

Ex-chief's new position wastes money

We have to wonder what the Halton Regional Police Commission is up to.

Last week it was announced that the force's controversial chief, Ken Skerrett was resigning from the force and being replaced by James Harding who had been a Deputy Chief with the force for about three weeks.

However, Mr. Skerrett is only resigning from his duties as chief, not from his \$40,000 a year salary.

Despite the fact that the force headed by Chief Skerrett has been one of the most controversy-ridden in Ontario with much of this blame being laid squarely on the shoulders of the senior officers in the force, including Skerrett, the ex-chief will now draw his healthy salary as a consultant with the force. His job, although loosely defined, appears to be to help reorganize the troubled force.

It makes little sense to us to have the man who was in charge while the problems developed now serve in an advisory capacity to help eliminate these same problems.

The force appeared headed in the right direction when an outside consultant was brought in by the Ontario Police Commission to help solve the force's many problems.

The credibility of Mr. Skerrett's appointment suffers a bit with the fact that the ex-chief will no longer have an office at police headquarters. Instead he will generally operate from his

home although he will have still have a desk in the force's Oakville office.

We suspect the police commission was not happy with the ex-chief's work, that would make sense considering the criticism Halton's police force has been subject to. But with the force's founding chief only 18 months away from retirement, it seemed unfair to simply ask for his resignation. On the other hand, changes had to be made to get the force back on its feet. So the commission have chosen the expensive option of maintaining the ex-chief on his old salary but without his previous responsibilities.

It's not a very honest solution to the problem. If the commission was concerned about the ex-chief's future, why did they not simply vote to grant him early retirement at full pension. He would be taken care of in an honorable fashion, but the force's credibility would have remained intact and Halton taxpayers would be spending a little less money.

Advocates of bomb dismantling equipment for the force must cringe when they heard about the ex-chief's hefty salary. They have been forced to come to the commission hat in hand for the less than \$2000 necessary for anti-bomb equipment yet, at the same time, the police commission are willing to put their ex-chief out to pasture at a cost of \$40,000 per year.

It doesn't sound like a responsible way to spend our tax dollars.

Mayor is realistic with budget vote

You have to give Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy credit, he's a realist.

At last week's regional council meeting, final approval was given to the 1979 capital budget. One of the thornier items on the budget was a \$2.3 million allocation for the purchase of yet to be specified industrial land in the region.

Based on previous discussions at the region of land banking, it seems a safe bet that this \$2.3 million will be used for buying land in the Burlington and Oakville areas.

Calling a spade a spade, Mayor Pomeroy more or less told councillors from those populous centers to our south, that he would support the allocation but he hoped his vote

would be remembered when it comes time to vote on an equalized sewer surcharge for the region.

Right now Halton Hills taxpayers are being hit with a sewer surcharge by Halton for work done on the local system. The mayor wants to see this surcharge lifted as soon as possible, in keeping with the same type of thinking that has led to an equalized water rate for Halton.

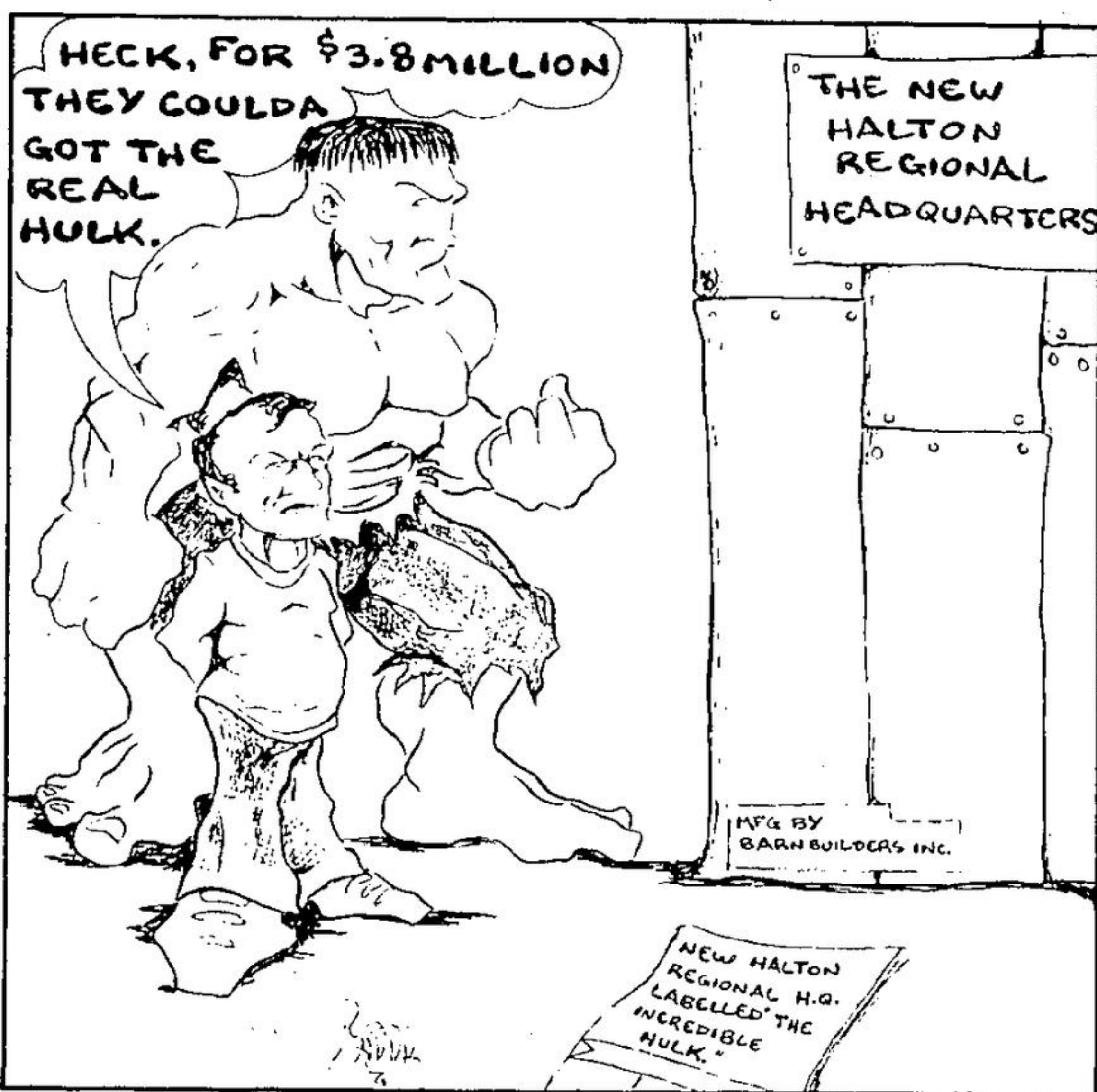
On the two issues the interests of the north and south parts of the region are clearly different. Obviously Halton Hills has little to gain directly by the purchase of industrial land in the south while Oakville and Burlington won't gain if their taxes are used to help subsidize the lifting of the sewer surcharge in the north.

Of course, it's not supposed to happen that way. The region is supposed to be one homogenous unit with common interests throughout. But in an area as large as Halton, with such diverse population makeup, it doesn't always work that way.

In talking 'deals' with the southern councillors, Mayor Pomeroy is simply accepting this reality. Whether Burlington Mayor Bird officially condones the Halton Hills mayor's thinking on this or not, it makes sense to remind our southern co-members of the region when Halton Hills councillors help them get what they need.

We're not saying our regional councillors should sell their vote to the highest bidder and trade off their votes for future favors. But it does make sense to do as the Mayor has done and remind the Burlington-Oakville councillors when Halton Hills representatives are willing to bite the bullet and vote strictly for the benefit of the south.

Let's hope they remember this when it comes time to vote for the equalized sewer surcharges.



Fun times in Ottawa during the transfer of power



Ottawa Report By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau
Of The Herald

While the transfer of power may be a serious, or sombre, business for Joe Clark, Pierre Trudeau and their assorted officials, these are marvellous days to be on the fringes of official Ottawa, looking in from the outside.

There hasn't been such a carnival-like atmosphere around Parliament Hill since the great centennial birthday bash of 1967. And the fact that no one seems to know exactly what's happening only adds to the enjoyment.

Ottawa may be accustomed to changing-of-the-board ceremonies, but changing-of-the-board displays are something else. Most of the spectators have changed themselves since the last display in 1963, and that was a relatively minor show, since the Conservatives had been in power for only six years at the time. It was a case of the Liberals assuming what they considered to be their rightful place.

Probably many of the Tories felt the same way about returning to opposition. But this is a full-scale ceremony, offering something for everyone.

For those with a sadistic streak, there

are the squirming mandarins, trying to look unconcerned as the incoming Tories say funny things about their futures. Most have served so long under Liberal masters they don't know quite how to behave these days.

SECRET SMILES

For those who enjoy unbridled gaiety, it's worth watching the secretaries of Tory MPs who have moved into the cabinet. All secretaries obviously want to work for a cabinet minister, with the various perks of office, including world travel.

For those preferring humor, there were over-eager cabinet hopefuls, who kept telling the press about their availability to serve.

One of these was Senator Claude Wagner who, during the election campaign, aided the Conservative cause by offering the view that only one or two Tories would be elected in Quebec. This occurred while Clark was desperately trying to convince everyone that the figure might be closer to 60. Anyway, despite this little variance, Wagner wanted to make it clear he was free to serve.

"No kidding," said a Clark aide. From the tone, I guessed then that Wagner wouldn't make it this time.

Down the street from Parliament Hill, reporters and photographers clustered around Joe Clark's office, trying to build a cabinet from the line-up of visitors. It was great fun while it lasted, but at the end of one day, the cabinet would seem to consist of maverick MP Tom Cossitt, defeated MP Jean Piggott, two Mounties and a Liberal messenger.

NO EXPECTATIONS

Another great sideshow was being

staged by those Tory MPs who wanted to convince everyone they didn't expect a cabinet appointment in the first place. "I'd be the most surprised man in Ottawa if I were appointed," said one, as he drank his sixth cup of coffee in a parliamentary cafeteria. I haven't thought about it."

Later, in an unguarded moment, he said that "If I don't get something good out of this (cabinet formation) I am taking the whole bloody summer off."

That's more like it.

"Hey," said a secretary as he tried to squeeze in with the latest transition story. "You should have seen the look on Jim Coul's face (he's Trudeau's principle secretary) as he looked at his new office space in the opposition office. My God, it was fun watching the agony."

An aide to a Liberal MP had a different agony story. "How can I get any work done when Tory secretaries keep coming in with measuring tapes to check out our office?"

All of Parliament Hill is in glorious turmoil. And even the accommodation problem can't be settled until the parties appoint new whips. There are nearly 300 ministerial employees who could be unemployed with the departure of the Liberals, and there seem to be twice that number of Tory sympathizers waiting for offers.

You can spot the Liberal employees who would be willing to switch. They have a standard opener: "Although I was technically employed by the Liberals I have never been a party man and always felt we needed a change."

Ho, ho, ho. These are truly fun times.

Attacking Ontario Hydro is complex but necessary



Queen's Park By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau
Of The Herald

TORONTO — It's hard to tell whether Liberal leader Stuart Smith is winning any political brownie points with the general public for his day-in-day hammering away at Ontario Hydro.

But even if he's not, and the complexity of the subjects he's tackling probably turns people off, the affair of the broken boilers is fascinating.

The manufacturers, Babcock and Wilcox, were awarded the contract to supply boilers for Pickering B nuclear station, only during a heat treatment process the tubing was crimped.

Repairs will cost \$35 million. To find out what happened, and why, and who should pay for it, the Liberals have had Ontario Hydro's annual report referred to a legislative committee.

Headlines or not, this is the nitty-gritty stuff which sensible opposition parties have to dig away at.

WAY BEHIND

It's not what you say. It is the way you say it.

Community and Social Services Minister Keith Norton stirred up a furor by suggesting men delinquent in their child support payments should be sent off to work camps in northern Ontario.

Family court figures show \$32.9 million in arrears and still growing. Norton obviously wanted to draw attention to the problem which his work camp idea certainly did, drawing page one headlines.

Just calling such men irresponsible in the usual mild Norton way ("figuratively speaking, they should be banished from society") wouldn't have drawn any notice. Sometimes a little hyperbole can be a good thing.

Not believing everything you read in the newspapers is such wise old advice it has become a cliché.

But it needs re-stating every now and then.

Two newspapers used a quote supposedly taken from a letter Premier William Davis sent the head of the transit union in Toronto.

Referring to the idea of legislating the drivers back to work if they went on strike, it said "I don't like to intervene in the free collective bargaining process, but

if the public of Toronto is inconvenienced I have no choice but to act."

NOT TRUE

I first heard the quote while sitting on a bus as two drivers discussed it, and was more amazed by it than anything.

If there is one thing Bill Davis doesn't do, it is make blunt statements like that in touchy situations where negotiations are still going on.

The premier has made a career of blurring the sharp edges of controversy. In fact, no such quote existed in Davis' letter, which contained nothing more than his usual let's-work-it-all-out-together optimism.

But the bus drivers took it as gospel. The power of the press to invent is a little frightening.

CONE clarifies

Recent news reports that the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment and ratepayer groups have united to fight the Escarpment Commission have been considerably exaggerated, according to Mrs. Lyn MacMillan, Chairman of CONE. Mrs. MacMillan points out that while the CONE charter favours fair treatment of landowners, it also stressed support for strong protective measures and public appreciation of Escarpment resources.

"While our meetings have been cordial and productive, and we can find agreement in many areas, CONE has not called for rescinding the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, nor for the demise of the Niagara Escarpment Commission before a plan is produced. Such decisions on our part would be premature, before full discussions with the CONE Executive and member groups."

From the ongoing discussions with NECRA and NENRA, CONE identifies several major points on which agreement seems probable: "First, the pressing need for adequate government funding to complete acquisition of key areas along the Escarpment. Second, the desirability of a return to local control to implement whatever Escarpment plan is produced. Third, the need to consider the social and economic effects of the Escarpment plan on landowners and municipalities. And fourth, that public access to private land must be totally at the discretion of the landowner."

"We have been impressed by the genuine concerns of the ratepayer groups and their willingness to search for acceptable solutions," says Dr. Duncan McEwen, CONE Vice-chairman.

For more information contact: Mrs. Lyn MacMillan - 485-5821 or Mr. Ron Reid - 444-8419.

Halton's History

From our files

OIL WORKER INJURED
THIRTY YEARS AGO—Mr. and Mrs. Martin Cummins received word that their son, William, who is employed with an oil firm in Bahrain, Arabia, on the Persian Gulf, had been badly burned in an other explosion. The family are anxiously awaiting further word and his friends in town are hopeful that his injuries are not too serious. Mr. Cummins spent some time in town last summer while on vacation and on his return to the Middle East married a French girl in France.

On Sunday in St. Alban's Church of England, Glen Williams, Alan Williamson Young, son of Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Young, was christened by his great-grandfather, Rev. N.A.F. Bourne of Toronto. The baby wore the christening robe of his great-grandmother's family.

The Booster Party in the park on Friday night was a great success. It was sponsored by the Lions Club to raise funds to send the Girls Pipe Band to the Lions Convention in New York City in July and while final figures have not been tallied it would appear a sizeable surplus will be available for other Lions activities such as the Stay at Home Camp.

FIRE KILLS WORKER

TWENTY YEARS AGO—An accident in the boiler room of Provincial Mill proved fatal to one of the mill's employees, George Kovacs, of 61 John Street E. Mr. Kovacs was taken to Guelph General Hospital after flames from combusting gases burned him about the head and chest while he was tending a furnace. He died early Monday morning.

The annual London-to-Brighton tour, a marathon made yearly by the antique cars of the Vintage Car Club of Canada, will pass through Georgetown this year and interested localities will be able to inspect some of the aged automobiles when they make a brief stop at Chuck Tyler's BA station on Guelph Street at the eastern town limits.

From the column "Controversial Corner" by Ian Cass: Recent information from the United States has revealed a horrifying development in the current trend towards education. In Rochester, boys were given a course in homemaking. In California, students were given school credits for working in a supermarket in Maryland, a course in dry-cleaning may be taken at one of the schools. Another New York school is proud of the fact that it has five gymnasiums, a retail store and a classroom devoted to "living"—whatever that may be. In Canada, we cannot avoid the influence of progress or degeneration which takes place south of the border. How far off the rails have we gone in the same direction?

From the Herald classifieds: "Completely furnished, just move in and enjoy this three-bedroom brick bungalow, recreation room, storms, decorated, fenced and sodded, near Harrison School. \$58 monthly plus taxes."

A building fund and stewardship canvass for St. George's Anglican Church will be launched Thursday at a dinner to which all members of the parish have been invited. The dinner will take place in Knox Church Hall. The church has engaged Methods Association for Church Finance to supervise the canvass which is designed to raise funds for a new parish hall.

EYE-CATCHING HOUSE

TEN YEARS AGO—An experimental house at the corner of Edward and Byron Streets has caught the eye of many a passerby, with its unusual construction. The house is being built by General Concrete Ltd., as an experiment. It is new type of construction, of pre-stressed concrete, with outside and inside dividing walls all made of concrete.

Halton East MPP James Snow said he cannot fully accept the decision to "go slow on the new GO service" because of development that is shaping up in the north part of Halton and Peel Counties. Two weeks ago, a Roberts report outlined a series of new north-south GO lines but said it would be premature at this time to consider putting these in service because of heavy capital and operating costs.

Texaco announced it will build a \$100 million refinery in Halton County. The refinery, one of the biggest in Ontario, will be built on the major section of a 720-acre tract of land north of the Queen Elizabeth Way in Burlington. It would be three times larger than British Petroleum or Shell Oil refineries now in the south end of the county.

Ontario Premier John Roberts named backbencher George Kerr, 45, of Halton West riding, to a key cabinet post Thursday and in doing so fulfilled a promise he made during the election campaign. During the campaign, Roberts promised a Halton political rally, "if you send George Kerr to Queen's Park, he will have a place in the cabinet."

FUND-RAISING QUERIED

ONE YEAR AGO—The high cost of replacing a stone which has fallen out of the old Acton town hall prompted finance committee to ask members of Acton's Save the Town Hall committee for a progress report on how well their fund-raising is proceeding. Estimates of \$900 to \$1,000 were offered for replacing a large stone which has fallen out of the face of the old, town hall and remortaring the existing brick work around it.

Given sufficient interest and support from the general public and Georgetown's other service clubs, the Georgetown Rotary Club hoped to approach council by September with plans for a cultural centre for the performing arts in Halton Hills. The club had no intention of undertaking the project alone, said committee chairman Rex Heslop.

The fact that planning bodies ignore their viewpoint was one of the major concerns voiced by those present at the rural development workshop in Milton Saturday. "I don't know what they say is true," says Bill Tom, vice-principal at Georgetown District High School. "What concerns me is the fact that the feeling exists."

CN Railway is planning to close the passenger agency at the Georgetown station but the company has no immediate plans to tear down the building, Mike Matthews, a spokesman for CN, said before any decision is made to tear down the station, several agencies and authorities will be consulted.

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