

Region-wide water study needed, councillor argues

By **STUART JOHNSTON**
Staff writer

Studying the growth potential for Ballinafad will be a waste of time, money and effort, according to Milton regional councillor Barry Lee.

Lee argued with his colleagues at regional council Wednesday morning that it is a "foregone conclusion" that rural development will be discouraged in future, and questioned why Halton Hills and the region are looking at expanding Ballinafad.

He also questioned the logic behind such a study, considering very little is known about the quantity and quality of rural water throughout the region. He insisted that a Halton-wide hydrogeological study be completed before piecemeal expansion should even be considered in the rural areas. Such a study was rejected by regional council earlier this year because the price tag was too

high.

Halton Hills, in conjunction with Erin Township and Wellington County to the north, are studying the effects of designating Ballinafad as a hamlet, instead of its current zoning as a rural cluster. Changing its designation will allow for more expansion.

Halton Hills' portion of the study is being fronted by three landowners in the area, all of which have development applications on file with the planning department.

"Rural development is being discouraged — the Sewell Commission is looking into it, our own reports are saying that — but these people are putting money into this but the results are already a foregone conclusion," Lee said. "Everything will be going in circles, but I don't think anything will be done."

While planning commissioner Rash Mohammed would also pre-



MARILYN SERJEANTSON

fer to see a region-wide water study done before the Ballinafad

review begins, he argued that he can't predict what its conclusions will be at this point.

"I don't feel its a waste of time or money ... I see your concern, but there's no predetermined thinking on our part," he said.

Planner Pat Murphy added that the Ballinafad study is the same as ones conducted on other hamlets throughout the region, so "it should give us a pretty good picture of that area."

Halton Hills councillor Marilyn Serjeantson noted that "it's better to work with Erin Township" now, because there is a long line of development waiting to happen on its side of the border. She reasoned Halton Hills must go ahead with the study to control development in both municipalities, otherwise the town may be left out in the cold.

But, Burlington's Bob Brechin

was puzzled why water always seems to be a problem in Ontario, noting that Europe, with 10 times the population, has managed to supply its citizens with clean water.

"We seem to be so friggin' hyper with hydrology — but how can Europe do it with its land mass and population?" he asked. "How can they solve their problems with 300 million people, yet we research to death every time someone wants to build a house?"

Acton's Rick Bonnette agreed, adding that Mohammed should look into the matter further.

"Acton has been fighting for years to get a population increase of only 1,500," he said. "We put people on the moon quicker than putting people in Acton."

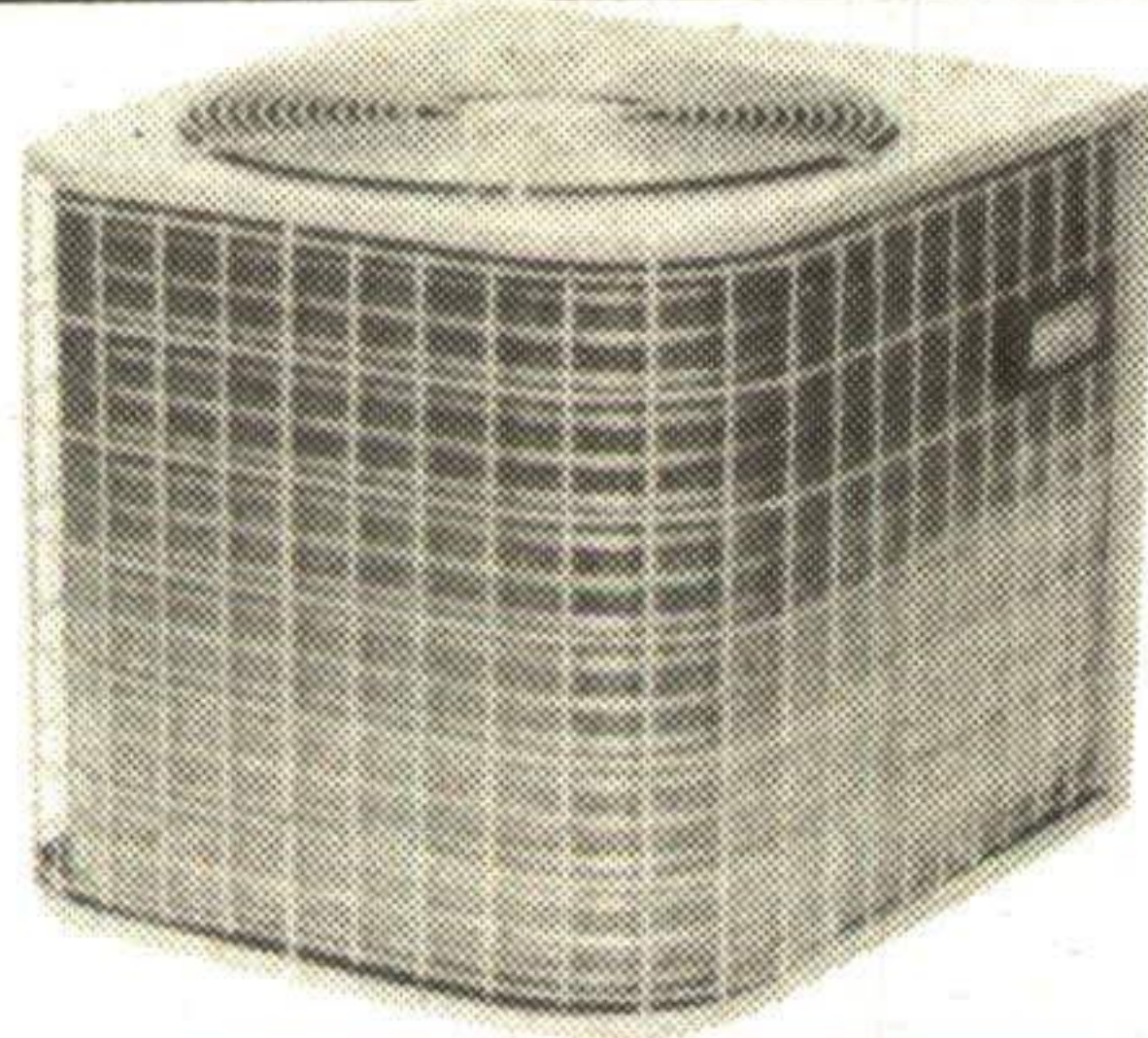
Mohammed promised to return with a brief report on Europe's water policies.

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