

# Region features twelve new faces



**SPEAKING** at the first meeting of Halton Regional Council in its new headquarters is Judge James Fuller. He asked the Health and Social Services Committee not to recommend cutting back its counselling services. Council decided to refer the matter back to the committee where Judge Fuller and other interested parties may speak their case.

## Despite problems

# Region opens new building

By Rod Lamb

Opening of Halton Region's new office building was officially celebrated Wednesday, Nov. 15 when regional chairman Ric Morrow and Oakville Councillor Carl Eriksen unveiled a plaque commemorating the event.

The bright green building on Bronte Rd. north of the Queen Elizabeth Way in Oakville cost \$2.6 million.

The building is paid for from \$2.1 million received from the sale of the old county building in Milton to the province and the balance from this year's budget.

It has been renting two floors in the Abbey Life building in Burlington, five miles to the west, for the past five years.

The building has had a number of critics.

One of the complaints is the bright green exterior.

However, when this newspaper asked Morrow what he thought of the color, he replied, "What color would you have it... pink?"

He said he was greatly pleased with the building, citing it as outstanding.

Location of the building was a complaint from staffers.

This newspaper learned some of the staff were unhappy because it is in "the middle of nowhere."

Situated in a green belt, the structure is far from shopping and dining amenities.

Unlike the Abbey Life building which was near Burlington Mall and had a variety of services and attractions, the new headquarters doesn't even have bus service.

The result has been all staffers have either had to drive a car to get to work or organize a car pool.

Staff used to be allowed to have coffee and refreshments at their desk. In the new building, they are asked to contain them in the cafeteria.

This newspaper has learned some of the staff members are not pleased with the cafeteria, saying it doesn't have a sufficient

variety of foodstuffs available for purchase.

However, the disenchantment with the new facility hasn't resulted in mass quittings.

Halton Personnel and Labor Relations director Dennis Camm said the staff have adjusted.

Some who used to get to work by bus have organized car pools. However, the majority of people used to get to the old place by car.

He said the move to the new building isn't as traumatic as the move from Milton to Burlington five years ago.

Parking, which had been a problem shortly after the staff had moved in, has been solved with the addition of extra parking space at the rear.

The building is unobtrusive. Motorists southbound on Highway 25 (Bronte Road) don't see it on their left until they pass an old barn. They may not see it at all if they are busy negotiating traffic. Also the building's entrance has only a three-lane entrance with a small sign saying regional headquarters.

There are no signs either south or north of the entrance warning motorists that the building is coming up.

Modern in construction, the building makes extensive use of the open concept of space with offices of one department opening onto another with no distinct boundary lines.

The result is a fluid equilibrium. Offices and barriers are created by partitions.

The feeling of openness is heightened and increased by the white walls and open ceiling which allows visitors to look at the roof and its supports.

Extensive use of windows floods all floor areas with light.

This is very true in the council chambers where three windows, in the shape of ships' bows, allow light to pour.

The walls and ceiling are white and to accentuate the lightness, and a yellow band runs around the walls where

the side lights are located.

The chambers are shaped like a small amphitheatre with the press galleries and spectator area facing down to the councillors' half moon shaped table. Halfway along the crest of the moon is the raised dais where the chairman, chief administrative officer and clerk sit.

The major complaint of the chamber is the seating for spectators.

Covered in the same sea of rust which perpetuates everywhere in the building, the carpeting is the only source of comfort to a person sitting in the public benches.

These are rock hard concrete. They are not heated. They are not particularly comfortable.

While councillors recline in plush, commander-style chairs and even the press sits on cushioned seats, the public is made to sit on cement-hard bleachers with only a layer of carpeting between them and discomfort.

No better incentive could be found for discouraging public turnout at meetings.

And while councillors can make reply to questions sitting behind their desks, the public is asked to come forward and stand behind one solitary microphone without the assistance of a speaker's podium.

Sloppy carpeting, incomplete electrical work and insufficient seating capacity for the press who have to spill over into the public gallery section are minor criticisms of the chamber.

Whether it was because of static electricity inherent in the carpeting, a number of the councillors complained of headaches during the opening meeting.

Burlington Mayor Mary Munro, who said she normally didn't get headaches, complained of one.

A complaint of heat was also levelled by another person.

Morrow said earlier there are bound to be starting problems and some time would be needed before they are ironed out.

There will be 12 new faces on the 1979-80 Halton Regional Council at its inaugural meeting Wednesday, Dec. 13.

The newcomers are as a result of the Nov. 13 election where incumbents were either defeated or decided to step down.

Representing Milton will be Bill Johnson and Gus Goutouski. They replace Jim Watson (Wares One and Three) and Jim Kerr (Ward Two) respectively.

Goutouski and Johnson will be supporting Milton Mayor Don Gordon.

Both are critics of the region's decision to locate a landfill area at Site F.

Newcomers from Halton Hills will be Mayor-elect Peter Pomeroy and Ed Wood.

They succeed incumbent Mayor Tom Hill and Councillor Garnet McKenzie, both of whom were defeated although McKenzie had stepped down to run for an area seat.

The duo will join the other three councillors from Halton Hills who were returned to office: Russell Miller, Roy Booth and Michael Armstrong.

Three new people will join the seven-man team from Oakville.

They are Bonnie Brown, Terry Mannell and Carol Gooding. They replace Gordon Reade, Arch Donaghey and Carl Eriksen. Mannell was on regional council earlier.

Reade was defeated by Mannell while Donaghey and Eriksen had stepped down. The newcomers join Mayor Harry Barrett and Councillors Mac Anderson, Laurie Mannell and Ron Planche.

He heads a team composed of newcomers Ted Macdonald, David LaCombe, Steve Toth and Jim Grieve. They succeed Tom Sutherland, Don Carter and Ben Ciprietti who stepped down. Veterans who continue to represent Burlington are Walter Mulkewich, Jack Raftis, Vern Connell and Pat McLaughlin.

## Family counselling

# Judge requests service extension

Judge A. James Fuller was the first person to address Halton Regional Council in its new headquarters Wednesday, Nov. 15.

Standing before a solitary microphone in the middle of the unfinished amphitheatre, Fuller asked council not to cut back its family counselling service.

He had appeared after the Health and Social Services Committee decided at its last meeting to reduce the service because of a falling caseload.

The region provides a family counsellor to assist people in court, every Tuesday and Wednesday.

Instead of having the parties, often husband and wife, pitted against each other in an adversary confrontation, the counsellor brings both sides together to work out their differences in a peaceful manner.

Fuller said 70 per cent of couples involved in a marriage breakdown are agreeable to conciliation. The balance, however, are determined to have their day in court.

He said the use of the counsellor enables disagreements to be ironed out and to resolve all or most of the differences between spouses.

Also, a man who has to pay alimony or allowance to his spouse is more likely to do so if he has negotiated it with his partner than if he were presented with a court order.

Fuller said the use of a counsellor in family disputes

is new, and therefore the responsibility of who pays the cost hasn't been worked out.

The cost of a counsellor to the region is approximately \$25,000 a year, plus expenses.

The counselling process is still new and often viewed as a pilot project by politicians.

Chairman Ric Morrow said the matter would be referred presentations by Fuller and other parties.

The committee made the decision in the first place. Therefore, those people who are most affected, will be able to appear before it when it holds its first meeting in the new term.


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