

Computer problems

Wary of spending nearly \$13,000 on a new computer to prepare and mail out water bills for Acton and Georgetown consumers, Halton regions' public works committee is hoping modifications can be made to Halton Hills' own computer to convert it to metric measurement.

Committee members were incredulous last Wednesday to learn that switching from gallons to litres in Halton Hills would necessitate the purchase of a new computer billing system to replace the over-taxed computer located in the Georgetown treasury office.

Reluctant to endorse the recommendation by public works director Bob Moore, the committee asked its staff to check with the Burroughs business machine company, which supplied the municipality's existing computer, to make sure that it cannot be converted at less expense.

SPEND MONEY
Councillors Gord Reade of Oakville and Pat McKenzie of Halton Hills questioned the need to spend any money on the Halton Hills billing operation until the effects of regional council's recent decision to equalize water rates across Halton can be tested. They suggested that council should defer a decision on the north Halton billing system until the methods of billing other municipalities has been determined.

Chief administrative officer Ernie Reid explained that the region could either buy the new computer for Halton Hills, as recommended, or else have Halton Hills handle the billing on its behalf. The latter option would cost Halton more money he warned.

"What's the problem in converting gallons to litres?" Coun. Reade asked. "I fail to see why we've got to buy new equipment."

"They (Burroughs) tell me it can't be done," Ken Faulkner of the public works staff responded.

"The vendor is naturally going to tell you that," Coun. Reade said. "He's trying to sell you a new computer. We're talking a simple conversion factor here, a Mickey Mouse thing to do. It's incredible that a mini-computer's capacity is so used up we can't use it for this."

NOT EXCITED
"I'm not that excited about it either," committee chairman Jack Rafalis commented. Mr. Faulkner reported that

TEACHER PREFERENCE GIVEN

Boards of education, including Halton, are beginning to give preference in the hiring of teachers to people who graduate out of their school system, Halton board of education was told Thursday.

John Bolch, superintendent of instruction, told the board the executive committee had done a study of five neighboring boards and discovered that while the boards are still interested in hiring the best teachers, all things being equal, a local person will be hired to fill a vacancy.

In a time of cutbacks and spending limitations, there is a tendency towards introspection, Mr. Bolch said.

"The neighboring boards still want to get the best teachers they can, but they still look toward local people, and all things being equal, the local people are being hired," he said. "The trend is toward introspection and that could be dangerous."

Trustee Bill Lawson asked if Mr. Bolch could instruct Halton principals to look at hiring local people for vacancies.

"That is our position now, and we have asked them where possible to interview at least one local person for a vacancy," Mr. Bolch said.

the present computer variety had room for additional input from Acton consumers when the region combined the Acton and Georgetown billing operations last year.

Mr. Moore's report on the situation explained that regional officials approached Halton Hills staff at council's direction to discuss the feasibility of having Halton Hills conduct the overall operation. He reported that Halton Hills is willing to handle the computer billing, but not mailing, collecting or meter reading.

REGION'S CHARGE
Mr. Moore said Halton Hills will take on the region's operation for a start-up charge of \$5,000, plus 50 cents per bill for the actual billing operation and \$1 for every change of name or address in the billing records.

"These costs would increase our operating costs by \$15,000 the first year and \$10,000 each subsequent year," he predicted. "The increased costs the first year are sufficient to write off the purchase cost of the new machine in one year."

Mr. Reid added that it would be two to three years before the region could take over the billing operation itself in Halton Hills.

Fondue
The word "fondue" comes from the French word "fondre" which means "to melt."



RED CROSS EXECUTIVE

Members of the executive of the Georgetown and District branch of the Red Cross are from the left: Elizabeth Jones, secretary, John Wicken, past president, Tina Yaramey, President, Margaret Pope, 1st. vice-president, and Ross Rennick, 2nd. vice-president

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A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR HILL TO THE HALTON HILLS ELECTORATE

I would like to take this opportunity to express my views on some of the key issues facing the ratepayers of Halton Hills in this election.

1. REGIONAL GOVERNMENT:

The Provincial Government introduced a new regional form of government in 1973 which resulted locally in the creation of the Regional Municipality of Halton. Regional Government has provided such local improvements as the construction of a new Fire Hall in Acton, reconstruction of local streets in Acton and Georgetown, safe water for Norval, equalized sewer and water rates throughout the Region and more efficient Police Protection.

While these improvements have been of considerable benefit locally, Regional Government has also resulted in an increased property tax burden on ratepayers throughout the Region.

It is my view that the present cost of Regional Government could be substantially reduced by returning the responsibility for the construction and maintenance of hard services (sewer and water) to local municipalities. Considerable additional savings could, I believe, be achieved by reduction of the staff, in several departments, employed at the Regional level.

2. FOCAL PROPERTIES DEVELOPMENTS:

A great deal of public time and public money has been expended, over the past few years, on fruitless discussion regarding the development by Focal Properties of the land it now owns in Halton Hills. The Town contracted Currie, Cooper and Lyerand Ltd., to prepare a feasibility study of such a development. This study resulted in a report which was opposed to the proposal. Focal Properties had undertaken to prepare a similar study and its report was strongly in favour of the Focal Properties development. After comparing these reports I felt that neither of them was completely unbiased in its approach. Until the obvious discrepancies in these two reports are resolved, I do not feel it is proper for me as Mayor to pass judgement on the desirability of the Focal Properties Development.

3. THE LIBRARY:

The Town of Halton Hills needs improved library facilities now. Since the Ontario Municipal Board decision of this year that \$400,000.00 was to be debentured for the specific purpose of reconstruction of the existing library, it must be impressed upon the Library Board that renovations must be carried out on the existing building. The longer this project is delayed, the more expensive it will become.

4. EQUALIZED WATER AND SEWER RATES:

What might have been a major issue in the election has been recently resolved as a result of some hard bargaining on my part with the Regional Council. We will now enjoy having the cost of installation and upkeep of these services shared by the whole region. I stand on my record in this issue as in others to demonstrate my efforts to give The Town of Halton Hills a strong and effective voice at the Regional Council.

★ ★ ★

These are some of the Key Issues in this election. Other areas of concern for me are the Metcalfe Ravine, which the town must take steps to remedy, and to work with the Downtown Business Merchants Association to revitalize the downtown core area.

In Acton, I have worked with the officials of the Beardmore Tannery and the Department of the Environment to attempt to resolve the problems relating to the discharge of the Tannery's effluent into the sewage treatment plant. I shall continue my efforts in this area to finalize this matter to the satisfaction of all concerned.

I have the experience needed, both locally and at the Regional level, to deal with the important issues now confronting the Town and I ask for your support on November 13, 1978.

Thank You!

TOM HILL

VOTE EXPERIENCE — VOTE HILL

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