

## Review committee sees More power at region

Halton Regional Council should have more control over autonomous and semi-autonomous boards and commissions in the region, according to members of the council's Bill 151 Review Committee.

Regional Chairman Ric Morrow told the committee at a meeting Friday that he wanted the committee to investigate the prospect of making the Children's Aid Society a Department of the Region.

Regional Council and the autonomous Children's Aid Board of Directors seem to be headed for a confrontation over the proposed CAS budget. The budget calls for a 60 per cent increase.

Mr. Morrow said he was disturbed to learn that the CAS wanted to hire its own accountant. He felt there was duplication being created that wouldn't be necessary if the CAS was considered a department of the region instead of an independent body.

Mr. Morrow angered CAS directors and members when he used the CAS annual meeting as a forum to scold the Society for its proposed 60 per cent budget increase.

That appears to be the first in a series of confrontations between the Region and the CAS will have.

The Region's Community Service Committee has said it will hold a special in-camera meeting to deal with personnel problems at the CAS and the proposed budget.

While the CAS is the organization most often in the headlines these days, the committee reviewing Bill 151 doesn't limit its plans for greater control to that body.

The committee agreed that legislation should be changed to strip the Board of Health of its autonomy.

As it stands, there are two provincial appointees and several regional councillors on the Board of Health. While the problem has never presented itself, it is possible that the Board of Health could push a program without the majority support of the council.

While the board membership is weighted heavily in favor of the council, it does represent a minority.

### O.M.B. approves severance

The Ontario Municipal Board has approved an application for a land severance for Norman and Ruth Newman north of Speyside. The severance application had been approved by the Region's Land Division Committee but opposed by the Regional Planning Department.

In a report to the regional Planning Committee Planner Brian Kropf said: "In arriving at his decision, C. G. Ebers of the OMB noted that the intent of the Official Plan was clearly to discourage scattered isolated development. However, the subject lands were unsuitable for agriculture and, while some consent criteria were contravened, several other criteria were not."

"He noted that the Board was not quite satisfied that the intent of The Planning Act would be observed in the severance. Further, Mr. Ebers stated that the Board feels the community as a whole is indebted to a family which has farmed lands for generations, and that the local circumstances of the situation are best known by the Land Division Committee."

"Therefore, with some hesitation, the Board dismissed the Region's appeal, upheld the decision of the Land Division Committee and allowed the severance."

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Unlike the planning, public works or administration committees it does not have to report to council. It does so now as a courtesy. But legally the council could not overrule a decision of the health board.

Mr. Morrow said that legislation should be tightened up to give council more control over the Board of Health. Milton Councillor Jim Watson echoed Morrow's sentiment concerning the possibility of the region's expanding role.

He favored the proposal that would make the Board of Health responsible to the Council and went even further than that.

He suggested the CAS, Police Department and Conservation Authority should all be under the direct control of the region. "I can see where one is taken in and the other is not," he said.

Chairman Morrow said the province would eventually turn over its responsibility for planning control to the

region. He said he looked forward to the day when there would be no interference on planning matters from the province. "Local control is what we want and local control is what we are getting," he said.

While the prospect of more power in planning at the regional level obviously pleased Mr. Morrow, some of the Review Committee members weren't without concern.

Oakville Councillor Laurie Mannell wondered whether or not planning should be at the area municipality level as opposed to the region. He wanted to take the responsibility one step closer to the people than the province is suggesting.

Councillor Watson said he was upset because the planners at the region had only one line of comment concerning a 650-home subdivision in Milton that council did not want, but when it

came to a land severance "away up in God's country they wrote something equivalent to the New Testament."

Don Gordon, Chairman of the Review Committee said he was annoyed from time to time by the Regional Planning Department. "What right do they have to dictate?"

Chief Administrative Officer Ernie Reid defended the planners. "They are not dictating. They are professionals and are stating professional opinions but the opinions aren't etched in stone," he said.

"That is the nice thing about it, we run the region, they don't," Mr. Morrow said, referring to the staff.

Oakville Administrator Ken Needham said the municipalities have always been subject to those sorts of comments and changes, but until now they have come from the province where local government has no control. He suggested that with the

power at the region there is at least the opportunity for more local control and knowledge of what is being done.

The region hasn't yet taken over the extra planning powers from the province and doesn't want to, until the official plan is finished.

Regional Planning Director Ed Cumming said that he intends to shift his staff that are currently working on plan preparation to handle the new responsibilities once the plan is completed and the new responsibilities are taken over.

The Bill 151 Review Committee is examining Bill 151, the Bill implementing regional council in Halton and is expected to report back to council this summer.

Up to middle age, heart attacks are five times more common in men than in women.



A CEREBRAL PALSY WALKER was presented to Milton District Hospital (and the community) this week by vice-Grand Helen Varley and Noble Grand Sharon Hyde of Evening Star Rebekah Lodge No. 79, Milton. Physiotherapist Joan Smith accepted the gift on behalf of the hospital and Tim Wigglesworth, an out-patient, gladly gave it a try. The walker is fully adjustable and can be used by children with walking difficulties. It is also being loaned out to Halton Developmental Centre for retarded children and will be available for loaning to community residents. The Rebekahs covered the \$150 cost.

### Mean vandals

Meanest vandals of the year have to be those responsible for breaking several windows Saturday night at the Kilbride home of a 97-year-old woman who lives alone. Mrs. Alma Carson said "hoodlums" are responsible and she wants them to come back and repair the windows, or she will find them and take them to court. Stones may have been used but one hole is round and looks like a bullet hole, she said. It broke both the storm window and inside window.

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## 30% in Georgetown Acton water rates up

Halton Regional Treasurer Don Farmer is recommending increases of 60 per cent in the water rates for people in the Acton urban service area. But even those increases won't be enough to cover all of the work that is being done and needs to be done on the Acton water system, Mr. Farmer told a press conference Monday afternoon.

The water rates have not been increased since 1964, a period of 13 years. Most municipalities have increased their rates every two or three years.

Mr. Farmer noted that water rates would be increased by 30 per cent in Georgetown and 30 per cent in Burlington.

While actual rates weren't readily available Mr. Farmer did say that even though it has been 13 years since the Acton rates were revised, they are currently slightly higher than the Burlington rates.

The treasurer is not forecasting rate increases for Milton or Oakville this year but indicated Milton rates may have to be increased next year. None of the rates have been adjusted since regional government took

over in 1974. In 1975 regional staff recommended uniform water rates across the region. The recommendation was rejected by regional council because council felt it wanted each area to pay for its own water and sewer service.

Regional Chairman Ric Morrow said the need for such drastic increases might be grounds to reconsider council's earlier decision to have each area pay for its own services.

He said there are some advantages in the equalized rates because that would even out the bumps that anyone area would experience.

"The Acton system has a lot of faults and requires a lot of maintenance. There are repairs we didn't even know about."

As if the 60 per cent increase in 1977 wasn't bad enough, Mr. Farmer said another substantial increase in 1978 will be required to avoid a continuing deficit.

He said there was about \$500,000 worth of work either in progress or about to be done on the system. Those debentures will come on stream next year or the year after.

Farmer said the Acton situation is a "drastic one." "The basic plant is inadequate, built on the cheap and parts of it need replacement. The soil conditions in Acton are difficult to work with. You have a number of strikes against you if you are in Acton and only limited reserves to draw from. As long as each area pays its own way one of the advantages of regional government (spreading the cost) doesn't exist," Mr. Farmer said.

Mr. Morrow said the only relief in store for Acton would be equalized water rates. He noted that there would be no provincial assistance for the problem unless Halton did go to the uniform water rates.

What makes the water rates situation even worse is the fact that 1976 was a wet summer and decreased the revenues the region would ordinarily receive and the winter was exceptionally cold.

Because of the cold winter there was an exceptional number of frozen services and broken mains that will cost the region an additional \$115,000.

Broken down to the various urban service areas Acton's share of the \$115,000 would be about \$8,100; Georgetown's share would be \$13,300; Milton's share would be about \$11,800; Burlington's share would be about \$43,200 and Oakville's share would be about \$38,000.

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\*QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD\*

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