

Editorial

Have a look

If you were one of the 600 men, women and children who turned out to have a look at Halton Hills' new civic centre on Saturday you probably came away with the opinion that your tax dollars were well spent.

When it was first announced that the town would build a new civic centre, and that the price tag would top the \$6 million mark, there were certainly some grumblings among the taxpayers - and the media.

There were no grumblings on Saturday.

The new circular building is esthetically pleasing, practical and in a good location.

Halton Hills couldn't afford to make the same mistake Halton Region did. Regional councillors built the big green complex in Oakville just 10 years ago, yet it's now set to undergo a \$30 million expansion.

It's obvious Halton Hills is soon going to see a boom in housing like it hasn't seen since the construction of the Delrex subdivision in the 1960s.

Until Halton Hills employees moved into the new building they were spread out in six buildings throughout the town.

As one recent story in the Herald's commemorative edition for the civic centre noted, the town's 75 workers "came from trailers and garages" throughout the town.

Politicians often foot the blame for not planning ahead. This time they did. They took some heat. Councillors approved the complex unanimously in October, 1987.

In retrospect, it was a wise decision.

But planning and construction of the civic centre didn't come completely without controversy. There was the choice of architect, which eventually led to a stormy debate at council. And there were strikes during construction which pushed back the moving-in date a few months.

But politicians, engineers and administrators were able to overcome these problems.

With the opening of the new civic centre Halton Hills is now ready to properly handle the complex problems that accompany growth.

If you haven't seen it yet, drop by. Have a look and judge for yourself if you got your money's worth.

C.N.E. success



Brian MacLeod
Editor's Notebook

Halton Hills seems to be enjoying quite a successful year at the Canadian National Exhibition this year.

Let's see. There's Kelly Stewart of Horaby, who won the Miss C.N.E. title for 1989-90 last week; then there's Gord Hamilton and his rooster Vern, whose victory in the crowing contest I mentioned last week. And then there's Nightfall.

Nightfall? Yup. They're a band of local boys who have rocked their way into the quarter finals of the "Rising Star '89" contest at the Ex. The contest is being held at the Heritage Stage. Nightfall played in its quarter finals last night (Tues-

day). Nightfall is competing against 96 other acts in the Rising Star contest.

The band is eyeing the semi-finals for fame and fortune. "The semis are where the cash is," the band's drummer Greg Hagan said Monday.

Band members are Greg Hagan, Dave Haffey, Mike Whaling (both play lead and rhythm guitar), Trevor Kemp (bass guitar), and Tim Tibbetts sings lead vocals.

To see how they did, check out the Herald Outlook this Saturday.

Psssst. Wanna buy a castle?
That's right, a castle.

There's one for sale on Jorstadt Island in the Thousand Islands. The Jorstadt Castle, located in the St. Lawrence River near Brockville is up for sale for \$9.8 million, Royal LePage reports.

All 28-rooms of it.

The castle, which took eight years to build, was originally used as a hunting lodge for the president of Singer Sewing Machine, Frederick G. Bourne. It was designed after Scotland's Woodstock Castle.

Groups "uneasy" about Act

By DEREK NELSON
Thomson News Service

Various groups testifying here about Bill 147, the Independent Health Facilities Act, share a common uneasiness.

They don't know what the real motivation is behind the bill.

But, whatever it is, they are scared it may be directed at them. And that applies to everyone from the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) to the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) to various abortion and natural childbirth groups.

Bill 147 is being looked at this summer by a legislative committee.

The health ministry explains the need for it with reference to the new technology and techniques that make it possible to do many medical and surgical procedures outside hospitals.

"These facilities usually fall

somewhere between a doctor's office and a hospital in the types of services they offer," the ministry said. They are widely viewed as being more "community-based," to use the current jargon, than a hospital.

About 20 exist today, yet "the ministry has not been able to fully fund these, nor has it been able to ensure the same assessment of quality control as in the case of hospitals," a ministry background explanation sheet said.

Hence the need for the act.

MUST PROVE NEED

Except for those in existence last June, independent clinics will only be able to open if the ministry decides there is a "demonstrated need" for the service in the community.

Moreover, the type and range of services provided by the clinic will also be decided by the ministry.

There is to be lots of consulta-

tion, especially with the local district health council and competitive bidding for licences, but the final word will be uttered by Queen's Park. Canadian and non-profit groups will get preference.

All very nice - but it doesn't answer the basic question that worries many of the groups testifying here.

What is the government's policy in regard to the clinics? Does it have any number of types in mind or is it simply going to approach approving new ones on an ad hoc basis?

As one reporter here said, it is legislation without policy.

For example, there are only two abortion clinics that will automatically function under Bill 147, one being Henry Morgentaler's clinic.



Nielsen's book takes the offensive



Stewart MacLeod
Ottawa
Thomson News Service

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney may not be displaying any hyperactive reaction to Erik Nielsen's book, but his close associates are certainly making up for it.

Even Mr. Nielsen must have been astonished at the counter-offensive against him.

Mr. Mulroney, in commenting on the book *The House is Not a Home*, said that revelations such as this, by his former deputy prime minister, are simply a matter for the author's conscience. "Everyone takes his or her responsibilities in life. If you want to keep a position of trust and intimate association with cabinet colleagues and write about it, then you take responsibility. I suppose it's a personal choice."

Mr. Mulroney didn't appear particularly upset when he talked about this with reporters.

But what one hears from those close to the prime minister suggests a much stronger reaction. It could be described as fury.

The speed at which reporters were being fed uncomplimentary stories about Mr. Nielsen - usually by people closely associated with the prime minister, was nothing short of amazing. Letters that would normally remain confidential were being read over the telephone to interested journalists.

The idea was to establish Mr.

Nielsen as a hypocrite - one who raked the Mulroney government over the coals for its practice of patronage, but also the one who helped design the system. It seems apparent that someone conducted a very exhaustive file search immediately after the startling book hit the shelves.

And startling it was - largely because this tell-all autobiography comes from a person who spent his entire political life revealing as little as possible, both about himself and his colleagues.

COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

It was his criticism of patronage that drew the most outrage from those close to the prime minister. This is partly because Mr. Nielsen now occupies a plum patronage post as head of the National Transportation Agency, but also because he was allegedly a key player when it came to making government appointments following the 1984 election.

Just hours after the book became available, some reporters were given access to a letter that Mr. Nielsen had written to party officials in 1984 regarding future appointments. He had written that "in the utmost confidence, we are selecting those people in each province who will chair the Provincial Committees, which will consider and recommend the course of action we will take on a range of matters, particularly on the selection of capable people."

Some Mulroney aides were quick to say that Mr. Nielsen chaired the meetings that dealt with patronage appointments.

One former aide phoned a reporter to say that "I've got some numbers on Nielsen." He went on to say that while Mr. Nielsen's current salary would normally be confidential, he happened to see a file that showed he was earning \$149,000.

There was further information about additional perks and his

parliamentary pension.

Other callers tried to discredit parts of the Nielsen book, even insignificant things such as wrong dates.

OFFERS INFORMATION

In his book, the former deputy prime minister said that his own immorality was a factor in his decision not to run for the party leadership in 1967. He said he had an extra-marital affair and the young woman - whom he did not identify - had an abortion. Later, she became pregnant again and gave birth to a son.

But Debbie Kelly decided to identify herself to the Ottawa Citizen as the young woman and went on at great length about her relationship with the "dictator" who, she claims, has refused to see his son.

It's certainly not the type of stuff that Mr. Nielsen, or other members of his family, would enjoy reading.

One source close to the prime minister offered information about how Mr. Nielsen allegedly sought an appointment as a judge in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. When the Canadian Bar Association didn't approve the appointment, it was alleged that Mr. Nielsen asked the prime minister to overrule the rejection.

Then there are the callers who say they can't verify certain allegations, but it might be worth asking about other skeletons that might be in Mr. Nielsen's closet.

One former Mulroney staffer who called a reporter with certain information about Mr. Nielsen's inside role in the patronage system was asked whether he had talked to the prime minister about this. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure it out," was the reply.

The game being played around Ottawa these days is called hard-