

Halton mayors meet to plot strategy over riding redistribution

Boundary protest builds

By CHRIS AAGAARD
Herald Staff Writer
The federal Electoral Boundaries Commission is discovering that riding changes proposed for Halton and Peel regions aren't as clear cut as they might have hoped.

Lobbies in both regions have criticised some of the riding changes, charging that they fall to consider traditional community ties.

In Halton, the region's four mayors were expected to join regional chairman Jack Ruffis yesterday to plan an appeal to be made at boundary change hearings in Hamilton Friday. Instead of four ridings in the region, they would prefer to see three, a proposal which has been presented to the commission by Halton Conservative MP Otto Jelinek at similar hearings last weekend in Toronto.

Proposed changes to the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act were made public late last year following studies by the independent commission. The commission has, among other suggestions, proposed that the Brampton-Georgetown riding and the neighboring Halton riding, which includes Acton, be readjusted.

The commission has proposed that Georgetown, Acton and Caledon should form a new riding called Halton Hills-Caledon.

Now a part of Halton riding, Milton would become part of the proposed riding of Halton-Wentworth. Urban Burlington would remain a riding of its own and part of Mississauga would help form the Oakville riding.

But, arguing that Halton has sufficient population within its own boundaries to form three ridings without combining outside communities, the regional delegation is expected to advocate combining Milton and Halton Hills in one riding and allowing Oakville to become one riding without a share of Mississauga's population.

When the commission

suggests new ridings, Mr. Jelinek said, they should "keep in mind the historical significance of communities and regions."

"What I would like to see - and not everyone is going to agree with me - is to try to keep three ridings within the region. That would put Georgetown back in with Milton and Acton. I think there's a historical significance in that Georgetown is a part of Halton."

The riding, he said, which would include a chunk of largely rural north Burlington, might be called North Halton.

There is no "significance" in bringing a small portion of Mississauga in with Oakville, he commented.

"It will be up to the commissioners concerning where they want to go with the riding issue," Mr. Jelinek said, "but I'm certainly not happy with the type of change that has taken place."

Meanwhile, Brampton-Georgetown MP John McDermid has also been at hearings in Toronto, lobbying for change in the proposals on behalf of his Brampton constituents.

Older sections of Brampton in the city's west end would remain linked electorally with Georgetown in the new Halton Hills-Caledon riding. South Brampton would join the northern portion of Mississauga to form a new riding.

Mr. McDermid has expressed fears that the

current proposals destroy Brampton's unity.

"Brampton - Georgetown is working quite well as an entity now," Mr. McDermid said. "If they have to violate the boundaries of our ridings it should be more towards the Halton Hills area as opposed to down in Mississauga."

Ironically, the new Brampton - Mississauga riding takes in Brampton's city hall. Brampton councillors have proposed that Brampton should be divided into two ridings. One riding, Mr. McDermid said, would include Caledon, while cutting out Georgetown.

This coincides with the Halton proposal to have Georgetown join and Acton and Milton to form a

new riding.

Hearings into the boundary changes will last until February. The maps, taking into consideration the results of the hearings, will be redesigned by June and may be presented to Parliament for debate in the autumn session.

Mr. McDermid said that MPs will have an opportunity to propose further changes during the debate. It will then be turned back to the commission, further changes made and finally, presented to the Speaker of the House for proclamation.

From the time the new Act is proclaimed, the boundary changes won't come into effect until a year later.

'Best idea I've seen'

The idea of forming a new federal riding from the municipalities of Milton, Acton and Georgetown, as well as a chunk of north Burlington "has merit", Halton Hills Mayor Pete Pomeroy told The Herald Monday. "It looks like the best proposal to me out

of the ones I've seen," he said. It differs from the proposal to link Halton Hills with Caledon "a great deal". "Caledon is more oriented toward Peel. Although it's difficult to separate local and federal concerns, there is still enough of a tie to make some objectives common."

Acton ditch posing threat

The Halton Housing Authority is concerned about the danger a ditch poses near 18 public housing units on Acton's Holmesway Place.

Authority representative Ann Gabriel asked council Monday night to consider including a project in the public works budget this year to either remove the ditch or make it less of a threat to children in the area.

In some places, she said, the ditch, which stretches along the west side of Holmesway Place, is four feet deep and can fill with water if the annual spring run-off isn't carried away by adjoining culverts.

"Children find this an intriguing place to play with boats and toys," Ms. Gabriel said, expressing concern that the ditch

invites a serious accident. "In talking to parents in the area, they are very concerned and are prepared to come and talk to you about it."

Council decided to refer the matter to the 1983 budget committee. While plans to lay storm sewers along nearby Coblehill Road and the Holmesway Place area are in the

town's public works long-range forecast, it may be a while before the town can finance the project.

Town engineer Bob Austin told councillors that his department is considering less expensive ways of dealing with the problem until the storm sewer project can get underway. It may be possible, he said, to raise

the bed of the ditch at a cost of \$3,500 to \$4,000.

But laying new storm sewers around Holmesway Place can't be done without storm sewer work along Coblehill Road, he said. At 1982 rates, it would cost about \$92,000 for the storm sewer project and \$142,000 for accompanying road reconstruction.

False alarms a concern at Silver Creek Towers

A rash of false alarms at the Silver Creek Towers apartments on Park Avenue have worried firefighters.

"It's gotten to be an ongoing thing down there,

so common that nobody moves," deputy fire chief Bob Hyde said.

Firefighters are concerned that residents aren't responding to the alarms and a situation

has developed much like the old story of the boy who cried wolf.

Pulling the alarms as a malicious act can carry a maximum of two years imprisonment and up to a \$500 fine.

Student learns lesson

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I gave her back the slip of paper. She smiled.

The evening had been a very enlightening one for me. I shared happiness, sadness, respect and love. Usually it's very hard to feel love for people you don't know very well, and harder still to love people who are handicapped, even though their handicaps lie only in the eyes of the beholder. But although I had just met these people, it was definitely love I felt for them, and I knew at once that they were not handicapped, but in fact "handicappable."

I made a lot of new friends and learned some valuable lessons. And I will probably always remember to be thankful for being able to be thankful. The people of "Friends in Deed" mean a lot to me, and I hope each and every one of them continues to succeed in life, but most of all, to enjoy it. I wish them all the best for now and for always, as I'm sure each of us at Acton High School does.

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