

# Morrow scores 'negative' attitude

Regional government will work in Halton, if its elected representatives will carry out their responsibility to effect solutions in a mature and responsible fashion.

But the citizens of Halton can "no longer afford the negative, wasteful, and unproductive members whose sole aim is to return to the old system which was burdened with duplication and an overabundance of elected people," Regional Chairman Ric Morrow told members of Halton area municipalities during a fence-mending tour last week.

The chairman visited all four area municipalities to present an 18-page, 20 minute speech which reviewed the region's accomplishments and scored the negativism which has prevailed in Halton since the region was formed in 1974.

His visit to Milton Council Tuesday provoked a lively exchange of opinions—and a host of barbs. Councillor Jim Watson claimed Bill 151 gave Halton "urban government, not regional government," and suggested the region is "ganging up politically, on the northern municipalities."

County government would have worked if the local mayors had been added to it, and if there had been planners on the staff, Watson said. Putting sewers and water under the region's responsibility was another mistake, he claimed.

And Halton had a perfectly good county headquarters but "because of the new powers of the urban area of the south, we sold it," he lamented. "They (the south) couldn't get the headquarters in the south under the county system, but they did it under regional government," he said. The south has taken over rural Halton, he charged.

"If we had remodelled county government, we would have been 10 times better off," Watson suggested.

Chairman Morrow agreed it was "a terrible mistake" to leave the old county building, and agreed the power has shifted politically to the south. But the county system was not democratic, he explained, as Oakville and Burlington had four votes out of 14.

Councillor Brian Penman asked about the regional staff size and budget, and Chairman Morrow replied the staff numbered about 900 (including the police) and the budget was \$34 million. Councillor Brad Clements wondered if either the staff or the budget can be reduced. The Chairman hinted the Bill 151 Review Committee's report, due soon, will provide some answers on that. He noted the sewer crews in Burlington have been reduced by two men since the region was formed.

What prompted the visit to council, Councilor Rick Day wondered. Chairman Morrow said it was the "negativism" which has existed across Halton. No-one has put forward the good and positive things that have taken place, he said. "I tried to reflect positively on what the staff

has done," he said. Councillor Day complained the regional planning staff must listen to the area councils and give weight to their opinions on matters of planning.

"If you believe in representative government and that we represent the people, then give us more weight than the planning staff," he pleaded. Elected councillors are much closer to the people, he said.

Chairman Morrow's speech emphasized the region wishes to be "a partner with area municipalities in the provision of local government services." He coking the common interests of the four area towns.

"Much of the initial negative response could have been avoided if the general public and elected officials had had a better understanding of the pressing need, at that time, for local government change," he said.

The county system was 100 years old, designed to serve the needs of that time, he pointed out. But 100 years ago there were no cars, rapid transit, sewage plants, social services, nor police service as we know them today. "It was unthinkable that Halton would some day have a population of 250,000 people and would be part of the fastest growing area of North America," he said.

The new system gives local government the opportunity to deal effectively with modern problems, however it will take elected people who are prepared to understand and contribute, he suggested. Formerly there were eight councils, eight separate staffs, five police forces and seven garbage dumps, he recalled. Today there are five councils, one police force and the region is working toward one garbage dump. "Council and staff are working to eliminate any unnecessary duplication that remains, but for those who arbitrarily use the 'duplication' label, it is quite obvious that their knowledge of local government is very limited," he said.

On the positive side, he reviewed the many benefits of regional government:

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—In policing, more effective law enforcement has come about.

—In planning, the region has the possibility of planning for proper and effective future use of lands depending on the input from elected representatives. Traffic and transportation studies have been of use, an ecological and environmental advisory committee has been established, computer mapping of land capabilities continues, and the province is returning some approval processes to the local government.

—In landfill, the region is moving toward one "properly designated and operated landfill site" on which \$250,000 has been spent in site selection and another \$1 million will be spent to prepare the site and make it operational. Collectively, as a region, Halton can introduce resource recovery.

—In public works, which bears the brunt of the negative comments, water and sewers were made regional responsibilities for greater efficiency. This means greater use of staff and equipment and the region co-operates with local municipalities. Joint tenders have been called on many items and inventory is being reduced.

—In roads, council continues to operate the former county roads system but studies are continuing on amending the system.

—Other benefits are in the fields of social services.

"We must understand that only by working together as partners can we provide the effective local government that our citizens expect and deserve," he concluded.

Chairman Morrow also mentioned the possibility of conducting effluent from the



A BEAUTIFUL YARD earned Mr. and Mrs. Harry Grady, 626 Churchill Ave., one of the certificates of merit in the Horticultural Society's first competition. No entries were invited, an outside judge toured the town and selected the winners at random. A rockery, ornamental waterfall and numerous ornamental shrubs and flowers help set the scene at the Grady home, where gardening is a family affair.

Milton sewage plant to Oakville, to join in the trunk sewer discharge to Lake Ontario. "This would solve the restrictions being experienced by the Milton area which presently discharges the plant effluent to the stream," he noted.

"I don't believe Milton

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