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Local voters approve unity deal



Mayor Russ Miller cast his vote Monday on the national referendum, with Elections Canada poll clerk Malcolm MacLeod and deputy returning officer Fraser Robin looking on.

By Wendy Long

Voters in the Halton-Peel riding voted Yes in Monday's national referendum, with 57 per cent of over 58,000 voters nodding approval to changing Canada's constitution as presented in the Charlottetown accord supporting the very close Ontario-wide Yes vote.

The race was close, with the unofficial results coming at 10:22 p.m. Monday as the final counts of 203 Halton-Peel polls poured in. The No side finished with 42 per cent of the vote, with rejected ballots totaling 279. Official results will be announced by Elections Canada after press time at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

In Halton Hills specifically, Yes won the day with 10,186 votes (unofficial figures) compared to the No side's 8,370. Georgetown (56 per cent), Glen Williams (by a high 62 per cent) and rural Halton Hills voted Yes, while Acton slid into the No side by a mere 22 votes.

Most impressive of the regional race, perhaps, is the fact that out of 77,828 enumerated voters in Halton-Peel, a whopping 75 per cent showed up to vote. An unprecedented number for municipal or even recent federal polls. To be exact, 58,710 Halton-Peel voters went to polling stations to mark their X. At least 279 ballots were spoiled in the riding.

"I was hoping for a best possible target of 60 per cent approval," said Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner in a telephone interview Monday night after the unofficial results were announced. "We're pretty close to that. We've surpassed what appears to be the national average, we've surpassed the provincial average and the average for the Metro Toronto region."

Turner elaborated that he is pleased with the result and "very

pleased with the 75 per cent voter turn-out" and participation at the town-hall meetings.

"It's a great night for direct democracy," Turner said, adding that it was a night to smile about.

"I never doubted that Halton-Peel would go yes," said Halton-Peel Yes to Canada Committee chairperson Bob Malcolmson. "Voters in this riding were well-informed. It shows that people are concerned about the future of this country."

The Yes side in Halton-Peel kept a slight majority throughout the counting, beginning with 54 per cent support and increasing only marginally to finish with 57 per cent of the vote over two hours. The first count for the No side began at 43 per cent, wavering slightly to finish at a solid 42 per cent.

Meanwhile across Canada the Charlottetown accord was resoundingly rejected in Manitoba, British Columbia and Alberta.

In Ontario, the vote was too close to call for most of the night as poll results came in. Unofficial results Tuesday morning had Ontario

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Councillors join forces to fight MVA

By Dianne Cornish

Halton Hills councillor Rick Bonnette has found two ready allies amongst fellow Halton regional councillors in his quest to have regional council re-consider its decision to implement Market Value Assessment (MVA) across Halton during the 1993 taxation year.

Oakville councillors Stephen Sparling and Keith Bird threw their support last week behind Bonnette's efforts to rekindle discussion on the new tax system which regional council narrowly endorsed September 23.

Two weeks ago, Bonnette won unanimous support from Halton Hills Town Council for a motion requesting that all regional councillors favoring MVA re-consider their vote until the exact costs of the new system are known and a formula for its phase-in has been established. Virtually the same tactic has been taken by Sparling who recently proposed a notice of motion at Oakville Town Council calling for the same measure of caution.

Regional councillors from Burlington and Milton voted solidly in favor of MVA, while Halton Hills and Oakville rejected the proposal. The result was a 12-12 tie which was broken by Pomeroy's vote in favor of the tax change.

Speaking briefly at last week's regional council meeting, Councillor Bonnette told members of his intention to re-introduce discussion on MVA in the

near future. He later told reporters that a motion for re-consideration of MVA will have to wait "temporarily" until Halton's school boards respond to the phase-in scheme which could affect grant structures for the boards.

A resolution for re-consideration would be premature at this stage, Bonnette said, adding that "facts and figures" from the school boards are needed first. Once a motion for re-consideration has been introduced, it cannot be brought before regional council again, even if new information comes to light, the Acton councillor said while explaining his reasons for adopting a 'wait-and-see' stance, at least until school boards have reacted to the proposed implementation of region-wide MVA.

Bonnette, Sparling and Bird told Halton Hills This Week that they will work together in lobbying councillors from the opposing camp to introduce a re-consideration motion. Under regional council's rules of procedure, someone from the majority side of the issue must present the motion that will rekindle discussion of MVA.

Sparling indicated that he knows of one Burlington councillor and one Milton councillor who "thought long and hard" before casting their vote in favor of MVA. "Hopefully, someone, in fairness" will re-introduce discussion of the matter, Bonnette said.

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\$500,000 fire likely caused by lightning

A fire that caused an estimated \$500,000 has been blamed on last Friday's severe thunderstorms.

According to police, a fire started in a wood-framed shed at about 7:45 p.m., after a band of thunderstorms rolled through Halton Hills.

A man was sitting in his Dublin Line, Acton, the home "was rocked by a loud bang...the house shook and pictures fell from the walls," a police report said.

The man believed that his house had been struck by lightning and went to examine the residence for damage.

He discovered that the 40'x80' steel-sided shed was engulfed in flame.

Police say the shed contained a large assortment of tools, lawn equipment and three motor vehicles. Firefighters quickly responded to the scene but were unable to save the structure.

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