

OHC rental housing like 'ghetto' says treasurer Frank Miller

By Peter Mills
Ontario Treasurer Frank Miller doesn't like Ontario Housing's low-rental units, referring to them as "ghettos" during a question-and-answer session in Milton Wednesday night.

Miller was speaking to a gathering of the Halton-Burlington Progressive Conservative riding Association at the Bayerischer-Hof, and made the comment in answer to a question regarding ownership of land by individuals in the province. "Home ownership is an important part of our society. There is a certain satisfaction to be derived from land ownership, and land-owners tend to have a degree of stability that renters don't always have, and I think we should encourage this. I don't believe in the Ontario Housing Corporation's low-rental housing units. They destroy human dignity and they're like ghettos. They tend to destroy fundamental human ethics," he said.

It was for that reason, Miller said, that he personally supported the platform plank of federal Conservative leader Joe Clark that interest on mortgage payments be deductible from federal income tax. He said the provincial government hasn't come out with an official position on the matter, but he supported it because he said he has, like most people, a mortgage (30,000 at 7.75 per cent on his home in Bracebridge) and some stocks (also about \$30,000 worth). He must pay tax on the capital gains from the stocks, but cannot deduct interest on the mortgage. He said it was like "double taxation."

On another topic, Miller said he, like his predecessor Darcy McKeough, is committed to giving Ontario a balanced budget, but it would not be easy, and the taxpayers themselves are part of the problem.

"When you try to put cold, hard, economic facts before the taxpayers, they don't want to see them. What the citizens want of government is not necessarily the same as what they want of government in their area. It taught all of us a lot of lessons. The people want the efficiencies, but they assume it can be taken out of some large invisible bureaucracy that won't affect them at all."

In other words, Miller said Ontarians want a balanced budget, and the cutbacks which are necessary to bring it about... as long as the cutbacks occur elsewhere, and don't affect them or any government-funded agency they may use.

Miller cited an example in the furor created in the spring when the government tried to raise Ontario Health Insurance Plan premiums. "We like to think OHIP is free, but actually, it pays less than 25 per cent of health costs. We tried to raise the premiums, but both of the opposition parties came out against it. Since we were a minority government, we couldn't win the battle, so we abandoned the plan—and as a result, you have a new treasurer."

Miller said he has a faith in the free-market system, which therefore makes him a believer in the "laissez-faire" economic theory first uttered by Adam Smith. He said he didn't believe that government should be acting in the capacity of being a long-term crutch in the economy, although it should be ready and able to act, if necessary, in providing some short-term stimulants to the economy. Miller said he would be selective in shoring up weak points, and cited the government's action in competing with Ohio to get the Ford Motor Company to build a plant in Windsor.

The treasurer said the Liberal party, for the moment at least, is acting in a conservative manner economically, and is supporting in general government non-intervention in the economy and balancing the budget. He also said the New Democratic Party is taking the opposite approach, by saying that increased government spending is the best way to stimulate the economy. The drop in the value of the Canadian dollar could turn out to be a blessing in disguise, according to Miller, who said that it was valued at \$1.03 U.S. two years ago when expectations for the future were higher, and we were also under wage and price controls.

"When the dollar plunged, it caused an interesting psychological reaction. Our confidence appeared shaken and it was assumed the drop meant something bad. So it caused lower expectations, especially in wage demands. The international financiers were saying, in effect, that Canadians had for years been paying themselves in phony money."

He complimented the federal government on its steps to control growth, but stated it had a way to go yet. "The federal deficit this year will be in the neighborhood of \$12 to \$15 billion, which is about equal to our total expenditures, which we expect will be in the neighborhood of \$15 billion."



ONTARIO TREASURER Frank Miller (centre) goes over a Progressive Conservative party pamphlet outlining procedures at the poll level with officials of the Halton-Burlington P.C. Riding Association. On the left is Stu McFadden, Milton's representative on the riding association's executive. On the right is Eric Gudgeon, president of the riding association. Mr. Miller was in Milton Wednesday to answer ques-

tions from association members. The questions dealt largely with the state of the provincial economy. Mr. Miller says he is committed to balancing Ontario's budget by 1984.

worth of capital projects "that don't show up on the balance sheet." He said the current Ontario deficit, apart from Ontario Hydro, is approximately equal to 10 months' income, or about \$11 billion.

He also noted that more than a quarter of a billion dollars in expected revenue will not be coming to the province because of the cuts in the budget recently tabled by federal finance minister Jean Chretien.

Ontario, according to Miller, is one of the leading provinces in its financial position. He said Ontario will not be borrowing a cent from anybody but itself, but will have to borrow \$1.5 billion to meet its deficit. It does have a cash flow that isn't considered revenue, and will issue a debenture to borrow the money, and pay interest on it.

Miller also said that over the past four years, Ontario has borrowed approximately five billion dollars against

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF MILTON

The Mayor and Members of Milton Council cordially invite the Citizens of Milton to attend the Inaugural and Swearing-in Ceremony for the new Council to be held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, December 4th, 1978 in the Council Chambers, Town Hall, 251 Main Street, East, Milton, Ontario.

C. Thompson, Clerk.

Board OKs contract to teacher's wife

Acton-Esqueping school board trustee H.H. (Bert) Hinton failed to block a contract to an Acton High School teacher whose husband is also a teacher at the same school.

Hinton said the teachers—Margaret and Paul Tamblin—are fine people but with the high unemployment rate he did not want it to appear they were being favored. Margaret Tamblin's name appeared on a list of high school and public school teachers who superintendent of instruction John Boich recommended be offered permanent contracts in January.

Hinton's motion to single out Margaret Tamblin failed to get a seconder from the other trustees. Boich said he saw nothing the board could do in the matter in light of its lack of policy, but mainly because of the Human Rights Code. That is the same old line. The administration can take

any old view it wants, if there is no board policy, replied Hinton. Margaret Tamblin is a guidance counsellor and English teacher. Paul Tamblin teaches chemistry this term and outside education next term.

RELIGION TOPIC

Women and Religion will be the topic of the next Horizon Lecture Dec. 7 at the Oakville campus of Sheridan College. Guest speaker is Mary Lucas, a Priest at St. Jude's Anglican Church in Oakville. Rev. Lucas came to Oakville in December, 1977 from Grace Church in St. Catharines where she served as Deacon and Priest.

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Natural gas price increase

An interim increase of about 12 cents per 1,000 cubic feet in rates charged by Union Gas for residential natural gas service has been authorized by the Ontario Energy Board.

The increase applies to gas used on and after November 25. It will be reflected in gas bills received by customers early in December.

On the basis of average annual consumption of 130,000 cubic feet per year, the increase will add about \$16. (3.2 per cent) per year to the average residential customer's gas bill.

The energy board approved the increase in retail rates to offset a comparable increase in the wholesale price Union has been paying for its gas supplies since last summer. The Wholesale price was raised by the Federal Government on August 1, as part of an agreement Ottawa negotiated with Alberta, the principal producing province.

Implementation of this wholesale price increase at the retail level was delayed until the company had used

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