

EDITORIAL

MVA crying for re-examination

Market Value Assessment (MVA) will be instituted across Halton Region for the 1993 taxation year unless something major happens within the next few weeks to change that direction. What's required is a vote for re-consideration by regional council, which narrowly approved the taxation scheme last month.

While that move appears unlikely given the unwavering stance of councillors from Burlington and Milton who voted unanimously for the system, there's still a chance that public and possibly political pressure could result in a re-examination of the issue.

The question that most readily comes to our minds is, What's the big hurry? Why do we have to have MVA in 1993? Obviously that same question has crossed the minds of Halton Hills municipal politicians who sit on regional council.

At Tuesday's town council meeting, Councillor Rick Bonnette, one of Halton Hills' five representatives to regional council, got unanimous support from Mayor Russ Miller and fellow councillors on a resolution calling for postponement of region-wide MVA, at least until exact costs of system and the formula for its phase-in are determined. That's not an unreasonable request.

There's no doubt that people are confused about MVA and how it will affect their 1993 tax bill. There's also no doubt that some people will see an increase because of MVA while others will see a decrease. What will be the impact for those receiving the increase? Will it mean that some seniors on fixed incomes, living in older established areas of Acton and Georgetown, will be forced to sell their homes because they cannot meet an unexpected surge in taxes? No one seems particularly anxious to answer those questions.

The real problem behind this whole tax mess is that people have lost faith in government. They simply don't believe that government is fair when it comes to taxation.

Public delegations, numbering about 15, approached regional council last month asking them to throw out the idea of region-wide MVA or, at the very least, postpone it to a time when the economy isn't reeling from a recession. However, to observers, it appeared that regional councillors had already made up their minds and weren't prepared to be swayed.

Council was split evenly, with Oakville and Halton Hills opposing the proposal and Burlington and Milton supporting adoption of MVA. As a result, the vote was a tie, 12-12. That left the deciding vote to regional chairman Peter Pomeroy, who cast his vote in favor of MVA.

According to rules of procedure guiding regional government, only someone voting on the majority side can introduce a motion for re-consideration. It must then get a two-thirds majority vote from council to be re-introduced.

With the vote being that close, it's obvious that the issue is contentious. That brings to mind yet another question to ponder. If a decision by municipally-elected members on council results in a tie vote and the deciding vote comes from someone who isn't elected by the people of Halton—namely, the Regional chairman (elected by regional councillors)—isn't it possible that some voters might feel that their interests aren't adequately represented at the regional level? Maybe the rules of procedure at the regional government level need re-examination themselves to see that they more accurately reflect the principles of a democratic system of government. The votes at municipal levels of government are lost votes. Tie votes at the regional level, broken by the Regional chairman's vote, should be seen as good grounds for re-consideration, particularly when the results of the vote have such wide-reaching implications on residents of Halton Region.

Freedom not the issue

Dear Editor,

It was interesting to read Mr. Gori's comments on "changing family values" (Sept. 26, 1992) and his perception that recognition of same-sex marriages is an "assault on society."

I know that we should be open to the demands of the different groups in our society and to be sure that everyone and every group receives fair consideration. However, it must be explained, in frankly moral terms, that some of the things people do nowadays are wrong.

We live in a society out of touch with its own standards and values. We are being desensitized to almost every form of degenerate behaviors and we accept this garbage, without even a whimper, in the name of freedom of the individual. But freedom is not the issue here.

The gay rights activists want, as Mr. Gori stated, "a public acknowledgment that their lifestyle is valid

and acceptable."

In Toronto, taxpayers' money was used to fund a pamphlet that tell young boys that homosexual sex is natural. It gives young boys this advice: "Having sex with men can be as scary as coming out. But just like being gay, having sex with men is natural."

It is ironic that this perversion is being promoted by the AIDS Committee of Toronto, who you think would know that there really is no such thing as safe sex with multiple partners. The pamphlet also goes on to describe sex in vulgar and profane language. Do our children need to read this? Do any of us? Is this valid and acceptable behavior?

Can I, as a responsible parent, tell my children that same-sex marriages are a "family" just as our family is? Never!

Yours truly,
Robert Yantho



The Apple Factory at the corner of Highway 7 and Mississauga Road, just east of Georgetown, has got into the spirit of the Halloween season with large straw pumpkins adding to the store's visual appeal.



CONSTITUTIONAL CONTROVERSY Don't be afraid to vote no

Dear Editor,

As a person who is currently thinking of voting no in the upcoming referendum there are some concerns and points I wish to express.

I am concerned about:
-Federal powers and money being handed over to the provinces in the belief that there will be a reduction in bureaucratic duplication. Later, when it comes to the very difficult and distasteful task of actually removing the federal employees involved I doubt the government will have the resolve to act.

-Expansion of the House of Commons to 337 seats. Do we really need more MPs and the costs that go along with such an increase? Our leaders should be showing the way to fiscal reform by proposing to reduce the number of MPs, and devising a way of distributing the remaining seats fairly.

-The other clauses that may be contentious but are not getting public recognition now because others are taking the forefront; will these come back to haunt us later?

-Attempts being made to scare people into voting yes. This tends to make me believe that the "consensus report" may not stand on its own merit.

-A special status being given to one province.

-The possibility that the "distinct society" references can be coupled with the "notwithstanding clause" and result in further erosion of the rights of minority peoples in Quebec that would otherwise be protected by the Charter of Rights.

Offhand I can think of only a few cultural pieces of Canada, but I cherish them all, such as: Caribana, Ukrainian and Italian weddings,

Highland Games, lobster suppers in P.E.I., lower-town Quebec, the International picnic, Quebec's Winter Carnival, little Italy and Chinatown in Toronto, the 1992 Toronto International Pow Wow. All of these exist, and in many cases flourish, without any constitutional protection. I find it extremely difficult to believe that the wonderful cultural reality that is Quebec needs constitutional protection.

I realize there was a lot of give and take among the people who took part in this process, and therefore some of the clauses are tied together, even though they may not appear so. And yes, it is our responsibility to know what we are being asked to decide upon. But why couldn't a method have been found, to break this "consensus report", into logical pieces that can be dealt with more easily by those of us who may have trouble understanding its language and implications.

I am told bad things will occur if I vote no, not that good things will happen if I vote yes. This appears to me to be like election politics, where one candidate speaks negatively about the other hoping to convince us not to vote for the other, and by default, vote for the speaker.

The current dire predictions are similar to those surrounding the Meech Lake accord. It failed and the country did not fall apart. The economic woes we find ourselves with now are not a result of that failed accord but are the result of other issues we should discuss at another time.

There are always economic fluctuations surrounding a major political discussion - that is the nature of a free market system. I resent it

being suggested to me that I make this decision based primarily on economic factors. These proposals are deeply important to all of this country's people, so we must vote with our minds and hearts, not our pocketbooks.

If a no vote will cause so many terrible things to occur, why are so many reasonable and intelligent people advocating it (a no vote)? Does everybody have a selfish agenda? Must I therefore be a jaded and cynical bystander in yet another mud-slinging, name-calling election type process?

If so, I will endure yet again, and even adopt my own selfish manner. For this is MY country, MY Canada. Look at it on a map, it is big, beautiful and diverse. It has survived many problems and will survive this one, and more in the future. It was founded on diversity and will survive our current differences. I love MY Canada. If you love it too, don't be afraid to act with your own mind and heart, not someone else's.

Sincerely yours,
Ted Daquano



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