

Union president's firing stirs controversy at Countryside

Countryside, the group home for mentally retarded adults at Hornby, became a storm centre for the third time in four months this week, when Nellie Pitt of Acton, president of the seven-member counsellors' union, was fired.

Mrs. Pitt, who is claiming wrongful dismissal and has protested to the Canadian Labor Congress, has been a counsellor at the Hornby home for the past two years. She was named president of the union when it was formed in April of this year.

A complaint may also be lodged with the Canadian Labor Relations Board over the firing.

But Edith Hillman of Acton, president of the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded which administers Countryside in conjunction with the provincial government, told this newspaper Mrs. Pitt's firing was legitimate and legally done. Mrs. Pitt was given three warnings, in writing — one by former director of the home Robert Bilodeau and two by acting director Jennie Kuiken who replaced Bilodeau in May.

Mrs. Pitt was officially suspended on Aug. 4 by the acting director, and the NHAMR Board of Directors met Tuesday evening of last week and confirmed Mrs. Kuiken's decision to fire Mrs. Pitt, said Mrs. Hillman.

It was Mrs. Hillman who told Mrs. Pitt on Wednesday morning, Aug. 16, that she was fired, on the recommendation of Mrs. Kuiken, and with the approval of the Board. Mrs. Hillman said "interference with management" was the reason given.

Mrs. Pitt is 49. She had been one of the negotiators representing the seven residence counsellors who were negotiating with the Board for the counsellors' first contract.

The Countryside union is believed to be one of the smallest independent unions in Canada.

Mrs. Hillman said it appears that since the firing Wednesday, Mrs. Pitt has been waging a campaign for re-instatement, via the news media. She said she had received several calls from newspapers and radio stations who were contacted by Mrs. Pitt.

there is "absolutely no connection" between the May resignation of Countryside director Bob Bilodeau and Mrs. Pitt's firing. "They are two very different things," she added.

Bilodeau, Director at the group home for two and a half years, has since been charged with 14 counts of fraud, by Halton Regional Police. He is due for his first appearance in Provincial Court in Milton on Monday morning of next week.

Charges were laid Aug. 3 by Halton Regional Police following a lengthy investigation. Bilodeau is charged with misappropriation of over \$5,000 from the residents' monthly spending money allowances.

Mrs. Hillman said the Board and union are in the middle of what she termed "favorable" negotiations over the contract right now. The Board has never fought the introduction of a union at Countryside, she assured this newspaper — "we didn't fight it at all, we feel unions can work both ways."

The negotiators are meeting again tonight (Wednesday). The union is

expected to name a replacement on the negotiating team for Mrs. Pitt.

The first controversy at Countryside this year involved the dismissal of Alice Maybanks of Georgetown, a residence counsellor who was let go just after her 13-week probationary period ended.

Mrs. Maybanks publically complained that she was dismissed because she refused to join the union, and because of a personality clash with Mrs. Pitt. The Board denied this, however, claiming Mrs. Maybanks was let go at the end of her probationary period because she did not fit in with the residents and staff.

Countryside houses 16 mentally retarded adults from the North Halton area. It is supported by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and by the NHAMR through its annual Flowers of Hope and other fund-raising appeals in the North Halton area. It is affiliated with ARC workshop at Hornby, where several Countryside residents work.



AN ACTON COUPLE were the proud winners of a 1950's style jukebox Saturday evening, when the Milton Optimist Club held their graffiti dance and draw. Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Landerkin of 196 Churchill Rd. purchased their one winning ticket earlier Saturday at the gate of the Milton club's Rod Show and Flea Market at Milton fair grounds. Presenting the prize is Bill Manuel of the Milton Optimists.

Water rates up again — uniform rates defeated

Halton residents will face increased water rates this year and each community will continue to charge for its own system.

Halton Regional Council rejected one of several attempts to have uniform water rates adopted during a meeting Wednesday. If that move had been successful the cost of operating water systems in the five urban service areas would have been shared.

The uniform rates had been promoted by staff and by regional chairman Ric Morrow and supported by Halton Hills councillors. With the exception of a few, all of those supporting the move were from Halton Hills.

Milton Councillors voted against uniform rates because they feared losing complete control of the approval process. They were afraid that it would become very difficult to have anything done in an area like Milton where there are only three council representatives.

Several Oakville councillors acknowledged that the policy

under discussion was the essence of regional government. Both Oakville Councillors Mac Anderson and Carl Eriksen said they had run on a platform that opposed regional government and saw their role as "keeping the monster in check."

The majority of Burlington councillors voted against the resolution because they felt the move should have included uniform sewage rates as well as water rates.

The Burlington caucus saw the move as a request for the other urban areas to assist Acton with the water system there, but they claimed there was no definite indication that sewage plants would be treated in the same way.

Based on a consumption rate of 6,000 gallons a month, Burlington rates will rise from \$4.58 to \$5.52 and Oakville's from \$4.54 to \$5.51. Milton rates jump from \$3.56 to \$5.77 while Georgetown's go from \$4.46 to \$6.61 and water rates will move dramatically from \$6.62 to \$12.04. The suggested uniform rate would have been \$3.79 for residential units.

Halton polio checks negative

A number of Halton residents have been checked for polio in the past week but there is no sign of the disease in the region, Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Joseph Chamberlain said this week.

He would not specify how many Halton residents have been checked or say what part of the region they come

Dr. Chamberlain said there are "a number of people who came to our attention," adding those checked have been in contact with people from Oxford County where the disease has broken out.

He said initial lab reports are negative and final reports are pending on all people checked for polio except for

one which came back negative.

Dr. Chamberlain emphasized that so far there has been "no indication" of polio in Halton.

He said most of the people who have been checked had been immunized.

Dr. Chamberlain said polio inoculation shots will continue to be given to persons under 18 and to adults who are either travelling to the Netherlands or returned from there recently. The disease broke out earlier this summer in the Netherlands

GO buses shut down if TTC goes on strike

If Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) workers go out on strike GO bus service to and from Halton Hills, including special GO bus service to the Canadian National Exhibition, will be shut down.

GO spokesman Tom Henry, who would not comment on the possibility of a strike, said

this week if TTC goes out, GO will have no choice but see GO bus service shut down since GO buses in this area are operated by Gray Coach Bus Lines, a subsidiary of the TTC. GO purchases bus service from Gray Coach. A TTC strike would affect GO rail service except add to the number of people riding the trains.

Over the weekend TTC drivers, machinists and maintenance workers voted to reject the TTC's latest contract offer and a strike vote was being taken Monday and Tuesday.

TTC could be shut down by a strike as early as today (Wednesday) but union spokesmen have said it is unlikely a walkout would take place that soon.

Union spokesman Charles Johnson said this week the 7,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union realize a strike would cripple Metro Toronto, especially now with the CNE in progress. The fact the CNE is on will be taken into consideration, Johnson said.

The last time there was a TTC strike was in 1974 and it occurred during the CNE. It resulted in greatly increased numbers of people riding Georgetown GO trains to avoid snarled Toronto traffic.

Since there was no GO bus service in Halton Hills in 1974 the strike had no effect

although it did shut down Gray Coach service in the area.

The CNE was again threatened by a transit strike in 1976 but it was averted when a settlement was reached.

Johnson says the workers don't want a strike and has suggested both sides will return to bargaining even if the workers vote to strike.

If GO buses shut down because Gray Coach workers are on strike with TTC workers, there isn't much GO can do Henry said.

He said additional rail service was most "unlikely" but extra passenger cars could be added to the four GO trains from Georgetown to Union Station in Toronto in the morning, and the four trains from Toronto to Georgetown in the late afternoon.

Henry said GO rail is much better equipped to handle a TTC strike this year than in 1974 since it now has some extra rail cars which could be added to Georgetown trains.

The only way Halton Hills residents could take transit to the CNE if there is a strike would be to take a Georgetown GO train to Union in the morning and then take a train from Union to the CNE. Georgetown passengers would, of course, have to leave the CNE early to take the train back to Georgetown.

Van blows rear tire

Halton Regional Police estimate the total property damage figure from last Thursday's single vehicle mishap at 15 Sideroad to be \$850.

According to police, the van driven by Rocky McCarron of RR4 Acton blew off its left rear tire, then struck a telephone pole.

Police put the damage to the auto at about \$500, while the balance of the damage figure comes from replacing the pole.

CN blames two for crash

A CNR dispatcher and work crew foreman contributed to the cause of a 22-car freight train derailment which sent five men to hospital and caused \$380,000 damage in mid-July.

The revelation was made last week by CNR public relations officer Mike Matthews. He also said both men have been demoted, the work crew were at a site on the Milton bypass when a northbound train came along.

A report of the accident has been sent to the Canadian Transport Commission.

School returns

Local children return to school September 6. Mothers will soon be able to breathe a sigh of relief.

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Another method of getting to the CNE without tackling traffic, which will be horrendous if there is a TTC strike, would be to drive from Halton Hills to Oakville, Clarkson, Port Credit, Long Branch or Mimico GO stations and take the train into the CNE. Trains are running along the Lake-shore throughout the day and evening. There are trains after the Grandstand show.

Currently GO buses are running throughout the morning from Halton Hills to the Port Credit GO train station where passengers transfer to trains for the CNE and buses leave the train station throughout the evening.

Teachers back

Teachers will soon be returning to local schools planning classes for the next year.

The schedule had called for construction to be substantially completed by the end of September to allow the move to take place.

But hopes of that happening become dimmer with every passing day. Regional Chairman Ric Morrow said he would bring a recom-

mentation to council at the next meeting concerning what to do about the moving schedule.

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