

Sewer rates issue is electioneering

Regional government in Halton has been a six-year long history of squabbles, and the one that seems to bounce back into the limelight more often than any other issue is uniform sewer and water rates.

It's coming up again today (Wednesday) at regional council, as council discusses a motion from the sewer rate committee to return to the old "charge-back" system whereby each municipality paid for the cost of its own sewer system.

Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy is angry that the committee has approved the motion, and is calling it just another instance of the Oakville-Burlington power block voting against Halton Hills and Milton.

Reading accounts of regional politics in Halton is like studying the American Civil War, when the North fought to keep the country together and the South fought for the right to rule its own house.

Politicians in North Halton have not always been strong supporters of the concept of regional government, but even the most vocal of opponents can't deny that Halton Hills has benefitted from a number of regional services, and most particularly uniform water and sewer rates. Without uniform sewer rates, a Georgetown ratepayer paying \$80 under the sewer surcharge system could have as much as \$100 added to that bill. How much would Burlington taxpayers save on their bill if the region returned to the old system? About \$15.

At the heart of the concept of regional government is the idea of services provided and paid for on a regional basis, providing smaller municipalities with a higher level of service than they might otherwise be able to afford; it could be called equalization payments among the municipalities, with Burlington and Oakville helping to provide services for Milton and Halton Hills.

The northern municipalities often feel a little hard-done-by when it comes to regional services. Roads in Halton Hills and Milton seem to have lower priority than those in Oakville and Burlington. Centralization of some police services have left residents feeling somewhat distanced from the local policemen.

Generally, however, Halton Hills and Milton have benefitted the most from regional government, although Milton residents might disagree when it comes to the choice of a landfill site. So it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that Burlington and Oakville are less than enthusiastic about continuing to support the two smaller municipalities.

The attitude in Burlington and Oakville appears to be, "We didn't ask to be included in regional government, and we can manage very well on our own without regional services."

Halton Hills and Milton didn't ask to be included in regional government either-nobody did. Politicians in Halton Hills have worked hard for the past six years trying to forge a single community identity from three "former" municipalities.

With the uncertain nature of politics, it's difficult to say whether or not regional government is here to stay. The Ontario Liberals occasionally make threatening noises about dismantling the system should they be elected, and it's just possible they would be willing to waste the millions of dollars spent in establishing it. On the other hand, such promises sound good at election time, particularly in regions such as Halton where at any one time, there are at least two groups working for the repeal of regional government.

Halton Hills had its own group at one point, called Actonians for Action, which claimed that forcing Acton to join the municipality of Halton Hills robbed the community of its identity, and gave little or nothing in return except higher taxes and unnecessary services.

The group may be defunct, but the feeling lingers that the public has been had. All Joe Citizen sees is that his tax bill never seems to stop climbing, and that pothole down the road still hasn't been fixed. When he calls the local works department, he's told, "Sorry, that's a regional road."

He doesn't remember that regional government and double-digit inflation arrived at the same time, and so there is no real basis for comparison between county and regional budgets.

He also forgets that the regional system provides services never even dreamed of in the days of the county system. When those services were first established, he may have rejected them as unnecessary, but six years later it's a different story. When budget cutbacks force a reduction in service, he's the first to complain.

The dismantling of regional government has become a political issue all on its own over the last six years, and no doubt this motion to revert to the old sewer system is just another political move by Oakville and Burlington councillors who know they have an election coming up.

It's time politicians stopped trying to make political hay out of past prejudices against regional government and looked to the future. Maybe one or two of the candidates for regional council in the upcoming election will have the courage to tell the voters they intend to make regional government work for the whole region, not make it pay for their municipalities.

Pageant organizers set an example

Opponents of the Miss Junior Halton Hills contest will probably view the poor weather which dogged this year's Georgetown Fall Fair as a form of divine retribution against the fair board for agreeing to allow the contest to be held.

But in spite of the controversy surrounding the fair and the pageant, or perhaps because of it, attendance at this year's fair was higher than last year. Pageant organizer Jim Barrett estimates that between 250 and 300 people watched the contest, braving the chill and the damp to encourage the young contestants.

In spite of threats of people boycotting the fair in order to show their opposition to the contest, it would appear the fair didn't suffer for being embroiled in controversy. In the end, it may have been a big plus. Maybe visitors to this year's fair took a closer look at what the members of the fair board have worked so hard to organize.

The letters to The Herald which opposed the beauty pageant had a similar tone for the most part: the writers commended the Barretts for getting involved with the fair but condemned their proposal.

It is to be hoped that the initiative shown by the Barretts, and the fact they were able to make the beauty contest work in spite of the opposition, might encourage others with new ideas to come forward and take part in the big 135th anniversary celebration next year, when the sun shines and the weather is warm for what will seem like the first time on Fall Fair Day.

All cultures not equal in quality

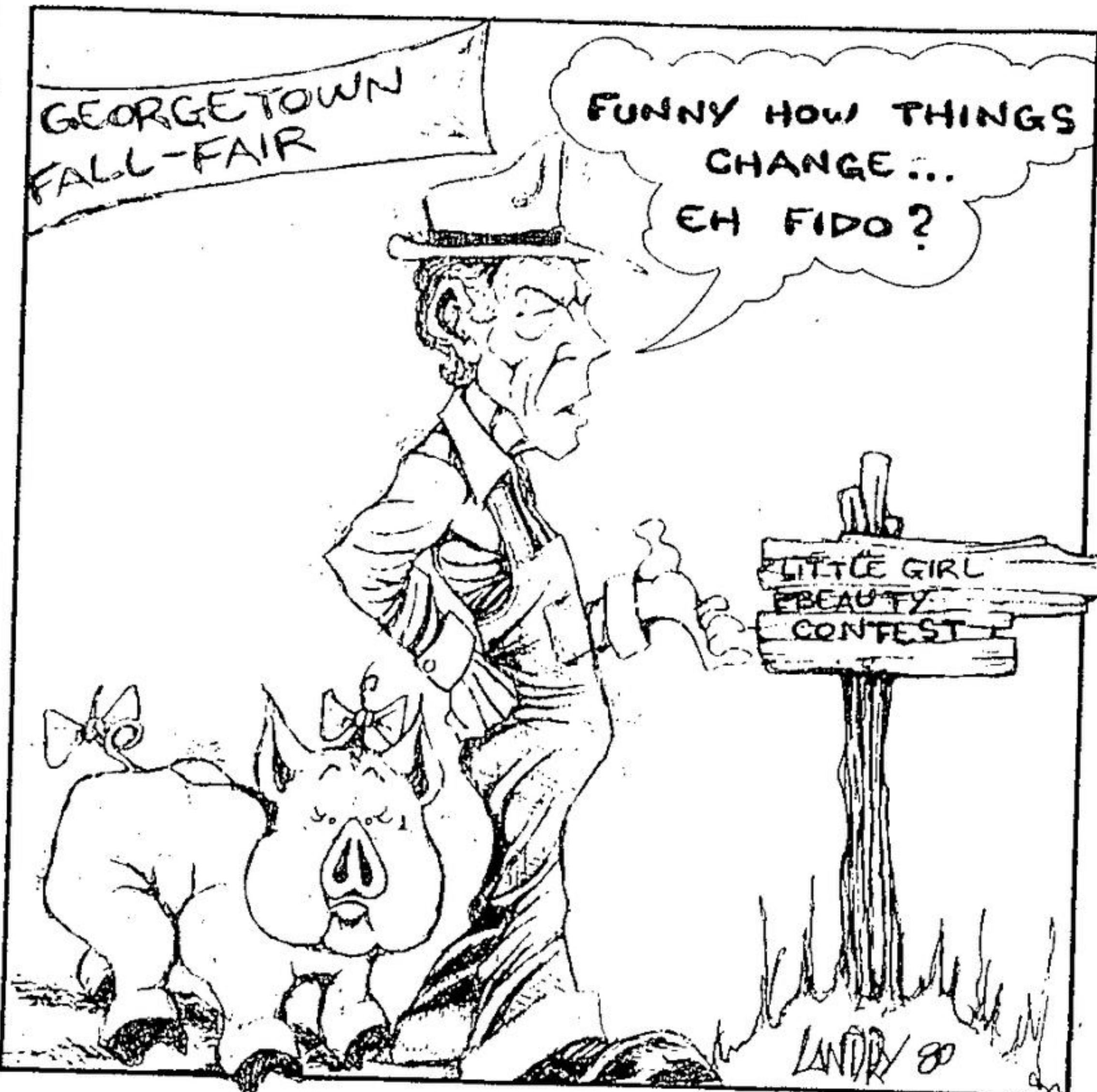
EDITOR'S NOTE: This column was submitted to The Herald by Peter Jackson of Unionville, who hopes it will spark some debate about the issues involved in creating changes in Canada's constitution. Mr. Jackson writes that he is concerned that the country's constitution will be created entirely by governments if people fail to get involved at the grass-roots level.

Multiculturalism is based on the mistaken assumption that all cultures have an equal or great quality, and have much to contribute to our great new society, and that a blending or mixing of cultures will automatically produce a new superior society and culture.

The truth is quite different. The truth is that all people, as individuals, have great potential and, as individuals, can learn the great qualities of the tremendous new society in the new world that we have built over the last 100 years - freedom, progress, opportunity for all, flexibility, creativity; and having learned these new qualities, each individual can become an equal participant in our new society and can help us to make it a still greater society.

The truth is that all other cultures and societies were greatly inadequate in varying degrees and areas, and were elitist, rigid, authoritarian and repressive; and greatly inadequate in freedom, progress and equality of opportunity for all; and therefore, we built a new society in the new world and raised individual freedom, opportunity and equality to great new heights. Many societies and cultures have been influenced by our new society in the new world (and by the similar American society), especially since the Second World War, and have copied parts of it in varying degrees, but all are still significantly behind us in some important areas.

We have already built a great new society in the new world and so we know we are on the right track and that we have the ability to go forward, even in the face of great new problems, and build a still newer and still greater society that will be a beacon and an inspiration to all men, everywhere.



Pepin conspicuously absent from constitutional talks



Ottawa Report

By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau of The Herald

I don't know whether you have noticed, but during this entire hub-bub on the constitution, including the televised federal-provincial conferences and all the subsequent snoring about unilateral action, the familiar face of Jean-Luc Pepin has been conspicuously absent.

Odd, isn't it?

It's not that Pepin should have a key constitutional role in his capacity as transport minister, but considering his experience with the constitution, one would have thought that Prime Minister Trudeau might have called on him once or twice. The least he could have done was to let Pepin sit behind him at the conference so the cameras could have captured him deep in thought.

But the only time I caught sight of the 55-year-old minister was when he announced a possible extension to Ottawa airport which, it seems, may or may not be completed in the next six years.

I assume he was aware there was a federal-provincial constitutional conference in progress—that information was fairly well publicized—but I would be hard pressed to prove even this.

WELL QUALIFIED

What makes it so odd is the fact that Pepin was, just a year or so ago, considered one of the foremost authorities on constitutional change. Who can forget the Pepin-Roberts Task Force on Canadian Unity, which Jean-Luc Pepin co-chaired with John Roberts, the former premier of Ontario. That royal commission went from coast to coast, listening to the views of hundreds of Canadians before handing down comprehensive and far-reaching recommendations for the future of the country. With the possible exception of former senator Eugene Forsey, Pepin was for a time, Canada's most sought-after commentator on constitutional affairs.

And when Prime Minister Trudeau was returned to power following the February general election, it was widely assumed that the bubbling Pepin would be given a key role in reshaping the Canadian constitution. Perhaps, it was frequently mentioned, he would be put in charge of federal-provincial relations. Or perhaps a new portfolio would be created so he could concentrate solely on constitutional matters.

But, as we have learned on many occasions, one shouldn't assume things with the prime minister. What he did was appoint Jean-Luc Pepin as his transport minister, a horribly difficult

assignment that meant becoming familiar with lifeboat regulations and the Crow's West Rates, not to mention extensions to Ottawa International Airport.

NO GRIP

And Pepin took to his new job just like a duck takes to glit ice. When Parliament mercifully recessed, the minister was still slithering and sliding without any apparent grip on his whereabouts. He had developed an uncanny knack for not knowing the answers to questions.

But despite this, one would assume that the prime minister would not overlook his obvious expertise in constitutional matters—and what better forum than that make-or-break federal-provincial conference? Surely his opinions would be more valuable than those of, say, State Secretary John Roberts, whose face frequently filled the camera lens. Admittedly, Pepin's views didn't exactly coincide with those of the prime minister, particularly on language rights, but despite this the transport minister obviously would have a great deal to offer.

But, alas, he didn't get his opportunity. When it comes to matters of the constitution, Prime Minister Trudeau doesn't place any great stock in his support staff. It's sort of a formal photo session with a revolving cast. And Pepin simply didn't make it. "I don't lie easily," he said, "so I won't tell you that I wouldn't have liked to be more involved in it."

That, I figure, is one of his better understatements.

Norton stirs up hornets' nest with attack on social service



Queen's Park

By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau of The Herald

Having to skirmish constantly with money-hungry, status-seeking social services professionals appears to have provoked normally gentle-worded (in public anyway) Community and Social Services Minister Keith Norton.

In an interview with the Globe and Mail, Norton attacked social service professionalism for usurping family duties and roles.

Since the Globe is read by the higher echelons of that profession, he stirred a veritable hornet's nest of response in the letters-to-the-editor column.

And unleashing such discussion was likely his intention.

Norton said "it's terribly presumptuous to believe that a three or four-year degree in social work makes someone more competent in the area of caring and makes families less competent."

Linked with this fear that professionals are diminishing people's sense of self-responsibility is a concern about social service workers' ignorance of economic reality. "It's frustrating and difficult to get

them to understand there are really finite resources available. They have to understand that programs cost money and it has to come from somewhere."

DAY CARE

Norton has been involved in a running battle over social service funding with a number of agencies and groups, the latest and most intense grants for day-care in Metro Toronto.

Child-care professionals, and teachers looking for work, have been agitating to make private day-care illegal on the grounds that such arrangements made by parents place children at risk.

Both for financial and social reasons Norton rejects such a view.

"What makes these so-called professionals any better at providing day-care than a kind, caring mother, who has successfully raised two or three children?" he asked.

"What is wrong with such a person taking in children on a private arrangement?"

Fair enough, especially since subsidized day-care for everyone is a financial impossibility.

GREAT DOUBT

But beyond the hubbub that creeping professionalism would impose upon us, Norton worries that it also "creates a lack of confidence in the competence of normal people to do things."

He stressed loving and caring as the key ingredients in life, and one doesn't need to be a professional to deliver those services.

Not surprisingly, judging from the letters-to-the-editor responses, a

number of social workers disagree.

The quality of their opposition to Norton's views may be weighed by noting their proclivity for using such shudder-producing phrases as the "caring industry" and the "helping professions."

ONE DISSENT

However, Norton did receive some accolades amidst the brickbats.

One 12-year veteran of the social service wrote that, while professionalism is necessary for those in real need, for many people it simply sugar-coats dependency.

Often professionals make it "easier and more acceptable for normal, healthy people to relinquish self-responsibility and to look on the government as a provider, protector, and worst of all, decision-maker in their lives."

And of course, the friendly professional is there to act as guide for, as one letter-writer put it, "reasonable remuneration."

The Herald

welcomes letters to the editor

Halton's History

From our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO—This week's weather report is a clear sheet in the rain column and the week's weather has been just about ideal. Sunday with an 80 degree temperature was only four degrees below the highest ever recorded for October.

District farmers will have fire protection next year of similar quality to that enjoyed in Halton towns if plans under discussion are carried through. Milton town council has sparked the idea of providing adequate protection for farmers in that district and a series of meetings have been held at which the matter has been thoroughly discussed.

Two new snow plows, both invented by residents of Halton County, will soon be on the market. They will be developed by Halton Manufacturing Company Limited, a private company formed by the inventors to produce and sell them. The plows are specifically designed for use by farmers in plowing lanes and barnyards, and by towns, cities and townships for road work.

A warning has been issued to young people in town that severe action will be taken should any break-ins occur at the high school in future. Twice recently, children have entered the building. The week before, last four boys were seen entering by a window which they opened downstairs.

TWENTY YEARS AGO—Grant Clark of Stevens Crescent, a 27-year-old accountant, has been named Eastern Canadian Champion Sports Car Driver for 1960. Clark took the championship organized by the Canadian Racing Drivers' Association by piloting his converted Austin Healey 3000 to five victories to score the maximum 500 points.

BANTAM TOURNEY

Georgetown will take a giant step forward on the hockey map during Easter week when a bantam tournament is slated to bring in teams from a wide area. The tournament, under OMHA auspices, will supplement similar events in Goderich and Brampton, which cater to different age groups. Goderich, established for some years, has boosted that town's name over the whole dominion as well as in the USA. Brampton had its first tournament last year and was pleased with the results.

Superintendent of the Cedarvale School for Girls for the past 16 years, Mrs. Orpha Houston has retired. At a recent banquet held in Toronto by the Board of Evangelism and Social Service honoring Mrs. Houston, the board chairman of Rev. Robert Oliver expressed gratitude for her devoted and capable leadership.

Tiny's family numbers three and three-quarters, and it's the fraction that's causing all the comment on the RR4 farm of Agar Ostrander. Tiny is a small border collie owned by the Ostranders and the three-quarters is one of her latest litter of pups—part of a pup. The little fellow is three weeks old, black and tan and perfect in every way, except he was born without any front legs.

What started out as a safety-conscious campaign has developed into a highly effective obsession at the local police department where 100 has become a magical number. A tabulation by traffic safety officer Ted Scott this week disclosed the local accident rate is down 42 from last year and may possibly be held to two figures this year.

AIR RAID SIRENS

Air raid warning sirens will be installed here shortly. At a meeting of the Georgetown Public School Board last week permission was granted by the board to the department of National Defence to erect the sirens at Howard Wrigglesworth Public School and George Kennedy Public School.

TEN YEARS AGO—A 22-member delegation from the 4th Line and 17 Sidway appeared before Esquering council, Monday night, protesting the continued use of these roads as a designated truck route. John Michie, spokesman for the group, presented a petition, signed by 90 per cent of the area residents, seeking the transfer of the truck route to 22 Sidway from Highway 25 to the third Line, and the west gate of Indusium Quarries.

Halton County's gravel pit is one of three removed from the provincial government's list of unsatisfactory pit and quarry operations along the Niagara Escarpment. However, the removal from the list makes no difference since the county no longer uses the pit. Department of Mines officials said this week there is no point in forbidding operations at the Halton and Saltfleet township pits since neither are being used.

NEW STUDIO

Building permits issued in Esquering during September totalled \$151. Two permits were for commercial buildings, including one for a television studio for Georgetown Cable TV which amounted to \$8,000. The studio will be built on the site of the present tower, near the top of North Hill.

The Halton Crown Attorney's office chose not to prosecute nine persons charged with impeding when they appeared in court September 30. Charges were not withdrawn, but the non-prosecution decision on the part of the Crown allows those charged to go untried.

Esquering Council was not enthused about a recommendation from the committee of Adjustment that the separation fee be increased. The deputy-revee said that just because neighboring municipalities have higher fees, is no reason for Esquering to raise its fees. Clerk Delmar French read out the fees in an adjoining municipalities, Nassagaweya charging \$500, Burlington \$900, Oakville \$800, and Erin only charging the \$25 application fee.

The practice of hauling the treated sewage from the Georgetown treatment plant on Mountainview Road South and spreading it on surrounding farmland has Mrs. Mary Shertel of RR1 Norval boiling. Mrs. Shertel said her family can't sit outside or open windows or doors because the smell is so bad. People who allow the sewage to be spread on their property are supposed to plow it under right away, but this is not being done, she said.

The number of hunters allowed to come in from outside the township has been cut to a trickle this fall in Nassagaweya. The legal minimum of 200 non-resident hunting permits will be sold this fall on a first-come basis. Last year, the north Halton township sold over 1,500 licences to non-residents.

ONE YEAR AGO—Halton Hills and Oakville regional councillors found a valuable and somewhat surprising ally in regional chairman Jack Hatfield last week when he broke a tie vote to push the new uniform sewer rate policy past strong opposition from Burlington and Milton councillors. Mr. Hatfield, a Burlington resident, ignored Burlington Mayor Holy Bird's charges that the revised rate schedule poses serious inequities for many Halton residents when the new policy finally came before regional council last Wednesday after years of preparation and debate.

The Halton Children's Aid Society (CAS) has been granted an initial concession in its ongoing search for additional operating funds following a meeting Friday with officials of the provincial ministry of community and social services. CAS treasurer William Devris told The Herald this week that the ministry has agreed to allocate \$10,500 to the Halton agency to cover the salary of one senior staff member who will be engaged in child abuse prevention and investigation efforts until the end of this year.