# Tax imagination rather than homeowners

■ 1038 ■

By STEVE ARNOLD Champion News Editor

A failing economy means public administrators have to tax their imaginations to the hilt rather than their residents.

That's the view Halton's new director of social services brings to her position at the head of one of the region's largest departments.

Debbie Oakley, who has been "learning the ropes" of her new position for the last month, was hired to replace Rennie Vivian, demoted in a shuffle of senior Regional staff.

He now heads the welfare branch of the department. Halton's social services department, in addition to welfare, is also responsible for the operation of Halton Centennial Manor and day care services.

"I wouldn't say there are any great gaping holes in the social services system you have here, but there is plenty of room for planning," Miss Oakley said in a recent interview

"You have a very sophisticated system operating here, but you have to continue to analyse what the changing needs or people are. . . especially in a pretty restrained budget situation."

"That's a realization that I intend to live with," she added

Miss Oakley was hired by Halton from a position with the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services which she held for three-and-a-half years. She worked a total of 10 years for the Provincial government

"I was looking for a new challenge," she said when asked why she left the Provincial civil service. "I liked what I was doing but I wanted some more variety in my experience.'

With Regional budgets getting tighter each year and the demand for social services rising con-

## Rent control breaks ranks

Rent control is a question that not only the provincial Conservatives are grappling with, it's also an issue that is breaking Liberal party ranks.

Julian Reed, Liberal MPP for Halton-Burlington, said that his own personal opinion on rent controls does not reflect the sentiments of the Liberal party

"I do believe the blanket imposition of allowing six per cent increase every six months has a negative effect on rent," he said. "It causes an automatic increase of six per cent without any justif-

George Kerr, Progressive Conservative MPP for Burlington South, said that he thought rent controls should be continued but the six per cent ceiling should be increased to a more realistic allowance of nine or 10 per cent."

The current six per cent ceiling he said, is not realistic for a landlord who pays 13 to 14 per cent in overhead costs.

Mr. Reed argues that now that rent controls are with us, "it'll be very difficult to get out of."

He said rent controls shouldn't apply in places like Sarnia where there is a 20 per cent vacancy rate, compared to Metro Toronto where available apartment space is next to zero.

"I don't see the logic of applying rent controls in an area that has a 20 per cent vacancy rate," he said. "Rent control is most appropriate on a local-

Throughout Halton the vacancy rate is 0.5 per cent, according to an October 1981 CMHC survey. Halton regional planner Dave McCLeary estimates the figure is actually lower than 0.5 per cent because CMHC only looks at the vacancy rate in apartment buildings that have six or more units.

Since 1971, the population of Milton has increased by 95 per cent. McCleary says Halton's population is continuing to grow because it is "an area still held as being attractive and it's not as busy and bustling as Toronto."

Halton's population is expected to continue growing up until the 21st century.

Regional and municipal planners will attempt to tackle the question of future housing in Halton at a

housing workshop scheduled for April. The workshop will have a wide range representation from the Minister to municipal Affairs and Housing Claude Bennett, to developers, community groups and concerned citizens, said Mr. McCleary.

"It's for everyone," he said. "A grassroots work-

shop designed for the exchange of ideas." A number of questions have to be looked at in the years ahead in regards to housing for the aged, handicapped and those under the care of Children's Aid Society, he added.

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information about who we are and what we do Halton's welfare system, which provides financial support to people in difficulties, is a target of

here and there."

some tough decisions in the future.

social services in Halton Region.

some incredible abuses going on," she said.

frequent criticism by taxpayers and councillors concerned about the cost and the apparently rising number of people depending on the Region for sup-"I don't think that we are unable to defend either where we are or where we are going with this system," Miss Oakley said. "Historically, people in

creativity, so we are going to have to be much more

analytical. We just can't go out and throw money

"We will have to go out there and create a pre-

sence and to the best of our ability ensure that the

money in this way. We have had a lot of experience defending that fact." While admitting that there will always be some abuses of a welfare system, Miss Oakley said there

are several factors built into Halton's system to

my position have had to defend spending public

stantly, administrators such as Miss Oakley face keep the abuses to a minimum. These include strictly enforced criteria for el-"We are going to have to be pretty creative in how igibility, frequent reviews of cases and managewe patch up our net," she said. "There are limits to

ment information systems. "Right now, however, there is not any kind of rampant abuse of the system going on. There will always be some, but those are always widely pub-

Among the needs that have to be met currently, licized before they are over," she said. she said, is the need to educate the public about "Part of the problem we have is that sometimes people don't clearly understand the process them-selves. We have to make an effort to educate them "For one sector of the public we have to demystify this whole thing. They think there are

about their rights and responsibilities," she added. In her new position Miss Oakley is working "much closer to a political arena" than in the past. "From what I've seen to date there seems to be a pretty strong commitment to social services. There's a healthy balance of control of the spending with some creative kinds of program and a reason-

able commitment to improving the standard of liv-

Welfare programs, she said, are not designed to create dependency on the Region. Most modern programs are actually aimed at the opposite goal, providing help to break a cycle of welfare and dead-end

"We step into an emergency situation where a person is looking for someone to lean on. We will put bread on the table, but we will also work with the person to help move him toward some form of training and employment.'

"Legally we can't abdicate the responsibility to provide food, clothing and shelter to people in need,

nor would we want to," she said.

Even the subsidized day care program operated by the Region is aimed at helping to break the welfare cycle, "because we are making it possible for a person to go out and make a way for herself.'

Even the services of Halton Centennial Manor, a Regionally operated home for the aged in Milton, are held back as a last resort of residents who can

no longer care for themselves in the community. The use of the Manor, however, is kept down by a number of community support programs, such as the Meals on Wheels, which make it possible for sen-

ior citizens to stay longer in their own homes.

CAS gets

co-ordinator

James Dickinson has

been hired by the Halton

Children's Aid Society as

interim co-ordinator of

the Children's Services

The move was made

\$20,000 grant provided

the Ministry

Community and Social

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DEBBIE OAKLEY

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**TENDERS** 

The Halton Board of Education will receive tenders for Audio Visual for secondary schools. Tenders will close at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 10, 1982.

Detailed tender lists and other particulars for the above classification may Administration 2050 Guelph Burlington, Ontario

necessarily accepted.

L. V. Auger Wally Beever Director

### Teacher to dine with Queen

Brian Turnbull of Oakville will be one Canada's choosen from each of the 282 federal ridings to dine with Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip at Ottawa this Friday.

Halton MP Otto Jelinek selected the 34-Oakville High School music teacher for the after "much consultation," for his contribution to music

within his community. He directs three different bands and is a lead organist at an Oakville church. To his credit is the Tempest Youth Choir which he founded 10 years ago and continues to direct. This choir has gained not only but national recognition.

### TANNING HINTS

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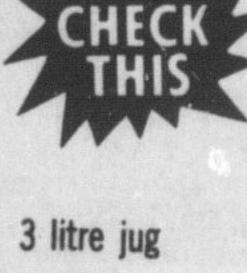
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