

Budget is tight

Welfare cases up this year

Regional welfare expenditures are greater and the number of applicants and recipients are higher in 1978 than for the same time period last year, a staff report shows. Already it's taken a chunk out of the welfare budget, which is only slightly increased over last year's.

By the end of March 1978, almost a half-million dollars in general assistance was paid out. This figure represents 35 per cent of the estimated 1978 budget and is more than \$100,000 over the amount paid out in the first quarter last year.

In 1977 slightly more than \$1.2 million was spent on general assistance, as the regional welfare program is known. For 1978 \$1,285,300 was originally budgeted for the program but \$40,000 was chopped from that figure at budget revisions last month.

By the end of February 637 Halton residents were collecting welfare from the region—133 more than at the end of February last year.

The proportion of recipients classified as employable has risen substantially, but there has been an increase in the number of classified unemployable as well.

In the first two months of this year 566 new applications for welfare were received—over 100 more than in the first two months of 1977.

The decrease in the case-load of employables depends on whether the individual can

find a job and whether unemployment insurance payments come through, Rene Vivian, administrator of family and social services, told the regional community and social services committee last week.

"What kind of control do you have on the individual who comes in and says: 'Hey man, you don't have a job do you?'" asked Halton Hills Councillor Roy Booth, a former business man.

Mr. Booth said on six occasions he had asked Canada Manpower to send him job applicants. "None of them wanted a job and they made it very clear to me they didn't want a job. Unfortunately, I

hired one or two. One stayed two weeks and the other one day."

Oakville Councillor Laurie Mannell, a former contractor, said Manpower tries to unload those who have been on welfare longest, regardless of their interest in work. "They're under pressure to get rid of people. This makes it very difficult for the guy who really wants to work and for the employer."

Mr. Vivian said problems such as Mr. Booth described were few in Halton. Checks are made on welfare recipients, he said, adding the hiring of another staff person for the general assistance program in the near future

should tighten controls and teach people how to get jobs.

It was in anticipation of decreased welfare rolls resulting from the hiring of an additional worker that the committee recently cut \$40,000 from the welfare budget, a move Mr. Vivian at that time referred to as "folly".

The region's general assistance program pays out welfare on a short-term basis only. Its general assistance budget is 80 per cent subsidized by the province. The region is obligated to provide assistance to people in need, even if it runs over budget.

People on long-term welfare, such as single mothers or the permanently disabled, come under the province's jurisdiction through its family benefits program.

In 1977 Halton had one of the lowest welfare populations in Ontario. For example, in June 1977, 0.4 per cent of the assessed population in Halton were on the region's welfare rolls compared to the Ontario average of 1.3 per cent.

The percentage receiving provincial family benefits in Halton was less than half the Ontario average, according to figures available for October of last year.

Search on for works centre

Senior employees within the Halton Regional Public Works Department want to get employees in the southern part of the region working under one roof.

As it stands now, regional public works employees are scattered all over Oakville and Burlington and this makes it difficult for the department to operate, according to Works Director Bob Moore.

Moore said the department was working with a "rinky dinky" arrangement. "We should have our men under one roof."

Moore said some of the workers are being housed in quarters owned by local municipalities or shared by hydro utilities.

"We've been told to get out of some areas but we have nowhere to go."

Some of the work force is being housed in a house on the Burlington beach strip that has been acquired for demolition.

Regional council has budgeted for the acquisition of the site this year and plans call for the construction of a building near the end of 1979.

The committee authorized staff to renew their search for a site at the meeting Wednesday.

Regional planning committee okays subdivision—again

The on again, off again, subdivision proposal for Southwold Estates is on again, for the time being, at any rate.

The regional planning committee, after a review of the issue, again recommended approval for the subdivision of the former rural estate located at Fourth Line and Five Sideroad.

The issue goes before regional council next. The last time the planning committee recommended

approval, the council turned it down.

The subdivision is opposed by Bob Merry, who operates a pig farm across the road from the proposed development.

Mr. Merry has contended that location of homes on the former estate may interfere with future expansions at his operation because homeowners would complain about the smell.

But last week Fred Cunningham, owner of the estate, told the planning committee he is complying with the Agricultural Code of Practice in his subdivision plan.

Ed Segsworth, chairman of the land use committee for the Halton Federation of Agriculture, agreed the plan meets criteria of the

minimum distance formula but added: "When you're designing a place for industry, you don't put a subdivision in the middle of it and the farmers want the same privilege."

Mr. Segsworth said he knew of two other rural estates that would be coming up for subdivision approval. "If you want to protect the agriculture industry in Halton, this is where you have to start," he said, referring to the Southwold Estate.

"We're damned if we do and damned if we don't," exclaimed Halton Hills Councillor Roy Booth. "Farmers don't want the Agricultural Code of Practice, but will use it when it suits them."

Mr. Booth said if the development proposal was

Reconstruct Trafalgar Rd.

Halton Region's Public Works Committee has authorized staff to acquire land that will be necessary for the reconstruction of Trafalgar Rd. from Ashgrove to Stewarttown.

Plans call for the expenditure of \$179,000 for property acquisition, design and moving fences this year. The reconstruction is expected to be underway in 1979 and that work is expected to cost \$670,000.

The plan will widen the road and improve roadside drainage. According to engineer Bruce Kitchen, the water from the fields drains to the road but the ditches aren't deep enough to take the water and as a result, the fields are often flooded.

He noted in several areas the road was so narrow that there was no place for a car to pull off onto a shoulder if it had to. There are no plans to expand the road to a four lanes.

The committee considered the plan earlier but sent it back to the engineers so they could see if the project could go ahead without taking as much land.

The most recent staff report recommends purchase of the S. Zindel house along with the acquisition of land along the route of the work. In the first report staff recommended purchase of a second home as well. Staff now say that the contract can be fulfilled without the purchase of the second home but it would limit future widening if that became necessary.

—Milton Block Parents are looking for more helpers. Call Mrs. Rae at 878-4412 if you are interested in helping.

—Acton Firefighters have only had one grass fire call to date this year. Milton fire brigade has responded to several grass calls.

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