

Local doctors should not abandon OHIP

With close to 50 per cent of the local doctors and most of the medical staff at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital no longer registered with the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan, it's safe to say that universal accessibility to medical care in Halton Hills is in trouble.

When the concept of medicare was introduced in provinces across Canada, the stated goal was to ensure that Canadian citizens would not be deprived of adequate medical care because of finances. But as more and more doctors drop out of the government medical insurance plans across the country, this goal becomes little more than a pipe dream.

While the OHIP system may still exist on paper, it is of little use of taxpayers if they are unable to find doctors still involved in the plan. This problem is especially serious in small communities like Halton Hills.

Unlike residents in large metropolitan centers like Toronto, Halton Hills residents do not have a large pool of doctors to choose from to find a family doctor still in the government medical insurance plan. If your doctor drops out of OHIP, the choice may soon be whether you are ready to drive to Oakville or Brampton for health care or stay here and pay your doctor's increased fees.

At the same time, as doctors are opting out of OHIP, their practices are filling up and some doctors are not accepting new patients. This, too, eats away at the pretense of choice when it comes to finding doctors in the OHIP plan.

There is even less chance of getting an OHIP doctor if you require surgical care at the Georgetown hospital.

None of the doctors performing surgery at the local hospital are in OHIP, according to a list of doctors supplied by the hospital.

At the same time, one of the two doctors giving anesthetics is out of OHIP. The anesthetists work on alternate days so there is a 50-50 chance of getting one's anesthetic covered by OHIP but, a patient will definitely have to come up with some cash to supplement OHIP payments for the operation.

The entire situation makes a joke of the OHIP plan. In this supposedly civilized society, Ontario residents should have the right to adequate medical care. The OHIP plan was designed to ensure we have this right. The right is being eroded with every doctor who drops out of the plan.

For citizens whose doctor has dropped out of our once model health insurance plan, the cost of health care is headed directly back to the days when the birth of a child or unplanned surgery could saddle a young couple with a significant debt.

If a doctor is out of OHIP, his or her patients pay regular OHIP

payments plus an additional 30 per cent which the doctor tacks on for services rendered, as recommended by the Ontario Medical Association.

Doctors have tossed around many reasons for opting out of the medical plan but the only reason that rings true is the one given by Dr. J. Bowyer, an associate of the Georgetown hospital.

"It's purely a question of money," he said.

Considering the fact that Revenue Canada statistics put the average income of Canadian doctors — before taxes but after expenses — at a whopping \$47,600 for 1976, it's hard to shed many tears for their plight.

Doctor's incomes have not increased substantially in the last few years but whose have? A thing called the AIB has been hanging around limiting wages hikes to close to six per cent for almost everyone. We venture that a six per cent wage hike on \$47,600 is a little easier to take than six per cent of \$10,000, a position many Canadians have been in during these AIB years.

When one considers the huge public investment in a doctor's career from all of us, in the form of federal and provincial support of post-secondary education, it doesn't seem out of line to ask doctors to accept 'low' incomes for the public good.

Yet many of these same doctors are now threatening to leave the country for the U.S. if they are not permitted to jack up their fees by the 30 per cent recommended by the OMA.

Certainly the OHIP program has problems with it but the way to deal with the problem is to find ways to remedy OHIP not scrap it. Public corporations and programs do not by definition have to be flawed or mismanaged, it is up to the voters to ensure they have a government that can properly administer the public programs under their charge. It is the government's responsibility to find ways to make the OHIP program work.

One of these ways would be to simply remove the alternative of opting out of the health care plan. If works that way in Quebec and there doesn't seem to be any major exodus of doctors out of that province.

Locally the Halton District Health Council does not consider the OHIP dropout rate a serious problem. In fact, they have had no discussions on the problem. We believe it is imperative for the local health council to take its lead from the Peel Health Council which is currently studying the impact of doctors opting out in that region. They will be presenting their findings to the regional council.

The Halton health council should prepare a similar study and the region should be ready to take a firm stand based on its findings.

United Church comment

Thankless work

"UNCHURCHED EDITORIAL"
Sir William Oster, the Canadian physician who was one of the makers of modern medicine, said in one of his essays: "Happiness lies in the absorption in some vocation which satisfies the soul".

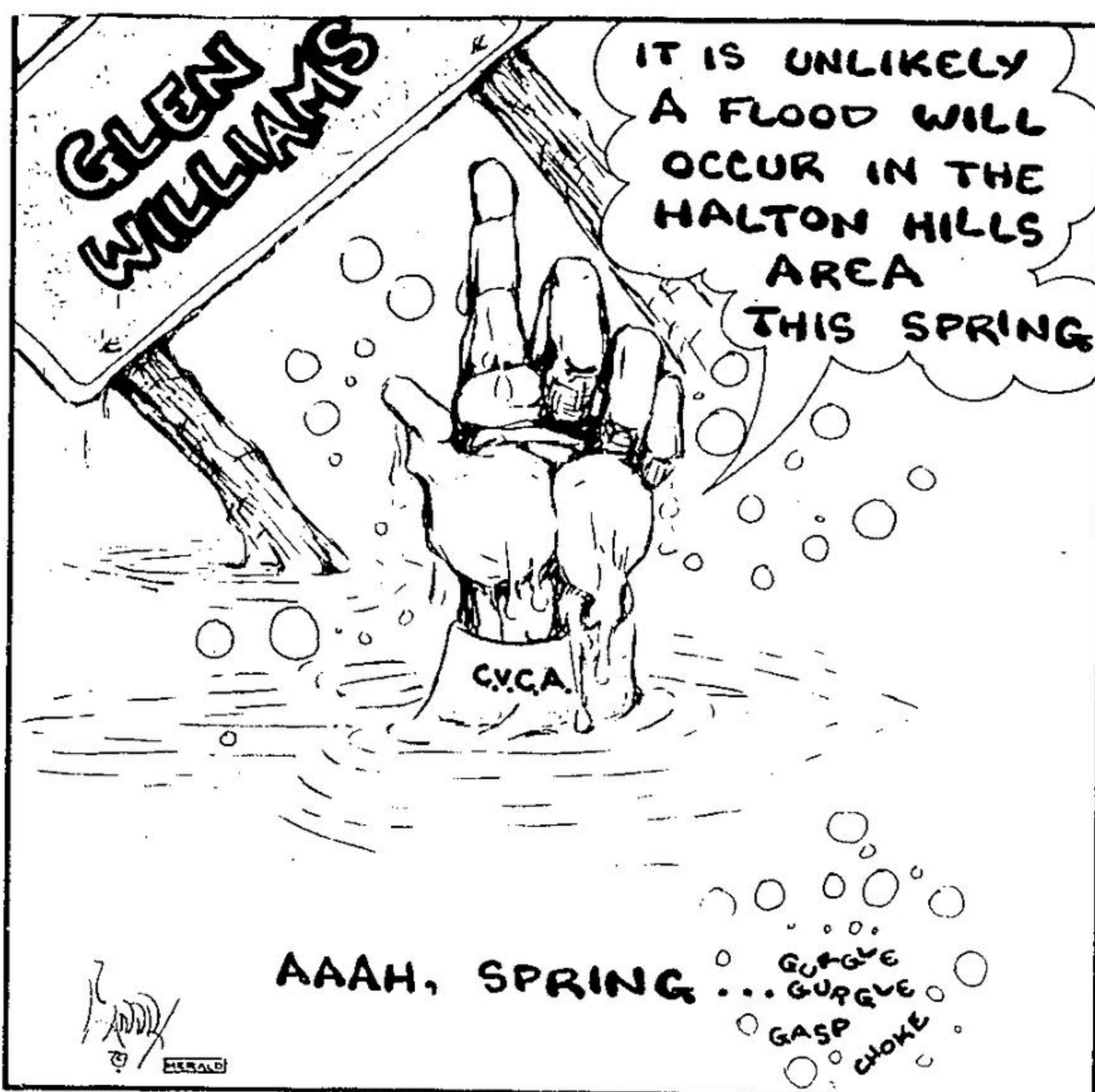
Yes, of course. But the kinds of rigidity which many people today must face in their work are enervating and demoralizing and terribly frustrating. For many there is little satisfaction, little fulfillment, in their daily work. For them work is primarily an ordeal that must be undergone in order to make money for the basic necessities of life and for leisure-time activities in which some personal fulfillment may be found.

We who find fulfillment in our work must resist the temptation to be over-critical of those work is dull or distasteful, those whose work consists mainly of routines which can put callouses on the heart as well as on the hands, those who labor merely for existence and for the leisure in which they can find their main fulfillment.

A few years ago a team of social scientists predicted that in the year 2000 the general pattern of work in the developed parts of the world will be one of a seven and a half hour work day instead of eight, with only four working days a week instead of five and only 39 working weeks per year compared to the present 50. In the face of all that is now happening in our society, that seems a fairly reasonable forecast. Our society is already becoming leisure-oriented in many ways.

Dr. Viktor Frankl, one of the more influential psychiatrists of our time, points out that "Boredom is now causing, and certainly brings to psychiatrists, more problems to solve than is distress." Bertrand Russell once said, "Boredom is a vital problem for the moralist, since at least half the sins of mankind are caused by fear of it".

In an age of increasing leisure for more people art and music and drama and literature and sports become increasingly significant in our society.



Ontario Hydro's power export reverses one of oldest policies



Queen's Park
By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau Of The Herald

TORONTO — Openly, if a little hesitantly, the Ontario government is reversing one of the oldest and most venerable policy positions in provincial history.

We are going to try to export power on a permanent basis to the United States. On Nov. 9, 1976, then energy minister Dennis Timbrell repeated in the legislature the long-standing Tory position that exporting power is not an Ontario Hydro goal.

"It is not now; it has never been; it never will be. We do export power but on an interruptible basis only."

That means power which is in temporary surplus locally can be sold outside the province, but if demand picks up here sales cease.

New realities, however, are undermi-

ning Timbrell's dogmatic statement, the chief factor being the unexpected decline in energy demand we're now experiencing.

TWO PLANTS
Hydro built, and is still building, to meet a greater demand than we're currently experiencing, leaving the province with power far in excess of what is required for the next decade.

One solution might be to cancel projected nuclear plants at Bruce and Darlington (eight reactors in all), but there are two very vital reasons why that's foolish.

A sudden upward shift in demand for a few years down the road would leave us beached like some energy-dry whale suffering blackouts and brownouts.

Even assuming current consumption and a permanent surplus there is an important argument which favors going ahead with planned facilities.

Treasurer Frank Miller put it in a nutshell when he noted there is a "trend-endous impact from Ontario Hydro projects, not only on the communities in which they are located, but also on industries which supply materials and equipment for these projects."

TOTAL COLLAPSE
In fact, there is a critical production level below which our fledgling nuclear industry must not fall if it is not to collapse.

Yet going ahead with building could

mean a permanent power surplus. What should be done about it?

Retiring Hydro chairman Robert Taylor said bluntly, "let's look at power exports, not just as a profitable way to use our present reserves, but for the long term as a continuing industrial policy."

And Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Tom Wells spelled it out in even greater detail last week.

"Maybe Hydro should capitalize more fully on the export market. Why not earn some U.S. dollars and use them to pay off U.S. debts?"

TWO DANGERS
And referring to Canada's tendency to export raw materials he asked "why not export the finished product (electricity) for the benefit of Ontario power consumers and Canada as a whole?"

The uranium, the plants, and the nuclear technology are all Canadian in origin.

Two reasons lurk on any export horizon, though.

One, which exists today, is that Hydro can't find any American utility willing to buy energy on long-term contracts.

The second is what happens if energy demands surge here and Ontario has brownouts while continuing to export power to America?

That would be political dynamite, and is the historical reason we've never exported in the past.

Election makes it difficult to ignore personal publicity



Ottawa Report
By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau Of The Herald

It would be much easier to ignore the domestic problems of politicians, but with an election looming it is exceedingly difficult to overlook the tidal-wave of personal publicity now washing over Prime Minister Trudeau.

And more is coming, probably in the midst of the campaign, as the irrepressible Margaret Trudeau unleashes her painfully-publicized book, Beyond Reason. From what we hear — and we are hearing a great deal these days — Pierre Trudeau is going to be reminded of many intimate moments as he stumps the country talking about national unity and energy costs.

No other Canadian prime minister has ever had to cope with such a delicate problem. But then no other Canadian prime minister was a single parent, divorced or separated. And while it would be nice if we stopped talking about it and left the poor prime minister alone, we are obviously looking at a problem that could easily affect Trudeau's ability to govern.

While we might like to leave the impression that we are not interested in his personal problems, I think we'll all be keeping a close eye on the way the prime minister copes with copious copy now flowing from his estranged wife.

OPES WELL
And so far, it would appear, Trudeau is coping very well indeed. In fact, from the day he got married in 1971, the prime

minister has displayed great dignity, and occasional tolerance, in dealing with domestic matters. He has never criticized and, publicly at least he has always indicated he had a sympathetic understanding of her own, sometimes inconsistent viewpoints.

But I think it's fair to say the favor hasn't been returned. In her latest outburst in London, Margaret says that she left her husband because "he cursed me, gave me nothing to do, treated me like the most worthless woman ever hatched on this earth". She said that "he wouldn't see that I didn't just want a dumb marriage, to be nothing but a decoration at his table".

At times, during the spate of recent interviews, Margaret also talks about more personal matters, like not sharing a bed with her husband. She talks about some of the official guests that came to Sussex Drive during her marital stay there — some of the remarks are critical and she mentioned how "furious" her husband became when she smoked marijuana in the official residence. She even tattled on a Mountie who, she alleges, gave her license to hide the smell of marijuana.

PM RESTRAINED
I don't know why, at this particular time, with her husband minding the kids and trying to hype himself for an election campaign, that Margaret would suddenly take the entire British press into her confidence. But I assume she has the sales of her forthcoming book in mind.

There must be some reason why she is willing to sit down with these various reporters and describe how she contemplated committing suicide during the marriage, or how she likes having her back rubbed or how she doesn't collect any alimony from her husband. She must have realized that her husband wouldn't like her discussing the Royal Family as she did — "Charles is so amusing and sexy and he flirts so beautifully..."

After the latest batch of Maggie's memoris hit the newsstands, the prime minister was asked at a news conference about his reactions.

Halton's History

From our files

COLD SNAPS HIT
...THIRTY YEARS AGO — Council set the 1949 tax rate at 64 mills (an increase of four mills over 1948). The estimated gross revenue is \$132,086, with income of \$36,099. There will be an increase from \$7,100 to \$8,900 in wages paid to town employees, due to the hiring of an extra man.

Red Skelton's spy in a Union suit with a southern exposure, Red Skelton, Arlene Dahl and Brian Donlevy start in MGM's mirth of a nation, "A Southern Yankee".

New cars are sprouting all over town. Like the crocus, they are heralding spring. It is more and more apparent, the traditional car-buying habit is back. For the last ten years, the car buyer bought what he could get. The story is different now. "John Doe" who would not buy anything but Chrysler products can do so now. The same goes for "Bill Smith" who has been buying General Motors cars for 20 years and "Joe Brown", who always strung along with old Henry Ford. Scott's brought out the highly advertised Chev a few weeks ago, now the futuristic Oldsmobile is on its way into the showroom. Saxe's Dodge and DeSoto are invading Georgetown. Bower's will introduce the new Plymouth and Tom Hewson has a maroon Hudson. Georgetown Motors are the headquarters for the new Fords and Monarchs. Indications are this influx of new cars means that Mr. Car Buyer can now go back to his old pre-war habits.

Wow! That drop of the weekend for two consecutive seven degrees below zero was a rude reminder of what we should have had during the winter. It was by no means a fit or proper celebration just before the first day of spring. The average minimum of 4.28 for last week was way below the monthly average for March which is 19.

GYROPLANE PLANNED
...TWENTY YEARS AGO — Five former Avro engineers and technicians are hard at work locally, producing working drawings for a two-seat gyroplane which, if successful, could be the future mass transportation medium for the world. Calling their firm Avion Industries, they have been encouraged by a group of local businessmen who hope to secure the necessary financing to bring the plane into production and to keep the plant located here. It is estimated that such a plant would employ 400 men.

Jack Crichton was elected to serve a second term as president of the Georgetown Chambers of Commerce at the annual meeting held last Wednesday at the North Halton Golf and Country Club. Serving with Mr. Crichton on the 1959 executive are Rev. Alex Calder, vice-president; Les Percival, secretary; Lee King, treasurer; and Charles William Hunter, Walter Biehn, Charles Wray, Dick Licata, Harold McClure and Fred Helson.

From the police news: What causes juvenile delinquency? Lack of parental control is a big contributing factor. The parent who allows his child to wander on the streets at night, or weekends, is as much to blame as his children for the acts they commit. How many parents know where their teenage sons and daughters are on weekends? How many of your children turn over their weekly pay packets, and in return receive their weekly allowance? For sixteen long, hard and lonely years (more in some cases) have you fed, clothes and nursed them in time of sickness — What do you get now? Your son or daughter comes home on payday, tosses you ten, maybe fifteen dollars for washing, ironing, feeding and cleaning up after them. Do you think it's right?

COUNCILLORS GET RAISES
...TEN YEARS AGO — Expressing concern about council's action in voting themselves a \$10 pay increase in salary for council and committee meetings, Ron Snow, 3 Rosefield Drive, asked council on Monday what justification they could give for this. Mayor Emmerson told him that at one time the Municipal Act defined a pay scale but that now it is up to council's discretion to set a rate. Council's workload today, he said, is even greater than when he entered politics a few years ago, and he said there aren't enough evenings in the week to accomplish all that council must do.

A report released this week by Halton director of education J.W. Singleton revealed that in the next three years another 500 teachers will be needed to man classes in this region. The report also revealed immediate plans to step up education services in North Halton.

Halton education trustees were told last week that the county school bill has increased by almost \$4 million over last year — but the preliminary budget did not include provincial grants. Total education spending this year will be almost \$32 million, as opposed to \$28 million last year. The board has 85 schools under its control, with about 45,000 students.

NO UNITY PRAYERS
...ONE YEAR AGO — A 500-kv transmission line from Bruce generating station to Milton will not be rerouted, despite complaints from citizens. Energy Minister Reuben Baetz said Tuesday. In a letter to William Mann, chairman of the Interested Citizens Group (ICG) Baetz said cabinet this week reaffirmed its decision to allow the line to run from the Bruce station through the Niagara Escarpment at Limehouse and connect with the Nanticoke to Pickering line at Milton.

Georgetown real estate broker Art Johnson has been elected president of the Ontario Real Estate Association for 1978. Mr. Johnson is the president of Johnson-Carney Limited, a real estate and mortgage brokerage firm with its head office in Georgetown and 17 branch offices in south-central Ontario. The firm employs almost 250 people, including 200 licenced salespeople.

School children in Halton won't be praying for Canadian unity. Halton board of education Thursday defeated a motion by trustee H.H. Hinton that the board contact the Hastings-Prince Edward Roman Catholic separate school board to obtain a copy of a prayer approximately 4,000 students say once a week to increase Canadian unity.

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