

# 'There's no way Georgetown hospital services can be cut'--Morris



FRED MORRIS, administrator of Georgetown and District Hospital, points to plans for an addition to the hospital.

The Georgetown District Memorial Hospital was spared a visit from health minister Frank Williams because the hospital did not exceed the criteria Miller used when he found it necessary to close 10 hospitals in Ontario, said hospital administrator Fred Morris in an interview this week.

Miller's criteria was to change the bed-to-population ratio from five beds per thousand population to four per thousand and if an area had surplus beds, the local hospital was closed.

To further cut cost, hospitals of related size were examined and those whose costs of operation were high faced cutbacks in the amount of money they could get.

"It's a fairly broad cost cutting proposition," Morris said.

But even if the Georgetown hospital escaped without having any beds closed or services curtailed, pressure on the hospital facilities still remain, Morris said.

"The pressure of population growth is increasing on us," he said.

To adequately serve the health needs of Halton Hills, 160 beds are needed, Morris said. Now there are 70 beds but the hospital has the capability to go to 200 beds with little change in support services, he said.

"If you exclude Acton, you're still dealing with 27,000 people, so we're still under the (bed formula) ratio," he said.

But if Acton is included, "it's obvious the facilities won't accommodate what we call Halton Hills."

"To accommodate Halton Hills adequately," Morris said, "there obviously has got to be some growth."

He pointed out, however, that the Georgetown district hospital is well prepared for growth. "We have a darn good base to build on," he said, limited only by the availability of finances.

In the first stage of expansion, Morris said, 80 beds can be built economically and quickly on existing foundation, taking into regard the built-in facilities of the hospital.

"The second and third floors are ready to go any time we get approval," he said, adding

that "we could use the facilities now, if we were to service Halton Hills properly. If that's our responsibility now and no one has said it is not, that's what our area of responsibility is. We could move to one of those floors immediately."

Morris said of the Georgetown hospital, "We've got congestion because patients have no nursing homes to go to." He said that the cost per day to keep a patient in a nursing home is \$18 while the cost per day of a patient in the hospital is \$90.

According to the ministry of health formula, there should

be three and a half nursing home beds per thousand of population, Morris said, adding that a nursing home in the area has got to be built. "Why shouldn't there be a nursing home?" he asked.

"On a regional basis, it's perhaps a little over-bedded," Morris said, "but the distribution is in Oakville and Burlington."

"If you take the Georgetown population or the Halton Hills population," he said, "we need about a hundred beds."

Morris was proud of the way the Georgetown hospital works. "We operate very efficiently," he said. "We have no qualms about stating that in terms of statistics or data available."

As examples of the hospital's efficiency, he said that the automated boiler plant saved enough money to finance a proper maintenance program for the hospital.

Further, a modern dictation handling system eliminated the need for duplication of dictating equipment and was available on a 24-hour basis to doctors and administrators. "There's no duplication of services," Morris said. "The

capital equipment is well utilized."

But when it comes to why the Georgetown hospital is well run, Morris said, "You've got to look at the community as well."

He had nothing but praise for the service clubs which support the hospital on worthwhile and meaningful projects. "Public support is astounding," he said. "You can't help but look at the volunteer ambulance service. There are darn few communities that have total volunteer service."

"The Red Cross are always very available," he said. Community support of the Georgetown and District hospital is "as secure as anyone can suggest."

When Morris reflected on the absence of psychiatric facilities in Halton Hills, he termed it "shocking."

"We've got to start coping with the psychiatric requirements of Halton Hills," he said. "In terms of efficiency of the hospital there's no foreseeable way we can cut beds or service," he said in summation. "We're having to work very hard to serve the population with the services we have."

## the HERALD

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### Town taxes may go up at least \$120

Projected mill rate increases announced over the past month by the region and the board of education indicate the Halton Hills' taxpayers will be facing a minimum mill rate increase this coming year of 16 mills or roughly \$120 more for a home assessed at \$7,500.

And the town has yet to indicate how much—if it has to—it will be increasing its portion of local taxes.

All three branches of local government—board of education, the region and the town—

blame the provincial government's cutbacks in local spending as the prime reason behind the tremendous projected jumps in tax bills.

Last year Halton Hills taxpayers saw their tax bills jump from a low of 1.13 mills in Acton to a high of 5.86 mills in Acton. Esqueping's mill rates increased by 5.51 mills.

The first sign of the big increase this year was given by the Halton Board of Education early this year when the director of the board, Em Lavender, issued an early warning that

Halton's taxpayers may face a minimum mill rate increase of 10 mills as a result of soaring educational costs.

In last year's local budget, education spending accounted for approximately 60 percent of the total tax bill.

The board of education's dire predictions were followed last week by the announcement by Halton chief administrative officer, Ernie Reid, that he presently foresees a 37 1/2 percent increase in spending by the region in 1976 which represents an average

mill rate increase of six mills across the region.

The region hopes to raise over \$13 million through taxes in 1976.

Meanwhile Halton Hills' treasurer Ray King notes that his department's work on preparing budget forecasts for the coming year is running about one week behind schedule. However he told the finance committee Monday night that they will be receiving their first in-depth look at departmental budgets within two weeks and council will begin its review of the proposed budgets in March.

The completed 1976 budget will likely not be finalized until late May or early June. Halton Hills may be in a more fortunate position than the other three Halton municipalities as it was able, in its 1975 budget, to set aside \$210,833 to be used in stabilizing its 1976 budget.

As well, while other municipalities have had their grants from the ministry of transportation and communications cut drastically, Halton Hills' share has been estimated to be the same as 1975, up not slightly more.

However both those points may be a counter-balanced by higher capital building costs accumulated in 1975. Councillor Harry Levy pointed out to the finance committee that a great deal of the town's major capital building projects were completed mid-way through last year.

When Mr. King was asked whether he thought the 10 percent increase in controllable gross expenditures would be indicated directly in the town's mill rate he replied that, until he had had a complete overview of the budget, he could not say.



OBSERVING "THINKING WEEK." As part of "Thinking Week" the 1st Terra Cotta

Brownie Pack studied the dress of Brownies of the world. Studying the chart are left to

right; Robin Symmes, Leanne Cook and Valerie Elwood.

#### Exploding septic tanks

### Burlington's Mayor blocks Norval

Burlington Mayor George Harrington pulled out all stops last week in attempting to delay, if not stop, the extension of the Georgetown watermain system to Norval.

At first trying to warn of the possibility of "exploding septic tanks" if municipal water is pumped to Norval, Mayor Harrington, seeing that he was gathering little support from his fellow councillors, hinted that perhaps they should "consider if the investment of providing sewers and watermain to Norval is really worth what we're investing in it."

How many people live in Norval, he asked.

Although admitting, as Oakville Councillor Bill Mason put it, that water for Norval was "a calculated risk well just have to take," regional councillors voted in favour of spending \$50,000 on engineering fees for the project.

That expenditure, however, is subject to hearing from the ministry of the environment that the project is approved for provincial financing. No word on that has been received as yet.

"We have no choice," commented Councillor Mason. "It has been discussed for two years and we're fully aware of the problems of possibly flooding of septic tanks but we really have no alternative."

"The people of Norval are well aware of our concerns," added Halton Hills Councillor Dick Howitt. "They're quite prepared to take that chance."

The "chance" Norval residents will be taking is that, with the addition of municipal water into the village, the flood plain soils will not be capable of absorbing the extra water. Septic tanks throughout the village could be seriously affected.

"We've got a bad situation with contaminated water in Norval," said Councillor Mason. "We have to do what we can do to alleviate that immediate problem. The urgency of the need for the water outweighs all other considerations." If, in a year's time, problems are created, he said, the council will just have to consider taking further steps.

"In a year we may end up having to build a pumping station in Norval and a sewage line back to Georgetown."

Mayor Harrington, however, suggested that the plans to extend the Georgetown system to Norval be delayed until further reports are carried out on the feasibility of installing sewage lines at the same time as the water lines.

"If the whole thing is still a year or two away, why not consider putting in the sewage

lines now?"

"If you solve one problem by creating another, what do you really achieve?"

That suggestion, Councillor Ernie Sykes angrily commented, "is nothing more than a stall," and no more practical than "pushing all 65 homes in Norval into the river."

Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett reported of a similar area in Oakville which had municipal water and sewage tanks but experienced no problems at all. "They have to have water in Norval...Let's get on with the job of getting it there!"

Under question by Councillor Ric Morrow, the region's chief administrative officer, Ernie Reid, confirmed the report in last week's Herald that stated money for the Norval project is not included in the ministry of the environment's 1976 budget nor is it high on the list of priorities for 1977 "unless a health hazard is definitely proven."



MISTER MUSCLE BEACH OF GEORGETOWN -- Needless to say Georgetown does not have a beach and, considering this is the winner in Saturday night's Mr. Muscle Beach Contest at Georgetown District High School, one has to wonder if GDHS has any muscles. "Tiger

Joe" Williams would have almost stolen the show Saturday night at the GDHS Beauty Queen Pageant were it not for the selection of a surprised (inset) Cathy Elalger as the Queen of the high school's winter carnival which is taking place this week. More pictures inside today's Herald.

### Public meeting on landfill sites 'a deliberate obstacle'

Tonight's meeting in Burlington to hear public reaction to the M.M. Dillon report on possible sites for the regional landfill site is a "deliberate obstacle placed in front of anyone who wants to comment effectively on the report," states Bill Johnson, president of the Nassagaweya Ratepayers Association and a well known north Halton environmentalist.

Mr. Johnson noted that the haste with which the public meeting was called did not allow anyone to study the report well enough to really question its conclusions.

The report was released two weeks ago at which time the February 25 date for the single public meeting on the report was set. "I would want to see hydrological maps

of the area and to be able to visit the sites and go over them before I draw any conclusions," Mr. Johnson said. "Then I would take them back to my ratepayers to get their opinions."

"It took me three weeks to complete my study of the MacLaren Report," he said. "The time element is ridiculous."



PAUL NEILSON of Acton travels up and down Mill St. urging the merchants to sign a petition for a mill increase which would help finance off-street parking.

### Two seeking PC nomination for next provincial election

Two men have already announced that they will be seeking the nomination as the Progressive Conservative candidate for Halton-Burlington in the next provincial election.

Gary Dawkins, defeated PC candidate in last fall's election, however, has stated flatly

that he's "99.9 percent sure that I won't be running again." The next provincial election, he said, is still well over one year away. Such an extended election campaign would be detrimental to his job as principal of M.Z. Bennett School in Acton.

"If it was a short-term

election campaign I perhaps might be interested in running again," Mr. Dawkins told the Herald, "but I don't believe there will be an election until spring of next year."

"I couldn't possibly run a long campaign while, at the same time, still doing a full job as principal."

The two men who thus far have indicated their intentions to seek the PC nomination at the local riding's nomination convention on March 17 are George Gray of Georgetown and George Kee of Hornby.

Mr. Gray sought the nomination last fall but was beaten by Mr. Dawkins. Last

week he hosted a special meeting for Georgetown PC's at which time he gauged his early support. He also introduced a new element into his campaign; a questionnaire dealing with various local political issues which he intends to use during his campaign if he is elected.

"I'm a businessman who's not very happy with the way the public's monies are being handled federally, provincially or regionally. I believe we should be returning to sound business practices in handling our economy to produce a balanced budget."

A graduate of Ontario Agricultural College he has been involved with livestock feed sales and is presently farming a 200-acre operation at RR1 Rockwood where he produces turkeys and beef cattle plus another 200-acre

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### No decision yet on Mill St. parking

Councillor Em Hyde told members of the works committee Monday night that if working on the south side of Mill St. in Acton was not eliminated, the merchants on that street would never provide off-street parking.

He said the committee would be in error to reconstruct Mill St. the way it is now.

"It's the wrong thing to do," Councillor Hyde said. "It's not progress. Progress is the merchants in Acton looking to improve their situation by providing off-street parking."

Councillor Hyde recommended that Mill St. be reconstructed with wider sidewalks and that parking on the south side of the

street from Main St. to John St. be eliminated.

Councillor Dick Howitt supported Councillor Hyde. He said that unless parking is banned on the south side of Mill St., the committee would have to wait "another 10 years" for the Acton merchants to provide off-street parking.

Councillor Howitt said there was a lot of merchants in Acton looking to town council for guidance on the issue but in response to a remark by Ward 1 councillor, Joe Hurst, that works committee meet with Acton merchants or at least get a petition from the merchants

to see what they desire. Councillor Howitt said the works committee would be no further ahead with such a meeting.

Councillor Hurst said he was opposed to eliminating parking on the south side of Mill St. "The road is narrow enough now so keep it as it is," he said. "Suppose in ten years we get a bypass."

He said he would like to get an expression from the merchants on the matter of the sidewalk width.

Town engineer Robert Austin suggesting that the sidewalk from Main St. to John St. and perhaps even beyond be installed with

interlocking paving stones instead of concrete. He said the cost was the same.

Councillor Hyde suggested that although the costs would be the same, the cost of maintenance would be greater.

Engineer Robert Austin replied that if the interlocking paving stones were properly installed there should be no increase in maintenance costs.

Councillor Hyde then asked if it had ever been seriously considered to change Mill St. and Church St. into one way streets.

Engineer Robert Austin advised him that Church St. was rebuilt as a residential street

and did not have a foundation that could take heavy traffic.

Councillor Hyde showed the committee a photograph of St. Alban's Drive and recommended that the works committee allow parking on the south side of the street but eliminate it on the north side. Councillor Hurst approved of this motion.

Chairman Mike Armstrong felt that the works committee should meet with the planning committee on the issue of what to do with Mill St. because third reading of the bylaw, which would permit reconstruction of Mill St.