

Morrow blasts Liberals for criticizing region

Halton Regional Chairman Ric Morrow isn't impressed with a report on regional government prepared by a Task Force of Liberal M.P.s.



RIC MORROW says the region does work well.

In a six-page brief sent to Liberal Leader Stuart Smith and regional chairmen around the province, Morrow takes a swipe at the task force for what he feels is an extremely biased report.

Morrow said the report was based on statements made at hearings of the Task Force around the province. He claims the widespread dissatisfaction with regional government the Liberals claim to have found is not representative of the general public.

Morrow said he was disappointed the Liberals never analysed the way regional government worked, but rather based a report on criticisms made by people at the meetings.

"It is unlikely, however, that a representative sample of the public would have attended the hearings, as the composition of the Task Force was hardly conducive to attracting a large proportion of the public to its meetings," Morrow said.

Morrow said the task force was wrong when it suggested that rural people resented their amalgamation with urban areas.

"In Halton, rural and urban areas functioned harmoniously within and as part of a county long before the inception of regional govern-

ment. Halton has illustrated that the area municipalities have spent more freely since the region acquired some of their responsibilities. The changes brought about through regional government provided an opportunity for area municipalities to reduce their level of spending, but few did."

Morrow said in his brief that representation has not been a problem in Halton.

"Unlike the finds claimed by the Task Force, representation on regional council has not been raised as a source of dissatisfaction by residents or by councillors in Halton. The distribution of council seats among the area municipalities provides a balance between urban and rural interests and has functioned smoothly in the four years since the region's creation," Morrow said.

The task force released its report at the end of June and identified five problems with the present system:

- 1) absence of community of interest necessary for the combination of urban and rural areas;
- 2) more costly but less efficient services because of added bureaucracy and over-serving;
- 3) distorted representation on regional council;
- 4) remoteness of government and loss of accountability to the public involved;
- 5) and ineffective land use planning.

Morrow says criticism of the regions' spending record isn't justified. "The group failed to recognize that in Halton particularly, regional facilities are often merely a replacement of former county facilities."

"The task force complains that municipalities tend to spend more freely, realizing that costs will be shared among a larger number of



BRENDA HUNT of Hillsburgh was one of hundreds of Scottish dancers competing in the Fergus Highland Games Saturday.



Former director of Countryside, the Hornby residence for mentally handicapped adults, was charged last week with 14 counts of fraud, involving "misappropriation of funds" according to Halton Regional Police.

Former director charged

The former director of Countryside, the Hornby residence for mentally handicapped adults, was charged last week with 14 counts of fraud, involving "misappropriation of funds" according to Halton Regional Police.

Robert Blodeau, 30, who resigned from his post last January, faces the 14 charges that resulted from a lengthy investigation by police. He will appear in court in Milton on Aug. 21.

Blodeau was director of Countryside from its opening in 1976. The residence is operated by the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded, which also operates "Turner Hill" preschool nursery in Milton and ARC Industries, a rehabilitation centre in Hornby. The group formerly operated Sunshine School, which was recently placed under the operation of Halton Board of Education.

Det. Len McNulty and Det. Ron Webber of Halton Regional Police handled the investigation. The police refused to divulge the amount of money involved.

GO to revamp and curtail bus service in Halton Hills

GO bus service in Halton Hills will be revamped this fall and in some instances service will even be reduced.

GO Transit spokesman Tom Henry revealed ridership on the bus routes is very low west of Brampton so GO will make substantial changes on October 29.

The changes will mean fewer buses will stop in Acton, riders must transfer in Brampton if they are going to downtown Toronto and it will cost more to go downtown.

Henry noted there are two GO bus routes in this area and there is considerable duplication of the two services.

The route runs from Georgetown to the York Mills subway station in Toronto while the other begins in Guelph with stops in Rockwood, Acton and Georgetown and ends at the Bay Street bus terminal and Union Station in Toronto.

The Guelph to downtown Toronto service, which was started by GO in the winter of 1976, was formerly a Gray Coach bus route, and will by the route most affected by changes.

Henry noted ridership on buses going from Guelph to Brampton is very low and most people wanting to go to Toronto and back from Guelph take a Gray Coach express bus.

Between Brampton and Georgetown the Guelph to downtown Toronto and the Georgetown to York Mills route, also started in the winter of 1976, is a duplication.

After October 29, people getting on buses going east from Halton Hills will either have to ride to York Mills or transfer in Brampton if they want to go to downtown Toronto. There won't be any buses going straight through from Acton or Georgetown to downtown Toronto.

In addition, those transferring to the bus at Brampton, going to downtown Toronto, will have to pay an additional 35 cents if they don't get off at the Islington subway station and take TTC for the

remaining leg of the of the trip.

These changes are prompted by the fact the average number of passengers riding buses on both routes west of Brampton is 12 people. Another reason is GO duplicates Mississauga Transit service between the Islington subway stop and Brampton.

While all details of the changes are still being worked out, Henry said it is certain now that some buses will go from Georgetown to York Mills while a few others will go from Guelph with stops in Rockwood, Acton and Georgetown to York Mills. There will definitely be fewer buses going through Acton.

He noted buses going through Halton Hills to York Mills and buses going to downtown Toronto are practically running on top of each

other in some cases. Henry said the changes will "reduce this wasteful duplication."

In addition, the changes are expected to "regularize" GO bus service in Halton Hills.

Henry noted GO is trying to develop an efficient "trunk" line bus service around Toronto and the day will come when passengers can get on buses in Halton Hills

and travel on the same bus all the way to Oshawa or up to Richmond Hill. The trunk line bus service is being designed to bring people in from areas outside Metro Toronto and feed them onto TTC subways. "There are many cost savings involved in these changes," Henry concluded. In an unrelated matter Henry also revealed GO buses will stop going to the Georgetown train station and that stop will be moved to Moore Park Plaza where the province run transit system hopes it can establish a ticket agency.

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Passes one hurdle

Regional plan on way

The end of efforts to put together an official regional plan for Halton is in sight.

Last week the regional planning committee adopted, with a major amendment, the latest version of the plan, but not before several hours of debate by councillors having one last whack at favorite issues. And not before an earnest but unsuccessful plea by Halton Hills Councillor Roy Booth to have consideration of the plan postponed so local municipalities could review the revised version.

Debate may not be over yet. The plan goes before the whole council today for adoption and will next be sent on to the Minister of Housing for approval.

Tables showing population projections, employment distribution and housing mix were removed from the plan despite vigorous protests by committee chairman Pat McLaughlin, Oakville Councillor Arch Donaghey and planning staffers. Planners were left with the task of expressing in words the directions indicated by the figures. The tables themselves are to be put in a reference document separate from the plan.

Those wanting the tables out of the body of the plan argued the figures would be interpreted as absolute goals to be achieved and would require a time-consuming official plan amendment to change.

Planners said the introduction to the plan explained the figures were not intended as maximums but were put in to express key relationships to be attained. Figures are needed in day-to-day decision making and as measurement criteria for evaluation, they added.

The tables provide a description of the kind of "animal" Halton is going to be and reflect the concerns of the public, who told planners they wanted a better relationship between housing and jobs within the region, one of the premises on which the plan is based, said Ed Cumming, planning director.

"We've spent five years building this plan and now you want to knock out the foundation," Mr. Donaghey added.

Milton Mayor Don Gordon contended figures showing distribution of employment don't allow sufficient flexibility to accommodate a major industry. "If an industry wants to come in to Milton, I'm not going to abide by any figures. I'm going to let them come in."

Burlington Mayor Mary Munro, who attended the meeting, and Burlington Councillor Ben Ciprietti objected in particular to inclusion of a table illustrating projections for

future housing mix. Mayor Munro said the figures showed Burlington with the highest density of any municipality of the region by 2001.

Mr. Donaghey replied though councillors may not like the figures, they were a realistic reflection of peoples' needs and preferences for housing.

The tables which were deleted by the committee showed all municipalities increasing the ratio of medium and high density housing slightly with a corresponding decrease in the percentage of low density

housing. By far the greater portion of housing in Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville and just more than half the housing in Burlington would remain low density.

The population table had shown a population growth in Milton to 33,000 in 1986 and 37,000 by 2001; in Halton Hills to 45,000 by 1986 and to 50,000 by 2001. Milton's population in 1976 was 29,600; Halton Hills', 34,200.

Figures projecting distribution of employment by municipality showed Milton more than doubling and Halton Hills almost doubling the number of jobs by 2001.

The major increase in jobs was viewed as taking place in the service sector while jobs in primary (agriculture, mining) and secondary (manufacturing, construction) industries were expected to decline. The plan's legal status is such that no public work can be undertaken until a bylaw passed which does not conform to it.

The plan can be amended by regional council on its own initiative or in response to an application by municipal councils or individuals. All amendments must be approved either by the Minister or, at his discretion, by the Ontario Municipal Board.

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