

Police say

# More manpower could put delinquents back on track

By JANE MULLER  
Champion Reporter

Many juvenile delinquents could be put back on track if more manpower was available to police to give one-to-one attention and operate programs aimed at reform.

A lack of opportunities for community service projects, supervisory staff for crime rectification projects, and one-to-one attention are some of the problems faced by Halton Regional Police Det. Bill Riddle of the force's youth bureau.

The number of young offenders (children under 16) who pass through Det. Riddle's office accelerate at certain times of the year—like, when report cards are received. Though not all the children he sees have been involved in criminal acts, some are "doing things which could lead to that."

Some of the youths he sees suffer behavioral problems while others have a simple "lack of direction."

"In a lot of cases it could be a problem with the parents, but it could be a problem with the child,"

contends the detective, who has spent three years with the youth bureau.

Juveniles are rarely institutionalized, as a move to other forms of rehabilitation is now the trend. Group homes (none of which exist in Halton), probation and community service programs are replacing the costly institutions.

Theresa Palomo of the Halton Children's Aid Society cites a lack of funds as the cause for a group home deficiency in Milton and Halton.

"Group homes offer a change of environment," said Det. Riddle, adding the former environment the juvenile offender was part of probably contributed to his problems.

Mandatory community service in place of fines is something Det. Riddle would like to see more of. He admits this program can run into trouble when the juvenile offenders trying to pay the consequences of their crimes are taking away paying jobs from others.

The program's merits far outweigh its downsides, however.

"It builds the child's self esteem because he is doing something constructive to pay back for his wrongs," Det. Riddle explains.

Most juveniles who find themselves on the wrong side of the law, are sentenced to probation and meet with probation officers on an average of once every two weeks. The type of guidance offered by a probation officer is sometimes not enough to put the young offender back on track, whereas a one-to-one relationship with a good role model could.

Det. Riddle looks to organizations like Big Brothers and Big Sisters to provide the manpower to give this extra attention, as there are not enough police officers to be handling such cases.

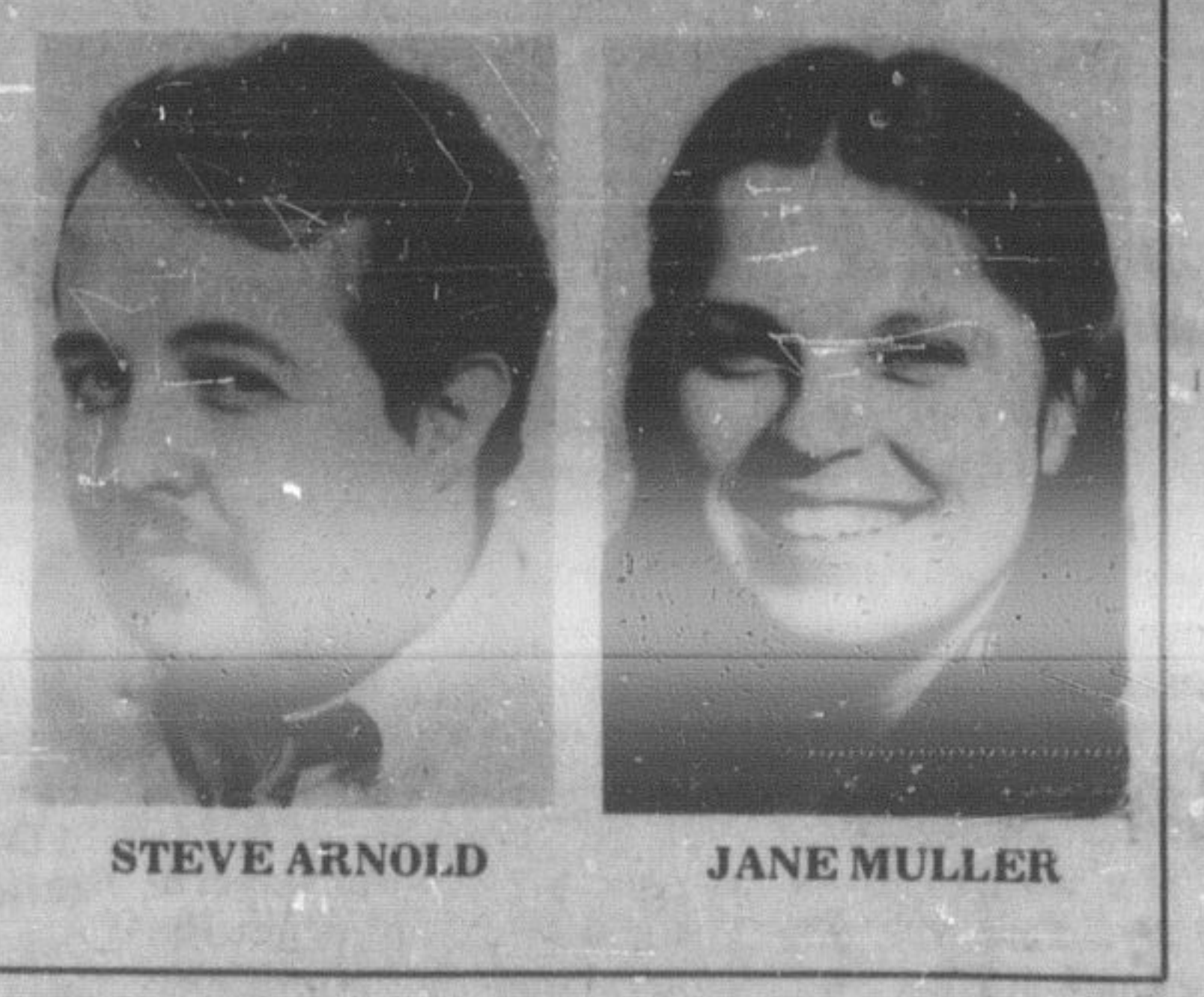
"I'd like to see a lot more Big Brothers and Sisters. Those types of agencies can really help, but it's a big responsibility," he said.

Det. Riddle likes the idea of having youths who commit crimes where, for instance, property is damaged being made to repair the damage they've caused. This type of reform is not as popular as he would like as supervision is needed and, again, the

## Champion Report:

Champion News Editor Steve Arnold and Champion Reporter Jane Muller are taking an in-depth look at social services in Milton—what exists, what is lacking and how the situation developed.

Today's segment is the first of their exclusive three-part series. The second and third parts of this exhaustive series will examine the problems that are caused because of services that do not exist and what steps are being taken to correct the problems.



STEVE ARNOLD

JANE MULLER

police force lacks this sort of manpower.

In a move to lessen the load on courts, officer discretion is being used more often resulting in some youths to be let off with a warning. There has been a recent move to sidestep court proceedings in some cases and a juvenile offender can be sent directly to a probation officer for further guidance.

"In today's society, we are dealing with problems after they happen rather than before," suggests the detective.

He said the force is taking some major strides in affecting crime prevention programs. The relatively new crime prevention bureau is not yet operating to the degree he would like to see however.

"One of our major aims has to be prevention," Det. Riddle said.

## Agency says

# Government spending inconsistent

By JANE MULLER  
Champion Reporter

The financial woes of governments are rarely sung as loud as when it comes time to dole out funds for social services.

"I just get sick when I think about it," said Theresa Palomo, public relations person for the Halton Children's Aid Society. The Society operated at a deficit last year.

She is referring to government spending in other areas, with specific reference to the recent purchase by the Ontario government of a \$10 million jet. These funds she claimed "could buy a lot of preventative programs, more than we could use in five years."

Halton Children's Aid Society (CAS) operates on the smallest budget in the Golden Horseshoe, according to Mrs. Palomo.

"They don't have an equalized funding formula, so it is not based on population or need," she said. Steps are to be taken next year to equalize the funding, she added.

"Last year Hamilton CAS had a \$200,000 surplus while Halton ran a deficit. The numbers served there are not three times greater than in Halton as the funding reflects," suggests Mrs. Palomo.

One area where the Halton CAS mounts more expenses than a major centre like Hamilton is in travel—as distant rural areas must be served.

"About five years ago we began channelling our funds into preventative programs," Mrs. Palomo said.

If such programs are pursued, she explains, vast amounts of money geared to treatment programs can be saved.

A mentally retarded child can tally a lifetime bill of \$1 million while programs aimed at preventative measures like pre-natal care can cost a meager \$5,000.

The public relations officer can't help but use the old cliché, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

A problem with preventative programs is their sponsorship by the CAS's funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Mrs. Palomo points out the difficulty in establishing a per diem rate for children who are not yet actual victims requiring treatment, makes funding all but impossible.

"They just can't get the head count," she explains.

Despite the problems in getting these programs off the ground the Halton CAS is making strides in the area of prevention.

In Milton, for example, a mother's program at the centre, which offers life skills training and help with parenting, has met with great popularity. In addition to offering guidance and a sympathetic atmosphere for mothers experiencing common problems as parents, the program provides a preschool program for children while their mothers take part in their program.

In the words of Carol Holmes, a consultant to the CAS, "we just can't keep up with treatment if money isn't spent on prevention."

Mrs. Holmes was the pioneer of a successful preventative program at Lester B. Pearson high school in Burlington—geared toward conditioning students for their possible future roles as parents.

Unrestricted by the simple academics and theories of parenting, the high school facilities a day care centre which serves to utilize previously vacant rooms at the high school. Students are actively involved with the centre as part of the course and get an actual taste of what life as a parent is all about.

In the ever growing town of Milton however Mrs. Holmes admits there is not a supply of unused classrooms to facilitate this type of operation.

Unfortunately, the situation at Lester B. Pearson High School is unique. Mrs. Holmes explains other groups wishing to occupy unused school rooms have run into a brick wall when faced with rental costs of up to \$3,000 per month.

The Halton Board of Education has taken some steps to begin parenting related courses as early as Kindergarten. Jack Richardson, a physical education consultant with the board, designed a resource package which covers Kindergarten to Grade 12 students.

## Social aid is lacking says judge

By STEVE ARNOLD  
Champion News Editor

When family problems go unsettled for too long they frequently end up before James Fuller.

As Halton's presiding family court judge, he sees the end result of what many people feel is a lack of social services in Milton and north Halton.

In a recent interview, Judge Fuller said there are many holes in the social service system in Milton for both juveniles and adults.

"In a pure child welfare sense," he said, "we do have the Children's Aid Society and its support services, but there are not too many of the society's group homes in the Milton area."

That lack of residences, he said, often means that children who must be taken out of their homes are sent as far away as St. Thomas.

In all of Halton, he added, there are only two group homes for juveniles and that comes nowhere near meeting the total need.

"In the north end there is no resource for the practical working out of community service orders," he said, adding that that particular service "which is a very effective tool for keeping someone out of future trouble with the law" relies on extra effort by probation staff to function.

Many of the accomplishments of the social service system, he added, are the result of extra effort and dedication by workers.

"Despite the lack of specific resources in the north end for juveniles, it's been my experience that the co-operation and communication among the various agencies has been very good," he said.

While the problems caused by a lack of services for juveniles can be partly overcome with extra work by existing staff, Judge Fuller said there is a real lack of facilities for handling problems in other areas covered by the Family Law Reform Act.

He noted, as an example, the problem of having conciliation reports done as a means of settling custody and access questions in divorce cases.

Despite the undeniable proof that such reports can avoid or drastically shorten family court trials, only two local agencies have the staff and experience to do the reports.

The Oakville Family Service Bureau "can do the work, but it isn't the same as having an agency right here."

The North Halton Mental Health Unit will only provide the service on the reference of a doctor.

"Despite the need and the benefit of these reports there just isn't an agency that can do that work for the court," he lamented.

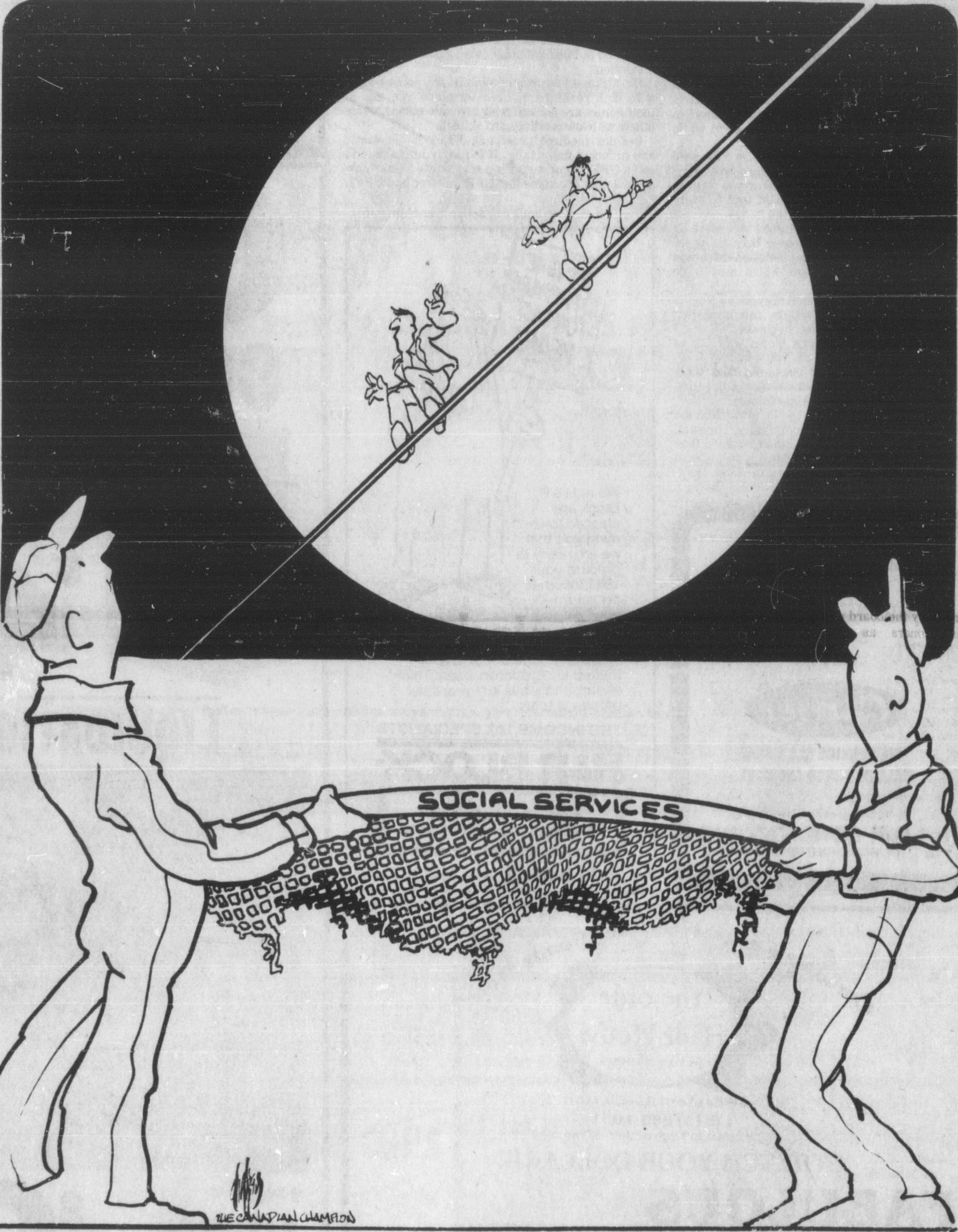
Aside from a lack of agencies, Judge Fuller said an even greater problem was a lack of transportation within the region. Residents simply cannot travel from Oakville to Milton without a car, so "it is not uncommon" for someone to miss court simply because they cannot get to the courthouse, he said.

Some of the shortages in the north end of the region, Judge Fuller speculated may be due to the size of the communities.

"For normal situations of family crisis," he said, "it seems to me that a person's community should be able to provide the services he needs."

He added that highly specialized services, such as inpatient treatment for psychiatric disorders or "locked or semi-structured settings" for behavioral disorders should not be expected in smaller communities such as Milton.

"I think the shortcomings we suffer in terms of adult services are less serious than the shortcomings in children's services," he said. "We seem, somehow, to be making do with adult services."



## Krantz asks

By STEVE ARNOLD  
Champion News Editor

Why do people always turn to the state when they have trouble?

That's a question that bothers Milton mayor Gord Krantz when he sees the growth of many social services throughout the region and the town.

"Personally," he said in a recent interview, "I have trouble accepting this trend. I don't think people have any initiative any more because they find it too easy to go to these agencies for assistance."

A life long resident of Milton, Mr. Krantz has served as a municipal councillor for 15 years before running for mayor in the 1980 local election.

"I'm a child of the depression," he declares with a certain pride. "I come from a time when, if you didn't work, you didn't eat."

"I don't think that we do enough as individuals to help ourselves," he said, "and, it really bothers me when I see generations of the same family living on welfare."

Mr. Krantz harks back to the days when the Town had responsibility for welfare services, handing out assistance to its own residents.

"In those days I was directly involved in seeing that abuses of the system didn't take place. Today, the system is far too big and it's much too easy to abuse," he said.

From his years in local government and his own experiences, Mr. Krantz feels there are several other problems with our current system of social

services. He recounts, for example, his experience several years ago when he helped a local welfare recipient get a job working with the Provincial highways department on a program to remove dead trees from the road sides.

The man had been receiving \$100 a week on welfare and was paid \$125 a week to drive to Mississauga for the tree cutting job.

"This was a man who really wanted to work, but he had to stop and ask himself if it was really worth it to put himself to the trouble of working."

"He realized that he would be a fool to work,

because the difference compared to what he could get on welfare was peanuts. He quit the job and I couldn't blame him for it," Mr. Krantz said.

The mayor argues that a "work for welfare" program should be considered for Halton, but notes that the Provincial government has turned thumbs down on such schemes in the past "and that's wrong."

At the base of all the debate over welfare, he said, is a simple lack of desire for people to help themselves, rather than to rely on social services.

"I didn't have any money when I quit school, but I had the initiative," he said.

There are other problems however, he admitted.

"Compared to the rest of the region, I think Milton is being shortchanged on the social services it's getting, but I'm not sure that the need for more is there," he said.

Mr. Krantz said he does "get the odd call from someone who feels most of the services provided by local agencies are adequate for the needs that are apparent."

Milton does, however, need low income housing and day care services, particularly for people who need subsidies.

"It certainly hasn't been because of a lack of try-

# Local growth is painful council says

By STEVE ARNOLD  
Champion News Editor

Milton today is changing faster than any of Halton's four municipalities, and like all change, the process is not entirely painless.

As more and more people crowd into the town, the services that provide a support for those in pain and trouble are less and less able to cope with the new demands being made of them.

This situation, along with the growing cries that have been heard from coroners, resulted two years ago in the formation of the North Halton Social Planning Council.

Bill Tom, chairman of the council, said it is clear that the influx of new residents to Milton and North Halton is putting a strain on the existing network of social services.

"The communities in the north are certainly changing with the influx of families from more urbanized areas, families who are used to having more social services available than are generally being offered here," he said in a recent interview.

"It's not that these families have more problems, it's just that people here have been used to solving their problems within their own families."

Mr. Tom explained that in a more rural area, such as Milton used to be, the family was the major source of social services, services that residents now expect municipal government to provide.

"I think the people who come here don't have the backup that's available to some of our older families," he said.

Mr. Tom noted, as an example, that in bygone days when grandparents lived nearby, demand for government day care services was low.

Since its inception, the council has been involved in a number of projects aimed at improving the social service scene in north Halton, he said.