

# Town council waffling on mobile home issue

To explain the Town's failed attempts at finding a new mobile home park for the residents of Willow Park in Norval, Halton Hills Council rationalizes that most of the public is prejudiced against mobile homes and the people most attracted to this type of living accommodation.

In other words, Council believes and has expressed on several occasions, townspeople don't have a problem with mobile homes as long as this type of housing isn't located in their neighborhood.

For those who don't know, the Willow Park residents are required to leave the park because it is situated in the Credit River floodplain. When the issue first came to the public's attention a couple of years ago, Town Council approved an Acton location where the Willow Park residents

could re-locate. The neighboring residents balked at the approval and challenged Council's decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. In the end the Board sided with the residents and overturned Council's decision.

At that time and since then, Council has partly attributed its inability to find the Willow Park residents a new park location to people's unjustified prejudice towards mobile homes and their owners.

Given Council's opinion concerning the public's perception of mobile homes, it should follow council would take action to enlighten the public about mobile homes and their owners. To me that means taking action that shows the public mobile homes are an affordable and attractive form of housing.

However at a recent council meeting, councillors missed the



Ben's Banter by Ben Dummett

perfect opportunity to take such action.

During the council meeting, in which discussion centred on an application to locate a mobile home on Sideroad 17 in rural Halton Hills for nine years, council ignored the chance to re-evaluate its zoning bylaw for mobile homes in the rural area. The current bylaw stipulates

mobile homes are not permitted in the rural area.

Mayor Miller said the zoning bylaw was approved during the early 70s because trailers were springing up throughout the rural area. Council of the day felt the trailers detracted from the rural area's natural setting.

While the zoning bylaw may have been appropriate during the early 70s it may not be now.

Despite the zoning bylaw, council approved the mobile home application. Note, the approval only applies to the specific location under consideration. It does not mean mobile homes are now permitted throughout the rural area for nine year periods.

Council made the exception on the basis the mobile home would be replaced by a permanent dwelling after the nine-year period, and the mobile home

itself would be built on a foundation giving the structure a look of permanence.

Most councillors appeared to agree mobile homes, if put on a foundation, and surrounded with landscaping, closely resemble a permanent single family home.

Acknowledging this fact, why didn't council direct staff to review the current restriction on mobile homes in the rural area?

The point is, council members should have done so. It would have sent a clear message to the public and mobile homeowners, council truly supports its claim mobile home owners live in an attractive form of housing which shouldn't be discriminated against.

By not sending out this message, mobile home owners have no reason to believe council supports their housing as being legitimate.

## Political Forum

### OTTAWA REPORT

# PC policy conference a step in right direction

I went to that Conservative policy conference in Toronto last week, along with other people from Acton, Georgetown, Caledon and Burlington. We wanted a chance to vote on some of the 320 resolutions being considered.

It was a new experience for all of us. In fact, there hasn't ever been a meeting like that one - by any political party. Over 2,000 people sat at tables, listened to debate and then voted electronically. Policy sessions started in the morning and went through until after eleven at night.

Observers from the other political parties were there, along with hundreds of reporters and TV cameras. The prime minister sat there in his sweater and blue jeans and voted with the other delegates from his riding.

Those of us who went from Halton-Peel had been involved

for several months in the process of forming policy. We had attended other meetings regionally, and then provincially. We'd drafted resolutions ourselves on things like reforming the Senate. We had spoken on the phone and met in small groups to try and hammer out positions.

A decision was made two years ago that policies would stop coming from the top down, and start going from the bottom up. After the Meech Lake deal failed over a year ago, the whole process speeded up. Clearly people could no longer put up with closed-door meetings where a handful of men struck a bargain after negotiating all night.

The political system in this country is in for an overhaul, and the Toronto meeting last week was, I think a part of that. Giving all members of a political party an equal chance to vote on what that organization stands for



Garth Turner MP Halton-Peel Progressive Conservative

seems like a good idea. Maybe all the parties should adopt that way of doing business - giving less power to the leader and more to the followers.

The issue of Quebec and Confederation came up in a big way last week. The delegates voted in favor of a united Canada. They

also voted for a motion saying Quebec should stay in Canada if it wanted to - instead of being forced to.

At that moment, the thousands of people in the hall rose, applauded and started to sing O Canada. A few of the delegates from Quebec brought out big Canadian flags, and ran down the aisles with the banners streaming behind them. A lot of people were moved to tears. Several left the room, embarrassed at their own emotional love of country.

This was important because a national political party had given the federalists in Quebec an important tool to fight the separatists in the Bloc Quebecois. No more can Lucien Bouchard say that "the rest of Canada" doesn't want Quebec or that Canadians outside that province refuse to take Quebecers seriously.

That caused problems at the

conference. One Montreal MP quit the Tory party moments after that important vote, and will probably join the separatists in a few days. Pierrette Venne, who has sat beside me in the House of Commons for the last three years, instead wanted people to vote for a massive decentralization of power from Ottawa to Quebec. But the delegates refused to even debate it.

And as the meeting ended, Front Street was full of protesting civil servants (who are fighting wage caps), postal workers (about to strike for a new contract), women's groups (wanting more social programs) and a host of other special interest groups demanding the government's head.

Inside, the delegates had voted for less government, lower spending and an end to the deficit. The next election, it seems certain, will be an interesting one.

## QUEEN'S PARK REPORT

# NDP worker-related initiatives in the works

In my last couple of reports I talked about the various initiatives undertaken during the past legislative session. This week I would like to concentrate on labour issues particularly because I know that many of you have been affected by plant closures and layoffs. In a previous report I outlined the Wage Protection Fund and its role in ensuring that you receive your back pay if your place of work goes bankrupt. But there are a number of other programs that our government has designed to help you cope with hard times.

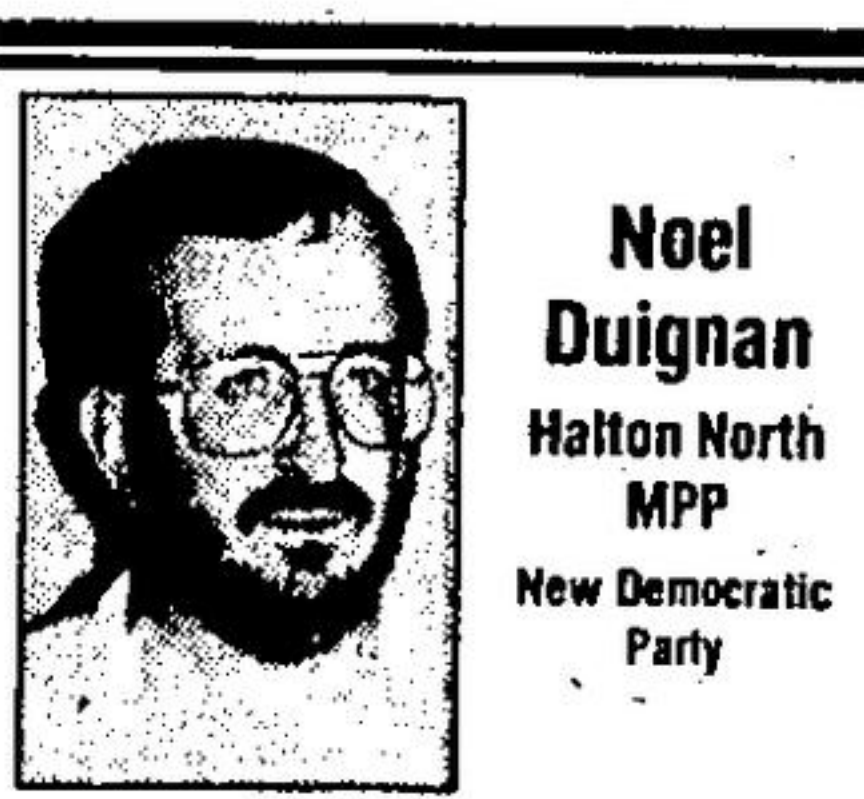
We've pledged, for example, \$32.5 million in new funding to retrain laid-off workers. Helping workers adjust to a changing economy allows individuals and companies to take full advantage of economic recovery. Some of the money has been earmarked for the coordination of services provided to laid-off workers through labor-adjustment committees and the remainder (\$25 million) has been geared toward new programs. These programs, which include literacy and basic skills development, are administered by the Ministries of Labor, Skills Development, Colleges and Universities, and Citizenship.

To make the workplace safer, we've toughened up construction-site regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to improve the protection of

workers against falls from heights. You may recall the unfortunate accident which happened earlier this year in Milton. While we may not be able to eliminate every work related death or serious injury, the amendments to the Construction Safety Regulation address four of the main health and safety concerns in the construction industry including falls from heights, trench cave-ins, and electrocution. The rules also call for improved hygiene conditions on most worksites. Under another amendment, clothing regulations for firefighters have been improved.

In June, Labor Minister Bob Mackenzie announced that the general minimum wage would be raised to \$6 from \$5.40 in response to the rising cost of living in Ontario. With the increase, fewer people will need government assistance to make ends meet. This move will be of greatest help to young people and female workers, two of the most poorly paid and vulnerable sectors of the economy. The raise is the first step in reaching the target of 60 per cent of the average wage by 1996.

The provincial government has also been working on a pair of ground-breaking proposals to make it easier for you to invest in Ontario companies. These plans will give workers more commitment to success and efficiency in



Noel Duignan MPP Halton North MPP New Democratic Party

the workplace. At the same time, employers get new sources of capital and ideas for innovation. One part of the program will complement existing federal legislation and provide tax credits to workers who invest in labor-sponsored investment funds; another part will provide extra tax credits to workers investing solely in their employers' corporation. Treasurer Floyd Laughren has announced that the discussion paper and draft legislation on the above Ontario Investment and Worker Ownership Program will be released on August 15th. New technologies and the increasing globalization of markets are creating new challenges and opportunities for Ontario businesses. To meet these challenges, these companies need access to new sources of capital to help them grow and adapt. New relation-

ships between business, labor and government are also needed and the Ontario Investment and Worker Ownership Program attempts to encourage individuals to invest in Ontario business and

to facilitate employee ownership. For more information on these initiatives or other programs, please call my Milton office Tuesdays through Fridays at 878-1729.

**Berry's World**

"Is this a GREAT idea, or what?"

© 1990 by NEA, Inc.