Acton wants out of region citing loss of identity

Citizens of Acton will be presenting a petition to Queen's Park to review regional government in light of dissatisfaction with the form of government imposed in 1973. Peter Papillon, chairman of the Actonians for Acton committee, which last week released a brief outlining a number of dissatisfactions the group found, said Monday that the petition has received a "very good reaction" from citizens.

Deadline for signatures on the petition is July 9 and a house-to-house canvass is being considered, he said. The petition will likely be presented to Queen's Park in the fall.

The brief, presented last Wednesday to Milton Mayor Don Gordon who is chairman of the regional Bill 151 review committee, has three major criticisms of regional government in Halton Hills.

One of the main prerequisites of a successful regional system is for a strong community interest to develop between amalgamated parties and in Halton Hills this has failed to happen, says the brief.

"Experience over the past three and one-half years actually indicated a widening disparity between the former towns of Acton and Georgetown," says the brief. "We believe this has been caused by a feeling in the former town of Acton of a gradual, demoralizing loss of identity."

The identity issue has had a great effect in Halton Hills, unlike the urban areas of Oakville, Burlington and Milton, which all retained antonomy over their area councils, the brief says.

Acton no longer has a town office or council chambers, the works and administrative departments personnel have been transferred out of town, most boards have been dissolved and control of local water and sewer concerns is by regional works personnel, "...with vastly inferior knowledge and experience with local requirements has created much bad feeling in Acton," the brief says.

The town of Acton previously had nine elected officials to municipal governments whereas now it has only three, who yet earn three times the salary of the former councillors and are spread too thin.

"We feel it is almost impossible for three people to satisfactorily look after the day to day needs of the town of Acton in the areas of town administration, works, planning and recreation," says the brief.

The brief also takes issue with the fact that on Halton Hills council, the three Acton representatives are outnumbered by the ten non-Acton residents. "We do not accept that this situation is either just or proper, and is a major issue in our criticism of government established under Bill 151."

"It is our considered opinion that our current system of local government in Halton Hills and regionally in Halton has become too costly to maintain at its current rate of growth in taxes," the brief states. In support, it cites an increase in the numbers of municipal employees with the coincident increased costs of salaries, benefits and pensions.

The brief recommends that as it is virtually impossible for the average citizen to understand the financial operations of regional government, an auditor-general reporting direct to the taxpayers be established.

Drastic revisions in the structure of Halton Hills are required, the brief says. "If this means the re-establishment of a seat of government in Acton itself, then perhaps that is the direction that should be taken."

In conclusion, the brief states: "We, as concerned citizens of the town of Acton, do not believe that the current system of municipal government is responsible to Acton's best interests. We believe the establishment of Halton Hills within the framework of Halton Region was poor political judgement, disruptive and detrimental to the future of the town of Acton and should be re-evaluated, with intensive input from Acton's citizens."

Members of the Actonians for Acton committee are: Peter Papillon, chairman; L. Youngblut, secretary; B. Aherne, R. Arbic, L. Bonnette, A. Braida, D. Dills, N. Elliot, R. Evelan, C. Leatherland, L. Lovell, G. Malcolm, B. Shoemaker, M. Smith, D. Swetman and B. Yundt.

CWL supper held

By PAULINE MILLER

The ladies of Holy Cross Catholic Womens League held their annual Pot Luck supper in the church hall Monday evening with 55 members in attendance.

The short business meeting consisted of preperations for the 25th anniversary Tea to be held Sunday, Sept. 26.

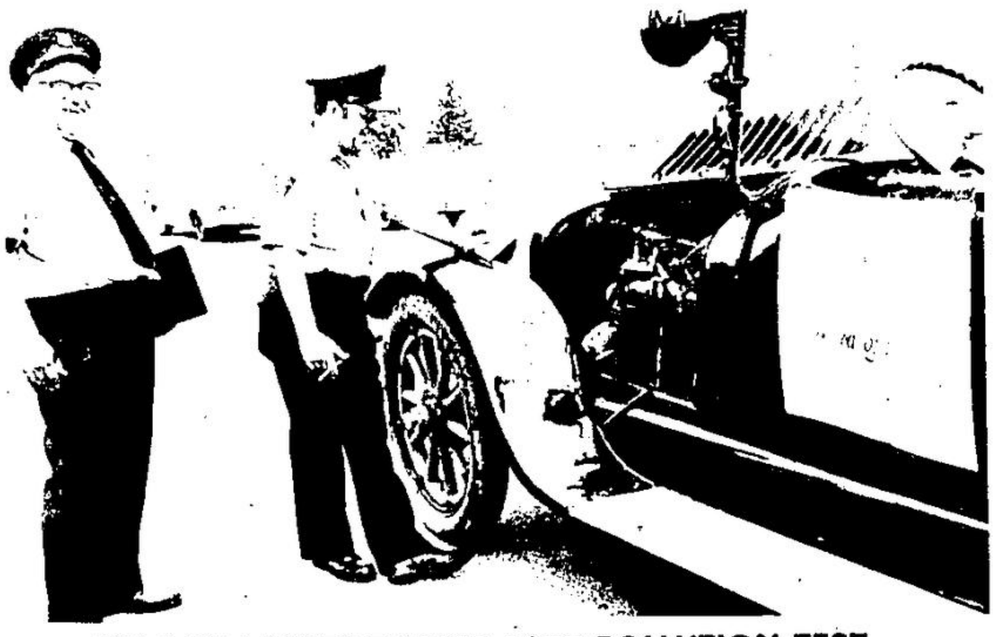
A motion was passed to give a local Religious program on channel 11, "Church Today," a $100 donation.

President Margaret Wilcox gave her report on the convention held in Owen Sound.

Wyn Ingham introduced our mystery guest who turned out to be Sue Evans who demonstrated the art of belly dancing. She was thanked for a very interesting demonstration by Margaret Wilcox.

This brings the CWL to the close of its 1976-77 season and the group wishes to thank all members, old and new, who have participated in the various functions throughout the year.

The coming season starts Sept. 19.



1914 ROADSTER PASSES 1977 POLLUTION TEST

Ministry of environment air resources branch inspectors John Cann, right, and Syd Newdick check Fred Ruddell's 1914 Chalmers for pollution control standards. At first perplexed by the automobile, the test inspectors who were at Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena all last week, finally determined the displacement of the engine and found that the smooth running antique car met the 1977 standards for carbon monoxide of one per cent. Slightly high on hydro carbons per part per million, the car managed to pass the standard and received the 1977 red sticker showing its been tested for air pollution standards. The car was on display on Main Street during Pioneer Days.

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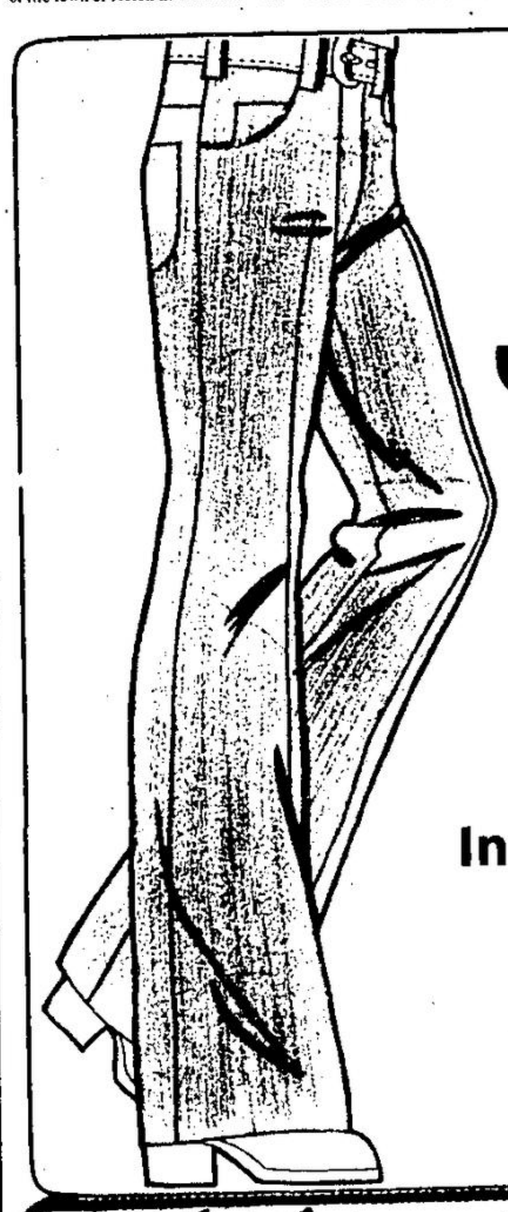

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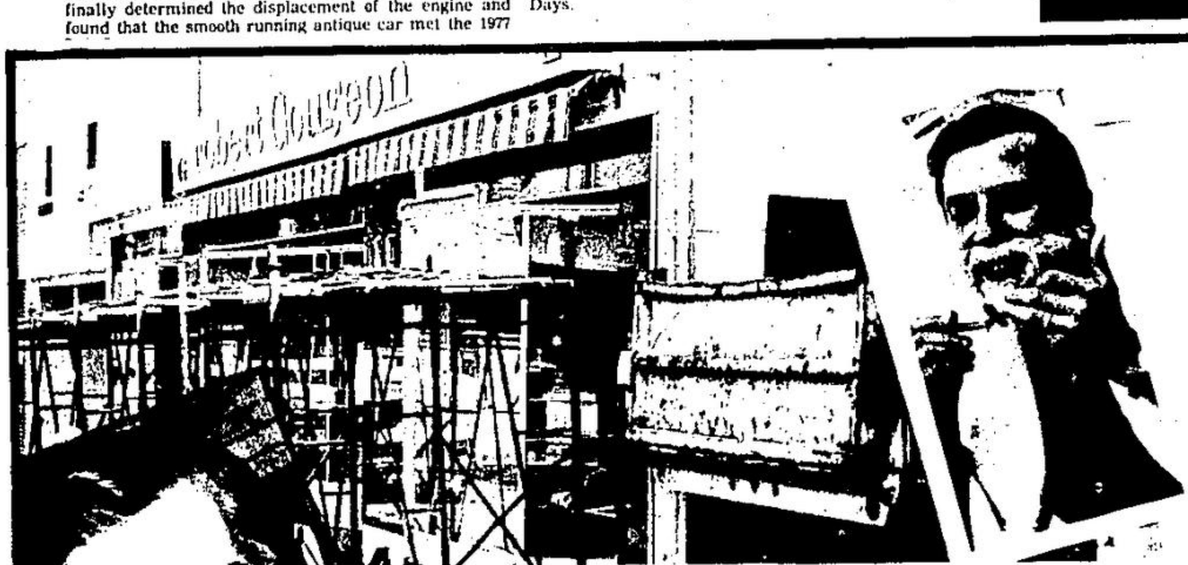

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