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Friday, July 17, 1981

Won't 'entertain' proposals about pulling out of regional government--Bennett

## Tough talk from housing minister

By CHRIS AAGAARD  
Herald Staff Writer

The province has no intention of allowing individual municipalities to opt out of regional government, Halton's councillors were told Wednesday.

Making a "goodwill" visit to regional council and introducing the new municipal affairs portfolio attached to his housing ministry, Claude Bennett said regional governments are

a "positive force" in delivering services to the public.

"I don't feel that regional councils have any more problems than do local councils," Mr. Bennett said. "Regional governments have served very well the problems of municipalities in Ontario."

The ministers' message was seen as a warning that the province is tiring of Burlington's threats to withdraw from

Halton region. Roly Bird, the city's mayor, has repeatedly protested that Burlington's ratepayers are paying more for regional services because they are subsidizing works projects in Milton and Halton Hills.

But even regional chairman Jack Raftis, who has long opposed Burlington's secessionist efforts, claimed that the province has opted out of



Housing and municipal affairs minister Claude Bennett fielded questions from regional councillors Wednesday afternoon during a "goodwill" visit. While covering a wide range of issues, the minister warned that the province will likely turn a deaf ear to any proposals from individual municipalities to opt out of regional government.

funding responsibilities at the expense of the larger tax base in Oakville and Burlington.

The grants, Mr. Raftis complained, either do not continue long enough or are too small to begin with. He warned Mr. Bennett that the bitterness which has often prevailed in regional council meetings between northern and southern municipalities in Halton will continue unless the provincial government does something to get the "financial monkey" off the region's back.

Asked by Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy about the province's apportionment grants — money given to individual municipalities to help fill in tax assessment disparities with their neighbors — Mr. Bennett said his office would try to announce the grant amounts closer to the town's budget time. Mayor Pomeroy had complained that the timing of the appointment grants made budgeting difficult.

## MOH declines Site F funds commitment

Provincial housing and municipal affairs minister Claude Bennett declined to make any firm commitments to the region toward additional studies needed for Site F, a proposed landfill site in Milton.

Replying to a councillors' question, during his visit to regional council Wednesday, Mr. Bennett said "there were complications with the Site F proposal which exceed even the authority of the ministry."

In its ongoing battle with Milton town council and a powerful citizens' lobby opposed to having a garbage dump on agricultural land at the northwest corner of Tre-

maine and Britannia Roads, Halton had hoped that public hearings on the proposal would be heard under the more limited terms of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA). Evidence presented for or against the site proposal would have to relate directly to the site, rather than on the surrounding area.

The ministry of environment announced in February that public hearings on Site F would have to be held under wider terms of reference of the Environmental Assessment Act (EAA) forcing the region to bring in evidence on other proposed

'dump sites throughout Halton.

Shortly after the ministry's decision, regional council voted to press the government to carry out further studies on other possible sites.

Tentative examinations of other areas for the new dump, including a site near Ashgrove, as well as a detailed study on the 246-acre Site F, have cost the region about \$3.4 million, Halton's chief administrative officer Dennis Perlin told councillors.

Recently, Milton council was charged with contempt of court for failing to comply with an Ontario Municipal



**CHAired FARM COMMITTEE**

Harold Middlebrook, the Burlington farmer who until recently served as chairman of the Halton Agricultural Advisory committee, says the committee "made headway" in encouraging regional politicians and staffers to understand the problems farmers face in Halton. In an interview with The Herald (the first of a two-part series beginning Wednesday), he reflects on the industry's future, the rented land issue, urban sprawl and Guelph University's Rural Development Outreach program.

## Region's growth 'excellent'

Halton region is enjoying "an excellent level of growth" which is expected to continue for "quite some time", regional business development director Matthew Fischer stated recently.

Of the ongoing projects with capital costs exceeding \$500,000 in southwestern Ontario, Halton has approximately \$40.3 million worth of new growth which could generate as many as 686 additional jobs.

By the end of April, more building permits were issued in Oakville than in any of the region's other "three area

municipalities. Permit sales there for industrial, commercial, institutional and residential building projects amounted to over \$22 million, \$7 million more than Burlington's total.

About \$4 million in building permits were issued in Halton during the January to April period, \$1 million less than Milton.

Meanwhile, the region's finance and administration committee has agreed to support the City of Cambridge in its bid to have a micro-electronics development centre established in its area.

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