

## Opinion

# Planning staff 'vision' will benefit community

Halton Hills residents, as much as any group in Halton Region, should be supportive of the new public transit and environmentally friendly vision Halton Regional planning staff is proposing be developed for the future.

Regional planning staff is currently touring the Region to obtain public input as part of its Official Plan Review. The Region's Official Plan is the blueprint for where and what type of development will happen in the Region. Staff is asking the public to support changes to the review that conform to two principles: Healthy Communities and Land Stewardship.

From Halton Hills' perspective, the first principle benefits

the community because it will create something residents have always desired - an improved transit system. The second principle also benefits local residents because it will maintain something people fear is disappearing - farmland.

The principle of Healthy Communities is the promotion of more compact urban centres and accompanying public transportation systems. While the people of Halton Hills have spoken in favor of a better transportation system, they generally come out against higher density development.

The only problem is, the one can't exist without the other. Right now a public transportation system involving Halton Hills



**Ben's Banter**  
by Ben Dummett

makes no sense because the area of coverage would be too large to justify the cost. If, however, more people lived closer together a system would be less costly and therefore more viable.

As for people's fears that

higher density development will ruin the rural lifestyle of Halton Hills, unless people accept higher density development there will be no rural lifestyle to appreciate whether they like it or not.

Halton can't escape the fact it's part of the greater Toronto area and as a result will continue to feel the pressure of growth. That means if Halton Hills is only willing to accept low density development it will only be a matter of time before the rural area is swallowed up anyway.

At the same time, higher density development doesn't mean the elimination of single family housing. As Halton Regional Planner Rash Mohammed said recently, "it won't be a free for all." The higher density development will

be created around pre-determined locations where it makes most sense to establish a transportation system - in other words, people shouldn't expect four and five storey buildings in the middle of the rural area.

Indeed the second principle underlying the official plan review is Land Stewardship.

This principle is the protection of environmentally sensitive and agricultural land. Regional planners realize the importance of the rural area.

The future look of Halton Region and more specifically Halton Hills, depends on a vision, and the vision currently held by Regional planning staff is one local residents would do well by if they help it become a reality.

# 'Mike the Knife' slashes to cover mistakes

OTTAWA - To no one's surprise, Mike the Knife had his eye firmly fixed on federal bureaucrats and the provinces when he unwrapped his seventh budget this week.

Finance Minister Michael Wilson let it be known that he plans to carve \$685 million out of operating expenditures, which includes public service wages, in the fiscal year beginning April 1.

For an encore, he intends to lop another \$720 million from federal employees and \$750 million from the provinces in 1992-93. Over five years, the provinces would lose a total of \$4.8 billion.

This toughness was anticipated. Wilson spoke of strong discipline and vigorous restraint in government spending, repeating past themes.

But he also revealed a package of new ideas that haven't been tried in Canada before, or in many other places for that matter.

Wilson, backed by John Crow, the Bank of Canada governor, has now set up explicit inflation targets, with the aim of reducing cost-of-living increases to two per cent by 1995. And even lower

after that.

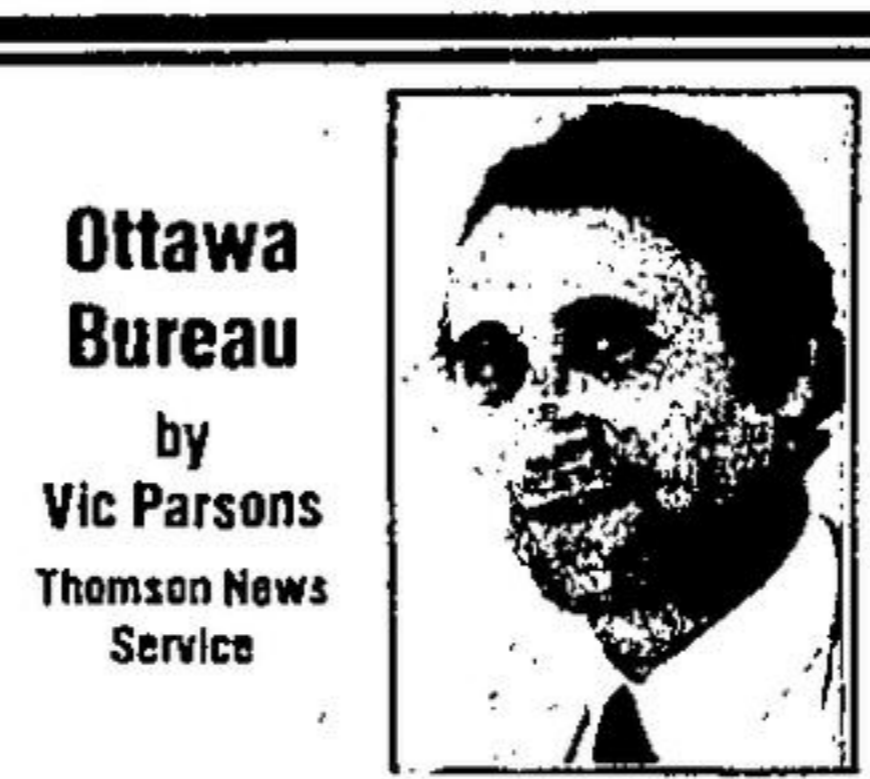
He also wants to legislate limits on Ottawa's program spending (that's total spending minus interest payments on the national debt), with a ceiling of \$115.8 billion in fiscal 1991-92, and a maximum of \$130.6 billion by 1995-96.

Furthermore, he plans to set up a Debt Servicing and Reduction Fund, which will take all net revenues from the goods and services tax, money raised in the sale of federal corporations and whatever voluntary gifts to the Crown you people are kind enough to send to Ottawa.

### AMBITIOUS GOALS

These are all ambitious aims. Not only because they will recharge the opposition's batteries, but also because Wilson's economic forecasts of the last couple of years have missed the mark.

A year ago, for instance, the finance minister predicted healthy economic growth in 1991 of three per cent. On Tuesday, he estimated the economy will shrink this year by one per cent, despite a recovery starting this summer.



**Ottawa Bureau**  
by Vic Parsons  
Thomson News Service

Such mistakes have a nasty tendency to play havoc with estimates of inflation, tax revenues and spending.

But Wilson isn't likely to let a little thing like botched prophecies deter him. His budget papers argue the key to sustained economic recovery is a decline in both actual inflation and the public's inflationary expectations.

By the end of 1992, Wilson hopes consumer prices will be increasing by only three per cent (down from 6.8 per cent in January). The target for mid-1994 will be 2.5 per cent - and two per cent at the

end of 1995. These are levels unheard of for two decades.

The goal is so-called "price stability," a favorite phrase of central banker Crow. Some economists take this to mean zero inflation, but anti-inflation moderates suggest it's something less than two per cent. Target setting is an innovation for Canada, and the only place where Finance Department officials can confirm it's being tried is in New Zealand.

### EXPLICIT TARGET

The idea is to try to quantify price stability for the benefit of the public, which will have to restrain its demands if the goal is to be achieved. "We're saying, here are the inflation expectations of the government and we want people to accept them," one official said.

A Bank of Canada background paper argues that inflation distracts householders and businesses from productive work because they want to ensure they are not losing out to higher living costs. It is also hardest on those with fixed incomes - the elderly and the poor receiving government benefits. People with money in the bank can always

move their cash around to make up for inflation losses.

What brought on this interest in targets? Bureaucrats turned back the pages of history and noted that between 1950 and 1973, the Canadian economy experienced average annual inflation of about 2.8 per cent, a performance that compared favorably with that of Japan and Germany.

Although those two economic powerhouses do not have inflation targets, they have managed to keep costs under control at times when Canada's competitiveness and production have been hurt by rising prices and interest rates.

Officials appear confident the target can be reached. They expect inflation at the end of 1991 to be at five per cent, with one percentage point of that due to the one-time impact of the GST. Then it's downhill all the way.

And they believe the tough line Ottawa's taking on public service wage and the provinces will catch on with other governments and the private sector.

The question is, will the public grin and bear it?

# Arab anger against the west will remain constant

Enough, already, about this "rising tide of Muslim anger" predicted to be the consequence of the defeat of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Yes, it's true many Arabs support Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in his war against the coalition.

"From conversations I had in Cairo a few days ago with persons familiar with the mood in Arab countries, it emerged that a great anger is accumulating among wide segments of the population in Egypt and other Arab states," Mideast expert Prof. Moshe Maoz wrote in a recent Jerusalem Post.

But this "rising anger" they presupposes there was no significant anger beforehand. The paraphrase idiosyncratic Canadian commentator Gwyn Dyer: "The Arabs in the street have always been anti-Western." Radical nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists simply lead the pack. Westerners are infidels, atheists and imperialists whose women do shocking things and whose men lack dignity and honor.

As Saddam is fond of pointing out, Muslim and Arab hostility to the West goes far back into history. Unlike Western liberals, Arabs (and their Muslim cousins the Turks and Persians) have no guilt over their world conquests. In their eyes, it was the will of God they succeeded.

Now, equally, it is the will of God that the American-British-French colonialists and their Arab lackeys in the coalition

have defeated Saddam. The masses may not like it, but they'll live with it, because they have no choice.

### TOLERANCE

This is the point. The world is not made up of nations and peoples who love each other. Group dislike, even hatred, is a much more common human emotion. Only in the West has "tolerance" acquired religious status.

Assume the dislike. Assume it infects all groups of Arabs to a greater or lesser degree, and rests on 1,300 years of hostility to which Saddam has simply added another chapter.

What keeps that anger in line? What keeps Islamic armies from riding forth in holy war against the West?

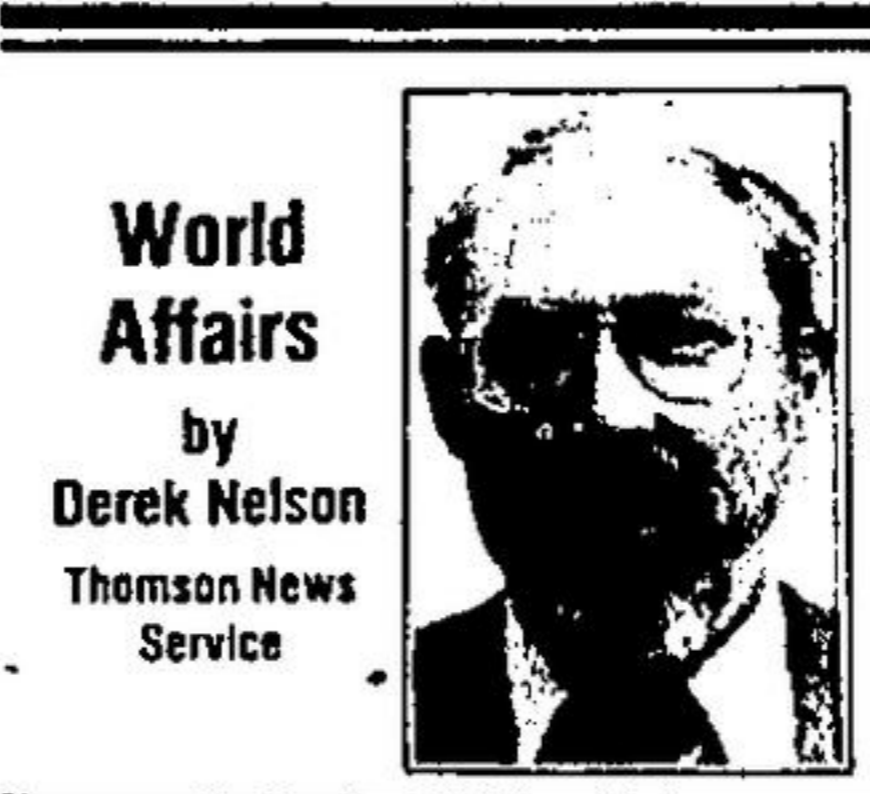
The answer is partly self-interest. Arabs are neither stupid nor monolithic in their thinking.

The oil-rich monarchies and their peoples, for instance, didn't want their comfortable lives ruined by an Arab Napoleon like Saddam.

But there is also fear.

Libya's Moammar Gadhafi only stopped playing his deadly territorial, terrorist and other games after the U.S. bombing raid against him in 1986. (Remember the predictions about rising Arab anger after this raid?)

Unfortunately, Saddam appeared more impressed by how the U.S. was paralyzed by concern over the fate of 62 hostages in the Iran Crisis a decade ago.



**World Affairs**  
by Derek Nelson  
Thomson News Service

He also remembered the U.S. cutting and running because 241 Marines were killed by a suicide car bombing in Beirut during the 1983 Euro-American intervention there.

So did the French. The American Enterprise Institute's Michael Ledeen, writing in The American spectator, recalled the French preference in 1983 was to shoot back.

### DOUBLE-TRACK

"They (the French) were entitled to wonder if we were really going to fight at all (in Kuwait). So their policy was a double-track one: if we were to fight, they would join; if we were going to cut a deal, they wanted to make sure that they got theirs."

Respecting only strength, Saddam saw November's attempt by President George Bush to pursue diplomacy (attempting to send his secretary of state to Baghdad) as weakness.

The BBC's John Simpson was in Baghdad, where he said the feeling was that this meant Bush wasn't serious about war. Sad-

dam axed any plan to withdraw.

Yes. Many Arabs are angry at the West now, just as many have always been. But if there hadn't been war, if the U.S. had once again backed down, then the at-

titude would have been, as former secretary of state Alexander Haig has suggested, total contempt for a pitiful giant.

Instead, there is respect along with any distaste.

## Berry's World



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