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Halton refuses to rule on Sunday shopping

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

Halton Region is preparing to pass the buck on Sunday shopping back to the provincial government.

Councillors voted Wednesday during a Regional administration and finance committee meeting to ignore over 100 applications from retailers, including three national

food store chains, who want Sunday shopping.

A and P and Dominion, the Oshawa Group Ltd. and Miracle Food Mart will get letters from Halton saying the Region will not approve Sunday store openings.

Those three grocers and Loblaws Supermarkets Ltd. approached Halton's acting chairman earlier

this month to ask for a "level playing field" shopping that would allow the major grocery chains to compete with drug stores and fruit markets that sell grocery items on Sunday.

Regional business manager Brent Kears said the finance department is flooded with calls asking when the Region will make

a decision on Sunday shopping.

"The grocery stores are calling every other day," he said. "They're watching us very closely... Everybody's playing a bit of a waiting game."

The supermarket chains are part of an "ad-hoc" group called the Fair Shopping Committee, formed in response to Bill C-113 of the Retail Business Holidays Act. That act goes into effect next February and hands Sunday opening legislation over to municipalities.

Halton's administrative and finance committee will recommend that Halton's council petition the provincial government to take back responsibility for Sunday shopping regulations. All applications under the present system will proceed as normal, committee members heard.

Halton Hills Councillor Rick Bonnette said Halton, which "takes large steps to be a leader" is backing out on the Sunday shopping issue. He said a public forum "is going to be a circus no matter how you look at it."

Halton Hills Mayor Russ Miller said Sunday shopping rules should be a provincial jurisdiction.

"I'm opposed to Sunday shopping, personally, but I think we should address the issue of our tourism."

The Olde Hide House in Acton, one of two tourist exemptions in Halton, will remain designated as a tourism industry until 1994.

Oakville Coun. Liz Behrens and Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale said they don't want to lead other regions in making a decision.

"I'm not the least bit interested in being a leader in terms of bringing this onstream," Coun. Behrens said of Sunday shopping.

"We can wait and see what our neighbors are doing. That's not to say that our neighbors are going to lead us," Mayor Mulvale said. The Oakville mayor said neighboring regions, such as Peel, could open Sunday and take business away from Halton stores.

Mayor Miller said he would agree with putting a referendum on the next election ballot, as suggested by Coun. John Graham and Metro Chairman Alan Tonks.

"I think it's an excellent way to feel the pulse of the people," the mayor said.

But the Region must act now, and can't wait for the next election, Halton Chairman Peter Pomeroy said Wednesday. "We all agree that it was a dirty trick that got us here," deciding the issue of Sunday shopping, he said. But, "we got it now. It's not going to go away."

Contract negotiations

Catholic teachers want a mediator

The Halton English Catholic Teachers Association plans to ask the provincial Education Relations Committee to appoint a mediator to help the secondary teachers and the school board decide on the terms of a collective agreement, the association's chief negotiator says.

Jerry Keyes said a mediator "will hopefully give us a shot at working out a deal."

The two sides have been at loggerheads since negotiations began in February. The ERC appointed Professor Gene Swimmer of the University of Ottawa as a fact finder for the negotiations. Under Bill 101 a fact finder is automatically appointed if an agreement isn't found by Sept. 1.

Mr. Swimmer will deliver his report to the association and the board Oct. 30, Mr. Keyes said.

The association is negotiating for the following:

- a one-year agreement instead of a two year;
- a reduction in classroom sizes;
- adjustments to salaries to keep up with inflation;
- the opportunity to be involved in

any changes the board might want to introduce that would directly affect the teachers.

Mr. Keyes said the board unilaterally lengthened each period from 72 minutes to 78 minutes and pushed back the school start time from 8:35 a.m. to 8:15 a.m., last May. The board should have first consulted with the teachers and then offered them some sort of pay compensation, he said.

"I'd like to see the management at Stelco lengthen their employees' working day without offering any compensation. If they did, there would be a strike in no time."

This is the first time the secondary teachers have entered into collective agreement negotiations without the elementary teachers, Mr. Keyes said. In the past the secondary and elementary teachers have negotiated contracts in conjunction with each other.

The Catholic board's senior administrator for human resources, Steve Balough, said the board doesn't discuss contract negotiations until the contract is settled.



Beauty and the beast

The saying "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is appropriate to describe the love shared between this pair. The University Women's Club of Georgetown sponsored the Ontario Ballet Theatre's production of "Beauty and the Beast" at the John Elliott Theatre in Georgetown Sunday afternoon. The ballet's per-

formance is the second program of the club's Super Sunday Series. Here, ballet company members Sarah Barden and Drew Davidson play the beauty and the beast respectively. (Herald photo by Ben Dummett)