

New position for Russ Miller encouraging

As Herald readers were noting this newspaper's disappointment over Halton region's failure to produce on-time solutions for its ongoing garbage crisis last Wednesday, regional council was in fact taking positive but forced action to rectify the situation.

That action, of course, was necessitated by the sudden resignation of Oakville Coun. Terry Mannell as chairman of the region's solid waste management (SWM) committee. Council members, and particularly those who voted against immediate implementation of a proposed waste management system, must have winced at the angry words used by Coun. Mannell in resigning.

Nevertheless, their response was prompt and apparently well-motivated: they selected Halton Hills Coun. Russ Miller, a SWM committee member, to replace his Oakville colleague.

Nothing could delight us more. At both the local and regional levels, Russ Miller has impressed us as a hard-working (full-time, no less) and conscientious elected official who does an invariably commendable, often excellent job representing Ward 2 ratepayers on town council and Halton Hills as a whole on regional council.

A former Domtar employee, Coun. Miller decided to devote himself exclusively to municipal work following that company's demise several years ago and now divides his working hours, night and day, among a variety of boards and committees.

The Esqueping councillor is still reminded on occasion of his late-night mail round a couple of years ago during which he personally dropped bulletins in the mailboxes of his rural constituents to keep them informed about an

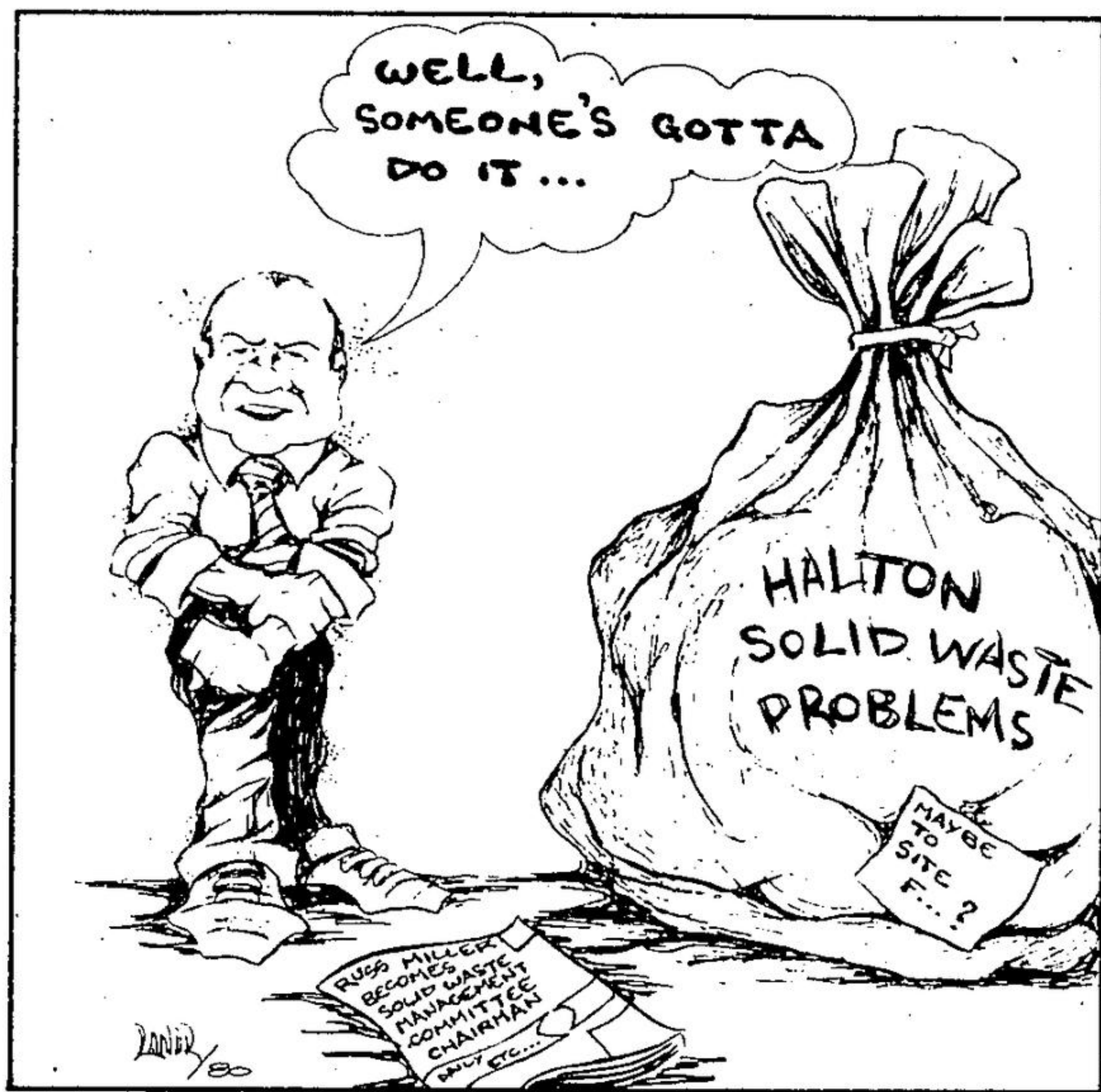
ongoing issue which was then of major concern. Fellow council members still jokingly refer to him as the postman from time to time, acknowledging his ability (and willingness) to outdo the local press in keeping residents up to date.

Late last summer, Coun. Miller won our respect by launching a serious attack against the SWM committee, of which he was a frustrated member, for failing to heed Halton Hills' warnings about the impending garbage transfer crisis. Less than two months before the Georgetown dump was to close, he pointed out in strong terms, the region had still not met its responsibility to provide north Halton with a transfer facility that would offset Halton Hills' temporary lack of landfill facilities.

About the same time, complaints from farmers and conservation officials tipped some councillors off about the improper disposal of sewage sludge. Coun. Miller led the way toward a solution, too often encountering bureaucratic obstacles, but overcoming all without exception.

We take pride in noting that there is no other person in all of Halton region better able to take control of the SWM committee. Hopefully, Coun. Miller may be able to do some persuading at the town council level and find the cooperation he needs from the mayor and other Halton Hills regional councillors to get the waste management system off the ground.

Not that we're trying to put Coun. Miller on the spot, but suddenly, we feel very reassured that the right kinds of things will start happening with Halton's biggest headache, the safe and efficient disposal of several million tons of garbage.



Classic confrontation brewing over PC's secret surveys



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

When it comes to Joe Clark's future as leader of the Progressive Conservative party, I am no blazing authority. But when it comes to that recent party caucus - the first since the Tory's electoral defeat - I feel absolutely confident in suggesting we should cheerfully ignore every comment made about Mr. Clark's future.

"Tories united under Clark" exclaimed one headline. "Tories close ranks behind beaten Clark," shouted another. "Caucus comes to praise Clark, not to bury him," was another breathless announcement.

It was very inspirational. Treasury Board President Sinclair Stevens, bursting with enthusiasm, was quoted as saying "there is no doubt Mr. Clark will lead the Tories into a new election."

This is a new party, said Sports Minister Steve Paproski. And Labor Minister Lincoln Alexander solemnly declared that "as long as I am around there will be no challenges to him (Clark)."

There was more, much more. In this post-election display of unity, Finance Minister John Crosbie said that "it was all tickety-boo as far as leadership is concerned." Other MPs talked about a very productive caucus and Energy Minister Ray Hnatyshyn even went so far as to say that the whole exercise was "an uplifting endorsement" for Mr. Clark.

ATE INSTEAD I just mention a few of the comments I have read - to convey the impression that the Tory MPs said nice things about their leader. These things obviously must be said, and it's the sacred duty of the media to transmit these observations to an interested public. In the normal course of events I, too, would have been waiting outside the caucus chamber to catch these uplifting quotations, but I've never regarded post-election caucuses as normal events, so therefore I detached myself from the mob that day.

Actually, I went across to fill and ate some pork hocks. This has nothing to do with losing interest in my job, it's just that I have this hang-up about the collective views of politicians following an electoral defeat.

Having faithfully recorded such comments since 1962, when a losing Lester Pearson was given a standing ovation, and a victorious John Diefenbaker - whose party managed to lose 92 seats in the process - was given a resounding rendition of "Hail to the Chief," I have decided that a post-election caucus, as an indicator of future events, rates several notches below a feed of Quebec pork hocks.

My research is still incomplete, but I still haven't been able to locate one significant paragraph coming from the first meeting of a just-defeated party. Six months after the election, of course, it's a different story.

CANADIAN TRADITION There is this great Canadian tradition of devoting the first post-election caucus agenda to an expression of loyalty to the humbled leader and again we have faithfully followed this course. The Conservative MPs who trooped out of that chamber with their I-love-Joe proclamations, differed little from those who emerged from a 1965 caucus pledging undying loyalty to Mr. Diefenbaker. As that leader himself put it, "there was an amazing display of support."

We all know what happened a few months later. More recently, there was that standing ovation for Pierre Trudeau following his 1979 defeat - it brought tears to his eyes - but that didn't stop subsequent talk of replacing him. And if you go way back to 1957, when the Liberals were unexpectedly whopped, there was nothing but praise for Louis St. Laurent in the post-election caucus. By all accounts, the Grits were game for another battle under the doddering and defeated leader. Opinions changed rather quickly after that.

Perhaps all those oaths of loyalty we heard for Joe Clark will remain in effect until the next election - I just don't know - but in view of our unique post-election traditions, I would wait a few months before carving them in granite.

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO-Six Milton district farmers appeared in court last week charged with failing to file income tax returns for the years 1946 to 1948. Three were convicted and assessed the minimum penalty of \$25 and costs or 15 days. One charge was dismissed and two others remanded until a later date.

At a special meeting of North Halton District High School Board in Milton on Monday, members present unanimously agreed on a new distribution of costs between the five municipalities which make up the area. The two Milton members were not present at the meeting, and ratification by them will be sought at the next board meeting. The new agreement will mean a saving to Esqueping of about \$3,900 and to Nassagaweya of \$400, the towns of Georgetown, Acton and Milton paying the extra.

At the Roxy Theatre: "She's a midnight girl in a 9 o'clock town! Nobody's as good as Bette when she's bad! Bette Davis and Joseph Cotten in Beyond the Forest"

TWENTY YEARS AGO-Preparation of a bylaw for a December vote on return to a ward system of elections passed by a 5-4 majority at Monday's council meeting when a motion for this was proposed by Coun. Gunn and Reeve Sargent.

Georgetown council has refused an application of Delrex Developments for the release of more residential building land at the present time. Action followed Monday night report by Coun. Ian Cass and a recommendation arising, from a March 5 meeting of the industrial and town planning committee which he heads.

More police protection at hockey games was urged by Coun. Harrison and Coun. Hunter at Monday's Council meeting. Coun. Harrison, who is also a hockey club official, said that the club has dropped its policy of paying off-duty police men for such protection this year. Police chairman Kelly said the police chief had told him that his men are instructed to visit the arena during their duty rounds, but not to stay there to the detriment of other parts of town.

A newspaper advertising campaign to convince Halton County residents to have polio inoculations before summer is planned by Dr. Archibald Bull, county medical officer of health. He said last week that the county health unit had already inoculated 33,000 of Halton's 106,000 population.

Gunner William Darby, one of 11 gunners who entered the Army when he was 16, is proving the value of his Soldier Apprentice training, while serving in Canada's NATO brigade. A Georgetown resident, he has completed the two year apprentice course and is now a member of the 1st Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, stationed at Hemer, Germany.

The Badge of Fortitude, a rarely-presented honor in guiding, was presented by Mrs. V.A. Filer, area commissioner to Diane McColgan, at a recent ceremony in St. John's Church Hall. Diane, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom McColgan, was awarded the badge for her cheerfulness and determination during a prolonged illness last year.

TEN YEARS AGO-Despite an estimated \$4,000,000 increase in this year's budget, the Halton County board of education predicts a decrease in the mill rate for education purposes over the county generally. Preliminary estimates set current expenditures at \$35.7 million, compared to \$31.6 million last year. The expected decrease in the mill rate is due to increased per pupil grants from the province, especially at the secondary level.

If pupils of Halton County schools want to drink milk, they'll pay for it. Halton county board of education took no action last week when trustee R.E. Goodin suggested at a regular board meeting that "There should be free milk for all the students in Halton County."

"Build a better mouse trap," is the advice commonly given to aspiring millionaires. Two local men, K.L. Duncan of Duncan Associates in Brampton, a Georgetown resident, and Hank Levers of Levers Engineering have taken the advice, but not quite literally - they have built a better fly trap. The fly-trap kills by electrocution, doing away not only with the swatter, but more importantly with the dangerous insecticides now known to be a hazard to all forms of life.

Students now attending occupations classes in the Georgetown area District High School will be transferred to General Brock Special Vocational High School in Burlington in September. W.K.M. Armstrong, superintendent of special education and student services, told the Halton board of education that while their best efforts were made, Georgetown and Milton high schools could not offer the variety in occupations classes with only 83 students in the classes.

ONE YEAR AGO-hydro-electricity consumers in the rural areas of Halton region will pay cheaper power rates if a new proposal to restructure the region's servicing areas gains support at Queen's Park. A study report released this week by a 15-member regional committee recommends January 1, 1980 as the start-up date for the restructuring and requests the provincial government grants to help offset the initial costs of the program.

The former head of Halton Regional Police special weapons team is urging the formation of a tactical assault squad following the shooting of a Halton Regional Police officer in Burlington Thursday. Chief Ken Skerrett has said he opposes the concept of a SWAT team, but he would be willing to start up the special weapons team, which was put into limbo last fall because the 13 men on the team could not train regularly and didn't have outdoor range facilities.

Local advocates of a cultural centre in Halton Hills have turned to a Burlington group who have succeeded in having such a facility built for some pointers on how it is done. Getting a cultural centre built requires people who will stick their necks out and who will remain committed to the project until the building is finished; that is the assessment of Betty Dawson, who was on the first board of directors of the Burlington Cultural Centre, and was involved with the project almost from the beginning.

Letter from the Editor

Paul Dorsey

Thoughts about awards and competitiveness

I suppose it's needless to say, but it was quite a thrill for me attending my first newspaper convention this past weekend at the Hotel Toronto, which, by the way, is within staggering distance of the plush, comfortable Toronto Press Club, another spot I got to see for the first time.

The Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association's annual convention is a combination learning and social experience for delegates that is invariably highlighted by two separate awards ceremonies during which notable achievements in journalism and advertising during the previous year are recognized.

As reported elsewhere in this newspaper issue, The Herald captured four first-place awards in its circulation category for an overall second-place standing, while former reporter Maggie Hannah arranged for us to receive a prestigious Premier Award by writing an in-depth feature on farming as a (sometimes) viable business. It turned out that was exactly what the judges like to see.

The Herald and the Georgetown Independent were two of only four entries in this year's Circulation Class 6 competition, a fact which disappointed judges and participants alike. An OWNA brochure detailing points awarded in each aspect of the competition explained why the Independent took a first-place standing over The Herald (we were number two), despite the fact we took four "Best" awards to their three.

It seems the judges found enough reason to award higher points for the Independent's editorial page, sports pages and classified advertising that the greater point-spread, so to speak, gave our "competitor" an overall edge.

I have to admit I was frankly surprised at the judge's decision concerning sports pages, particularly in light of last year's outstanding effort by former sports editor Tony Panacei (now sports editor at our Barrie affiliate, the Examiner).

At the same time, however, I'd like to publicly break with unofficial precedent and congratulate independent staffers for their fine showing. Those on hand at the convention Friday were indeed gracious in conversation with Herald representatives, perhaps demonstrating again what I suspect is a general, mutual absence of competitive aggression in the Georgetown community.

While competitiveness is an integral part of the newspaper business and must be maintained in any market, I personally feel relieved that the kind of go-for-broke aggression that characterized larger newspapers and resulted in outright hostility among reporters in nearby markets does not exist here.

As was amply detailed for us by a newspaper veteran we chatted with at the Toronto Press Club, that kind of aggression between the big-city dailies of the 1940s and '50s created some downright ghastly instances of pseudo-journalism, all in the interest of getting the scoop of the day.

Thank God that type of irresponsibility is no longer a daily fare among competing newspapers today.

A last toot of the horn: in the final analysis, I suppose Georgetown weekly readers should consider themselves remarkably well-served with two award-winning newspapers, both substantially different in scope and appearance, catering to their needs.

Let us know if and when there's more we can do.

Joe Clark's caucus support same as given outgoing Dief



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

A classic confrontation is brewing here between the cabinet and the legislature over the government's refusal to release the contents of 23 secret public opinion polls.

Done for 12 ministries in the year prior to April, 1979, the polls were used by the government in the development of policy.

Conservative cabinet ministers and senior civil servants, for example, knew what the people of Ontario thought of the government's censorship, gambling and liquor policies.

No one else, neither opposition, media, nor notably the taxpayers who paid for the polls, had access to the information, questions or answers.

But now the opposition parties think they have a lever with which to pry the polls loose from their cloak of government secrecy.

Three Liberal and three NDP on the Public Accounts Committee here combined to out vote four Conservative members to ask for a Speaker's Warrant.

BACK SOON They claim the government is in contravention of the Legislative Assembly Act by refusing to give the polls to the committee.

The House resumes March 11, and the committee will likely report two days later.

The chairman will ask the legislature to authorize the Speaker to issue a warrant, which has the same force in law as a court order.

Because the combined opposition outnumber the government the motion will carry, and at that point matters become interesting.

Will the ministers of the Crown defy the will of parliament and still refuse to release the polls?

The government contends publication of the polls would violate the principle that documents used by cabinet in making decisions are traditionally secret.

REPORT DUE It argues in addition that if there is to be any change in the secrecy rules then it should come after the royal commission currently looking at freedom of information reports this spring.

With the second argument one can have a measure of agreement, but the first has no validity at all.

The information the polls reveal is not only useful for formulating policy, but also provides the kind of background material every politician likes to have handy for partisan use.

It is a silly argument to pretend that partisan politics do not play a major role in any cabinet decision.

BEST WAY What better way to frame policy so it fits public preconceptions than to use the results of polls?

A poll on the general awareness of the Foodland Ontario campaign might be non-political, but a poll on public views of economic issues like taxes or inflation is purely political.

By any principle of fairness the polls

should either be charged to Conservative Party coffers or else be available to all.

Unlike other cabinet documents which contain opinions and options, polls, by their very nature, contain neutral material.

How the government uses the polls is its business alone. The polls themselves, however, and their results, must be shared with the opposition and the public who paid for them.

the HERALD
A DIVISION OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS COMPANY LTD
103 MAIN ST. SOUTH, GEORGETOWN, L7G 1E5
WILLIAM EVDOKIMOFF
Publisher & General Manager
PAUL DORSEY
Managing Editor
Phone 877-2201
Second Class Mail Registered No. 0943

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