the annual meeting of the Y last Wednesday. About 25 attended the dinner meeting in St. Alban's parish hall. The short business meeting included reports and election of officers as well.

Helen Van Sickler was elected new chairman of the board, and she had headed the committee which presented the new constitution. She explained the committee had looked over constitutions of other Ys and a sample from headquarters, as well as the one existing copy of Acton's.

The constitutions and by-laws had not been changed since 1935. The documents had already been approved by the board of directors.

The by-laws call for 18 people on the board, and this number is still short three men. Previous figure was 15.

Other changes were made to bring the rules up-to-date.

Election

Len Ewing was elected first vice-president, Hilary James second vice-president, Bonnie Bottomley secretary and David Hunter treasurer.

Other board members are past president Ross Ribey, Lloyd Broostad, Gail Maltby, Doreen Gibb, Marg Wallis and Sally Leatherland.

This makes six men and nine women; the aim is nine of each.

Ownership

A meeting is scheduled for March 10 in Leatherland's office to discuss the board's position regarding the ownership of the building, before a meeting is held with Halton Hills solicitor, Mrs. Van Sickler admitted a problem was anticipated. The matter of ownership had been uncertain for years.

Committee chairmen will have people on their committees who are not board

members.

Sue Hobbins is in charge of publicity and public relations; Gail Maltby in charge of finance. There is no program chairman as yet.

Reports were given by last year's chairman of committee.

Reports

Hilary James, program convener, said the year had been "fairly successful."

### Town hires boss

Pat Sheehan, 53 of Scarborough has been hired as Facility Superintendent for the town of Halton Hills at a salary of \$11,865.

Mr. Sheehan will be over-all superintendent of the three arenas, one in Acton and two in Georgetown.

He has worked for the borough of Scarborough for the past 20 years, and was in charge of all recreational facilities, including pools, arenas, rinks, community centre and tennis courts and was responsible for a staff of 79 employees.

Mr. Sheehan is married and has a family of five grown-up children. He and his wife hope to move to town as soon as possible.

There is no need to organize swimming programs in town this year, since the new pool is open. The program was limited due to the poor facilities but she mentioned the Ladies Take a Break, Yoga, basketball, gymnastics and weight lifting.

She ended by mentioning the need for volunteers. Mrs. Bottomley is running the day programs "almost single-handed" and Randy Weldon is running evening groups as part of his recreation course.

Lloyd Broostad reported for the building committee. The meeting room is completely redecorated and a lot of work has been done on the washrooms. There have been problems with heat and broken windows.

The financial report was given by Dave Hunter.

Budget

The preliminary budget for 1975 showed income from Halton Hills, Walker Lodge, apartment, Conservatory of Music and office rentals; membership fees and donations.

Expenditures proposed include repairs, payments on bank loan, and payment for two non-existent persons, a janitor and program co-ordinator.

Total estimated income was \$3,090 and total estimated expenditures \$9,195. Last year's financial statement showed a loss of \$201.41 over the year.

Changes

The change in the constitution opens the Y to a broader membership. The previous rules had officially required members to belong to a Christian church. Membership is now open to anyone.

The new purpose reads: "The Y is a world-wide fellowship dedicated to the growth of persons in spirit, mind and body and a sense of responsibility to each other and the human community."

The program devotes itself to the "physical, social, intellectual and spiritual development of individuals committed to the Christian way of life and the responsibility of good citizenship." This involves a program of education, recreation and personal services.

Membership fees are: family \$12, junior \$2, student \$2 and adult \$5.