

Should voters elect Regional chairmen?

Pomeroy's jump may have helped prompt Province to suggest some electoral changes

Pete Pomeroy's jump from Town mayor to Regional chairman and the appointment of his successor by council may be at least partially responsible for substantial changes proposed for next year's municipal election.

With Peel Region chairman Frank Bean watching from the gallery, Halton Regional council last week took its first critical glance at changes proposed by Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Claude Bennett.

Saying the current method of selecting Regional chairmen has been "much criticized", Bennett urged council to discuss his concerns and suggestions with area municipalities and let him know the consensus so changes can be made next year.

Council agreed to invite the opinions of the four areas, but balked at Bennett's suggestion that "various community, labor and business groups" should also be surveyed.

"We're being neatly put in a box," Burlington Councillor Joan Little said. "He's telling us 'you promote my idea'. Let him find out for himself what people think."

"It's the old trap," Mayor Russ Miller agreed. "The province gets us to do whatever they want and we end up as the bad guys. I'm happy with the system the way it is now and I've never heard anyone complain about it. Let's dispose of this as fast as possible. If Bennett has a problem, let him fix it."

"The problem", according to Bennett, was outlined in a series of concerns raised in "major reviews" of Metropolitan Toronto, Niagara, Ottawa-Carleton, Waterloo and Hamilton-Wentworth regions.

"There appears to be a growing consensus that chairmen should be more accountable to their local electorates," he said in a letter to Pomeroy. "The fact that a chairman is not directly accountable to any electorate other than his or her respective council makes people uneasy, as it appears to be undemocratic."

The current system could see any member of the general public elected chairman by Regional council, the minister pointed out. He need not be an elected official. And, if a Regional councillor is elected chairman by his colleagues, he resigns his local seat.

"The electors in the local municipality are denied the representative who was their first choice on election day and the vacancy created must be filled by appointment or through a by-election," Bennett said.

The scenario is familiar to Halton Hills voters. Re-elected mayor of the Town in 1982, Pomeroy jumped into the Regional chairman's seat when Jack Rafits retired in mid-term. A publicly-beleaguered Town council opted to appoint a new mayor—Russ Miller—and a new Ward 2 representative to replace Miller. As runner-up in the 1982 election, Peter Norton was named to council.

Bennett said he has already rejected the idea of having all voters of a Region elect the chairman, but "at a minimum", he said, "candidates for the position of chairman in 1985 should seek and retain elected office at the area level."

But should all council members be eligible for the chairmanship? Would a constituency office be enough to let a chairman who is also a councillor handle his workload? Bennett invited comments.

The minister suggested he would draw the

line at having a mayor also serve as chairman, citing both the "onerous" workload and the ethical problem of having one person serve as chief spokesman for two councils.

"I believe that the mayors of the local municipalities should be precluded from serving as chairman," he said.

When the Region sends copies of Bennett's letter to the area municipalities, it will include copies of a response from Waterloo Regional chairman James Gray, who pointed out that his plan to retire next year lends him a more objective perspective.

"The suggestion that the chairman should retain his/her local seat is positively ludicrous," Gray wrote Bennett. "This could only have been conceived by an academic student of municipal government who has never been in the front lines."

As well as the hefty workload, he noted, chairmen must be impartial in order to maintain the support of councillors.

Gray outlined his own plan for resolving concerns in Waterloo next year.

"I have suggested to council that I am willing to step down in September—three months early—with a new chairman to be elected immediately from the existing members of council. This would permit any member to run, including the mayors. It would ensure that all had stood for local election and it would ensure that the chairman had the confidence of council. It would allow the area councils to have their elections with the chairman's position already established and would, therefore avoid a later local by-election."

Admitting his plan is imperfect, Gray suggested Bennett change legislation to let the September election of a chairman stand for three years without a confirming election in December.

Preventing mayors from seeking the chairmanship would not only eliminate some of the best candidates, he added, it would invite "subterfuge", with mayors who hope to become chairmen running locally as councillors instead.

Waterloo is not among the Regions criticizing the current system, Gray said. He suggested only Metro Toronto, "where chairmen have tended to wield a great deal of power", is having serious problems.

Burlington Councillor Steve Toth recalled that former chairchairman Rafits complained about "losing his public base". Toth's colleagues were quick to condemn the idea of a Halton-wide election for the

chairman. Campaign costs would be prohibitive for the candidates, Little noted, and running the

election would be "a humongous task". Oakville's Jackie Cutmore added. Fellow Oakville Councillor Ann Mulvale warned

that a Halton-wide election would see the larger population in south Halton favoring Burlington and Oakville candidates.

SCISSORS
HAIRSTYLING
Sensor Perm Special
NOVEMBER 5 to 21, 1984
Regular \$50 **NOW \$35.00**
877-7917 HALTON HILLS SHOPPING CENTRE (Next to Burger King) Open Mon.-Sat.

I'm gonna be thinner by Christmas!
We'll help you lose 17-25 lbs. in just 6 weeks.
I'm Starting Today. Why don't you?
CALL: 877-2900
Hours: Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Saturday 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
DIET CENTER
LITE YEARS AHEAD!
70 Mill St. Georgetown sold post office

OPEN HOUSE
We Invite You To Our Parade Day Open House This Saturday
Enjoy Free Hot Cider and Goodies and See Our 1984 Christmas Collection
We'll Have Many Specials for the Occasion 10% OFF All Christmas Items Including Copper & Pottery
VANDEBURGH FLOWERS
Georgetown Market Place



IN FASHION
Decorating gingerbread men Saturday at Trinity United Church's bazaar was Kay Hart. She was wearing an outfit that was perfect for the bazaar's Old-Fashioned Christmas theme. The skirt is almost 100 years old. Hart borrowed her wardrobe from Marguerite Taylor.

Naturally in Fashion!
CASUAL SUEDE JACKETS \$169
Canadian-made in Men's and Ladies' Styles

the olde Hide House
Built in 1899 with half a million bricks and massive wood beams, our 1 1/2 acre store houses a current collection of over 10,000 garments.
Natural products are featured — Men's and Ladies' Leather, Suede, Sheepskin, Fur and Woollen fashions and accessories. Over 95% of our merchandise is made in Canada.
You save 15-30%. Our low overhead and enormous volume — over 350,000 shoppers annually — allow us to offer you genuine savings Everyday!

Jack TANNERS — ON THE PREMISES —
Complete your shopping visit with a delicious Lunch, Dinner or Sunday Brunch.
RESERVATIONS (519) 853-3440
OPEN 10-10, 7 DAYS A WEEK
49 Eastern Ave., ACTON, (519) 853-1031
the olde Hide House
It's Worth the Drive to Acton!

The Gold Centre's Pre-Christmas Seiko Watch Sale!
The Gold Centre - presenting our Christmas line of Quality SEIKO Watches for the whole family...over 800 in stock, with a complete selection of Seiko Lassales - the entire line available at 25% to 40% OFF!
Use the attached 10% OFF Coupon until December 1 '84 for even greater savings. Any watch purchase before this date also qualifies you for our FREE SEIKO TRAVEL ALARM GIVEAWAY on December 15, 1984.

Men's Seiko Quartz Dress Watch with Day & Date
Regular Price \$350 **SALE PRICE \$210.**

Ladies Seiko Quartz Dress Watch
Regular Price \$160 **SALE PRICE \$96.**

FREE GIVEAWAY
Every Watch purchase before December 15, '84 qualifies you for 1 of 10 of the incredibly slim, credit-card size SEIKO TRAVEL ALARMS (valued at \$49.95 each) on this date!
SEIKO AUTHORIZED DEALER
All details available at the showroom or by phoning 453-7063
Setting the standard for the world, for the future.

10% OFF COUPON
Use this coupon at The Gold Centre until Saturday December 1 '84 and receive 10% OFF any SEIKO Watch purchase - including SALE WATCHES!
The Gold Centre
The Gold Centre 453-7063, Centennial Mall - 227 Voodoo at Kennedy, Brampton. Monday, Tuesday & Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm / Wednesday to Friday, 10 am - 9 pm