

Shooting hearing Sept. 15

The trial by Supreme Court judge and jury of Halton Hills' Robert Esplen, 49, charged in the shooting death of 23-year-old Andrew Wysman of Milton, is scheduled to begin in Milton Sept. 15.

Mr. Esplen appeared in Milton provincial court Aug. 25 for a preliminary hearing, the proceedings of which cannot be reported because of the news black-out ordered by Judge Douglas Latimer. Five witnesses, including the victim's brother, addressed the court before the hearing was adjourned to Sept. 15.

At that time, the court will decide whether there is enough evidence to warrant trial by higher court; Mr. Esplen is free on \$100,000 bail.

The accused was charged after Mr. Wysman was shot in the back with a .22 calibre rifle while fishing on Mr. Esplen's farm on Sideroad 10 just off Highway 25.

Monthly budget checks

Regional councillors will be keeping closer tabs on Halton's finances starting next month as council committees begin a monthly scrupulousness of their budgets.

An administration and finance committee recommendation directing the treasury department to study the quarterly financial statements filed by the City of Burlington and the monthly statements used by the police commission was approved by council last Wednesday afternoon.

Under the new "watch-dog" program, the treasury department will be required to analyze the monthly reports submitted to the committees and, in turn, report to the administration and finance committee every four months.

The monthly reports will also forecast anticipated expenditures to the end of the year.

Region petition stalled?

Mike Majic isn't getting the support he expected in Halton for his petition asking the province to abolish regional government in Ontario.

Mr. Majic said last week he expected more support in Halton following the revelation that the region has a deficit of \$700,000 in its 1980 budget.

Mr. Majic began collecting signatures last spring, with a goal of collecting 100,000 names, but so far he has collected only about 7,500.

Mr. Majic's campaign arose out of frustration over property tax increases on his three-acre property in Flamborough Township. The taxes have increased from \$290 in 1973 to more than \$1,000 this year.

In the course of his four-month campaign, Mr. Majic, who was laid off from an Oakville truck assembly plant, has knocked on doors in Mississauga, Brampton, Oakville, Georgetown, Kitchener, Hamilton-Wentworth, St. Catharines and Muskoka.

It is Mr. Majic's intention, once he has gathered 100,000 signatures, to present the petition to Premier William Davis and demand that the province dismantle regional government. He says he will launch a court action if the province fails to act to meet his demands.

So far, about 400 Acton area residents have signed the petition. A few years ago, 2,000 signatures were collected on a similar petition in the Acton area calling for the town to opt out of the region.

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