

MP Whiting optimistic about 1972

"I'm very optimistic about 1972, I can't see us going anywhere but up," Halton MP Rud Whiting said this week in a special year-end interview with his newspaper.

"The government must come to grips with some very tough problems this year, but the general attitude across the country has changed so much. I see a marked difference in people's attitudes now, compared to this time last year," he said. "They have more faith in the future, they are much more optimistic now."

Long session

Halton's busy MP is currently home from the House of Commons in Ottawa, and handling numerous problems in a week's vacation before the House resumes sittings on Feb. 16. The parliamentary session which just recessed on Dec. 31 was the third longest in the history of Canada and, in the words of Liberal House Leader Allan J. MacEachen, "a substantial amount of government business has been completed."

Although the House got through some important bills, some have been held over for the next session which starts in mid-February. The income tax bill, the establishment of farm products marketing boards, overhauling of arrest and bail procedures, establishment of the Canada Development Corporation, updating of veterans' pensions, reorganization of federal courts and changes in the regional development incentives act, establishment of a textile and clothing board, amendments to unemployment insurance and post office acts, and even the bill which increased members' salaries are among the recent accomplishments of the government.

Reform is highlight

But Whiting feels the tax reform measures was the highlight of the past year, as far as he was concerned. "We had been waiting 10 years for it," he said. "I received a lot of letters from constituents and I spoke on the reform bill, both in caucus and in the house. Many of the suggestions from constituents in Halton were incorporated in the final legislation."

The federal government has also had a hand in many new building projects in Halton, reviewed Whiting. New senior citizens buildings (which are mainly financed by the federal government and built under the supervision and management of Ontario Housing Corporation) have been opened in Acton, Milton and Georgetown and a 116-unit senior citizens apartment building is under construction in Oakville right now.

Geared to income rental housing has also been provided in Acton and Oakville and a proposal for a new unit for Milton is currently at the tender stage. A large project slated for Oakville fell through when neighbors in

the McCraney St. area objected and the government and civic officials are considering adding units to an existing low-rental housing project on Maurice Dr.

Polymer industry

Whiting said his biggest "personal" accomplishment during the past year was the decision by Polymer Corporation, a crown corporation, to locate in Milton. He worked closely with Town of Milton officials in wooing Polymer to the town and the resulting \$5,500,000 industrial plant, which will require a staff of

over 200, was well worth the effort.

Asked to enumerate any other "personal" achievements of 1972, Whiting indicated there were many smaller items on which he helped to bring about a solution. Introduction of a "claims agent" system in Acton for people who had to travel to Waterloo for unemployment insurance benefits and claims; opening of a new unemployment office in Oakville a year ago to serve the Oakville and Milton areas; his actions on literally "dozens" of immigration cases, finding solutions to veterans'

problems, Canada Pension Plan and disability pensions... the list could go on and on.

Speeds up work

In many of these cases, the people did not have to approach their MP for action, but once they were in contact with him he was able to speed up the machinery or cut down on some of the red tape involved. He cites many cases where civil servants were moving too slowly to suit some of his constituents, and a letter or telephone call from the MP got the paperwork speeded up.

The U.S. surcharge on imports, which affected many Halton firms, was a blow that fell during 1971 but the government found some relief for many of them and Mr. Whiting was busy meeting with industrialists on the surcharge and related problems during the summer and fall months.

Will there be a federal election in 1972? Whiting won't say a definite "yes" but hints there is "a strong possibility" that Prime

Minister Pierre Trudeau will call an election. Whiting feels it will be in the fall, if one is called this year.

"Good record"

"I think we will go to the country, when the time comes, with a good record of stewardship," he said. He feels his own work in the House and in the riding will stand him in good stead when it comes time to campaign for re-election.

Besides his regular duties as a back-bencher in Ottawa, Whiting has been busy on riding problems and parliamentary committee work. He is a member of the special committee on environment and pollution, which was extremely busy before the summer recess. Amendments to the Canada shipping act were given to his committee before reaching the House floor for debate.

He was also active on the public accounts committee, which meets two mornings each week and is one of the most active

committees in the House. For the past two months he has been serving as vice-chairman of the committee.

Whiting stresses that the federal government is "as close as your telephone or a mailbox."

Close as the phone

"When I was elected, I was elected to serve the people. If they have a problem, it just takes a letter or a phone call and I will be glad to assist." During the

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week when he is in Ottawa his wife takes messages at his home telephone in Oakville, 845-5985, and if she is out an answering service handles the calls. Whiting calls home at least once a day to see if there are any messages, and can usually call the person back later the same day.

He also gets "buttonholed" when he tours the riding for meetings and public speaking engagements, and has held an "open house" recently in each municipality in the Halton riding, when people could come and discuss their problems on a Saturday morning or afternoon, without an appointment.

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YOUNG SKIERS sometimes need a helping hand, as Chris Watters proves by escorting his daughter Anne at the Glen Eden Ski area. Anne is one of the participants in the junior ski program, which is sponsored by the Milton Recreation Committee.—(Staff Photo)

Safe snowmobiling course offered at Sheridan College

For the safety-minded snowmobiler, Sheridan College will offer a course designed to train snowmobile operators in methods of safe operating techniques.

The two-day course entitled Sheridan Safe S-Know-Mobiling, will be conducted Jan. 15 and Jan. 22 on the 200-acre campus site at Sheridan's Heavy Equipment School in Milton. Administrator of the Heavy Equipment School, Wilf Fournier, whose main responsibility centers around safety, will be chief instructor for the course.

Some classroom instruction will be given in one of the new buildings just opened, however the practical application will be conducted on the open fields at the campus site.

All-inclusive All safety aspects of

snowmobiling will be taught, from starting and stopping the snow machine to learning snowmobile regulations issued by the Department of Transport and what local by-laws must be observed. Snowmobilers will be instructed on compass reading, driving and steering on hard snow, soft snow and ice, different ground conditions, ecology and pollution problems and noise nuisance.

Students will also be advised on what to do in emergency situations when there is an engine failure or accident, survival methods in cold weather, what type of clothing and equipment to take on long trips and how to tow sleighs and disabled machines.

The course will cost \$15. For further information, contact the Continuing Education Division, Sheridan College, 845-9430 (Oakville); or 632-7081 (Burlington).

Seven days a week

MP describes busy schedule

What's the normal weekly schedule for a busy Member of Parliament like Rud Whiting, who serves the federal constituency of Halton in the House of Commons at Ottawa?

In a year-end interview the other day, Mr. Whiting explained his "normal" weekly schedule when the House is in session and it works out to about seven days a week, 14 to 18 hours a day.

Monday mornings you will find the MP catching the airport limousine from Oakville, where he lives, to Toronto airport. He flies to Ottawa each Monday morning and is usually in his office in Parliament's west block by 12 o'clock noon. His secretary by then has the mail ready and he usually spends a couple of hours going over the mail and dictating letters, before the House session opens at 2 p.m.

Weekend business

He stays in the House until 4 p.m., then returns to his office to work out solutions to problems which have come up at home in the riding over the weekend. Whiting says he is often in contact with about 30 constituents on an average weekend at home, and much of this requires further action from the Ottawa end. His secretary usually stays until 6 or 6:30 p.m., getting out the mail while Whiting makes phone calls and has supper before returning to the House for the evening sitting.

Parliament adjourns at 10 p.m., then he calls home to his wife and his answering service in Oakville to see what messages may have accumulated through the day. He'll often spend until 11 p.m. on the phone, returning calls to constituents, then stays to lay out his next day's work. It is often midnight or 12:30 a.m. when he heads for his apartment in Ottawa to sleep.

Morning meetings

The next morning finds him in his office around 8 or 8:30 a.m. and he'll spend the morning writing letters, making phone calls, or attending committee meetings. The public accounts committee, of which he is vice-chairman, meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. while the caucus meets Wednesdays from 9:30 to 12:30. Fridays, the House session starts at 11 a.m. and adjourns around

supper time.

Meanwhile, if there is an important function in the riding, he will make a special trip home to attend it. On a regular week, he heads home Friday evening.

Saturdays and Sundays are spent in meeting with constituents or attending social and business functions in the riding. "The phone never stops ringing, even on Sundays," he says with a grin.

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