

# Staff shortage, big work load cause deficit

By Mike Patton

A lack of staff and an increased workload were responsible for errors in Halton's treasury department which resulted in a surprise \$600,000 deficit being discovered last summer, a consultant's report has found.

The report by Hickling-Johnston Limited says "a significant increase in workload of the treasury department resulted in 1980 from the decision by (regional) council to introduce uniform sewer surcharge rates" but adds that "the increases in workload have not been matched by corresponding adjustments in staffing, either in terms of overall numbers or in terms of more highly qualified staff."

The number of staff in Halton's treasury department has not increased since 1976.

"The result has been a situation in which certain low key activities have been inadequately performed or neglected altogether," the report says.

In July last year, members of regional council and the public were shocked to learn that Halton was facing a \$165,000 operating deficit where it had been previously thought a surplus of \$365,000 had existed.

The perceived deficit, eventually pegged at about \$700,000, brought about the resignations of Halton's chief administrative officer Ernie Reid and Halton treasurer Donald Farmer. Mr. Reid took early retirement in August with a \$68,000 cash award from the region and Mr. Farmer accepted a lesser position in the region's treasury department.

The Hickling-Johnston report completed for the Region last month says "a recent confidential survey of several regional and area municipality treasury departments indicates that Halton's treasury department is significantly understaffed relative to other treasury departments... in terms of numbers of professionally qualified staff."

The consultants are

recommending the hiring of seven new employees in the department, at an increased annual cost to the region estimated at between \$115,000 and \$160,000.

New staff positions which the consultants say need to be created include a manager of accounting and systems, an operating budget analyst, a financial analyst, a systems analyst and a secretary.

The presence of Mr. Farmer in his recent capacity as Halton's deputy treasurer could pose some problems for regional council and the new treasurer who is expected to be hired within the next few weeks, the Hickling-Johnston report said.

"Council may well feel that it would be unfair to effectively remove the (deputy treasurer) title from an existing employee (Mr. Farmer) who has put in a great deal of effort during a difficult period.

"We are specifically not making any recommendation on this issue, but we do feel that if there

were not an incumbent (deputy treasurer), we would not recommend such an appointment until the permanent treasurer had had an opportunity to work with his key subordinates for a year or so," the report says.

The consultants also advised that Mr. Farmer should not be hired to fill the proposed manager of accounting and systems position, although they admitted he "has more than adequate competency to fill this role."

Citing "a lack of confidence" in Mr. Farmer by regional council and "potential conflict" between him and the region's new treasurer, the consultants said "We feel it will be necessary to look outside the current organization to find a suitable candidate."

Before his demotion, Mr. Farmer had been Halton's treasurer since the region was formed in 1974.

Other inefficiencies in the treasury department discovered by the consultants included the slow processing of taxes on local improvement projects. "Some projects dating back to 1977 had not been processed... The financial effect of this was to burden the general fund with interest expense which would otherwise have been paid by the taxpayer who benefitted by the local improvement."

After the deficit problem arose last summer, the region hired Hickling-Johnston Limited in September to do a \$75,000 study of Halton's administration weaknesses but requested a special task force study of the treasury department to be done first.

Hickling-Johnston are also examining the structure of regional council and Halton's administration.

Members of the region's management study review committee have been considering the reports in private but Halton Chairman Jack Rafits said they would be made public at a special meeting of regional council scheduled for Jan. 21.



Legs up ladies. Using the gym wall at Limehouse school the women's winter fitness class gets in shape.



Laura Smith, instructor for the Limehouse women's fitness program, puts her class through the paces.



This isn't an easy exercise as Diane Leferink learns at the women's fitness class at Limehouse School.



Exercising is good for Mickey and George. George Smith of Limehouse enjoys the women's winter fitness program.

# Acton in Halton-Peel book new phone directories soon

The new phone book, with Acton listings in a Halton Hills section separately headed Acton and Georgetown, will be out soon.

The 1981 edition of the telephone directory for Halton and Peel Regions, Dufferin County, bigger and more informative than ever, becomes available beginning January 27, 1981.

W.C. Salmon, local Bell manager, said 3,000 directories will be delivered this year in the Acton exchange. Delivery is scheduled to be completed by February 25. At the request of subscribers in the Acton exchange, Acton listings have been switched from the Municipality of

## Ministerial exchange

Acton ministers marked the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Sunday with a ministerial exchange among four local churches. Rev. John Robertson, Knox Presbyterian Church, traded places with Rev. Arthur Tribe of St. Alban's Anglican Church while Trinity United Church minister Rev. Chuck Beaton swapped congregations for the day with Father Leo Speagle of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church.

Waterloo directory to the Halton and Peel Regions, Dufferin County directory, effective with this issue.

Inside the cover, which illustrates half a dozen types of phones available to subscribers, there is an expanded introductory section and a new, separate Blue Pages government listings section.

The introductory section has several new features.

—Page one is headed Help! It provides specific locations for entering local emergency numbers such as police, fire and ambulance.

—Information on how to contact, without charge, the new Telecommunication Centre for Special Needs (disabilities) in Toronto is in the new phone book. It is open weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

—The company's general regulations are printed in their entirety. They are reproduced to make them readily accessible to customers and to provide a greater awareness of the rules which govern the company.

Government alphabetical listings are now in

the distinctive separate "Blue Pages" section, following the white pages listings. Previously, the federal, provincial and municipal government sections were found under G.

The Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario have both expanded their listings section and the list-

ings for government programs and services have been changed to make them easier for the public to locate.

Bell is continuing its policy of one directory per customer. Anyone who does not receive a copy should call the local Bell business office after the delivery period ends February 25.

## NOTICE

### All 1981 Acton Chamber of Commerce Membership Dues Are NOW Due!

FEES:	Individual	\$10.00
	2 Employees	\$15.00
	3-8 Employees	\$22.50
	9-14 Employees	\$37.50
	15-24 Employees	\$62.50
	25 & up Employees	\$75.00

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND MAIL WITH YOUR DUES TO BOX 415, ACTON, L7J 2M7

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

## INAUGURAL MEETING

OF THE  
**ACTON and DISTRICT RED CROSS CHAPTER**  
 IS BEING HELD

January 26, 1981 - 7:30 p.m.

at the  
**CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**  
 CHURCHILL ROAD NORTH, ACTON

Anyone wishing to attend the meeting are more than welcome to do so

## Plan Klondike Days dance

The January meeting of the CWL was chaired by vice-president Ruth McMahon, since the president's chair was vacated in December.

The meeting was opened with the league prayer followed by a spiritual reading by Pat Garton. Reports were read by various chairmen and letters of thanks were read from those who received flowers at Christmas.

Plans for the "Klondike Days" dance to be held in the band hall on Feb. 21 were discussed.

**Emergency plan 1981 objective**

The Halton District Health Council has decided to add a plan to deal with emergencies as part of its 1981 goals and objectives.

The working group which was preparing the goals and objectives had listed six but it was decided a seventh, "To deal with emergency situations as they arise" should be included.

During the tanker explosion in Mississauga in 1979 and the Extender fire in 1980, disaster plans and/or the lack of them have been cited as major points of contention on how the issues were handled.

Special consideration will be given to any couple attending dressed in "appropriate costume."

Prizes for 1981 bazaar were discussed, but it was decided to leave any decisions until a later date. A group will be formed under Julie Conroy to make little "goodies" for bags which are given out at the Diocesan convention.

Coffee Sunday was postponed one week in order to coincide with the visit of Rev. Chuck Beaton, Trinity United, as guest speaker at Masses to start off Christian Unity Week. The meeting closed with a prayer and coffee and cookies were enjoyed.

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