

## Farmers hope for interest relief

By Jack Dinardo  
Halton's farmers aren't suffering yet due to high interest rates and an Ontario government relief program expected last week may prevent them from becoming a problem.

Ontario Treasurer Frank Miller has promised some sort of assistance to farmers being squeezed by high interest rates with a program involving \$50 to \$100 million.

The Halton Federation of Agriculture representing 200 members says area farmers are in good shape for now but that conditions are rapidly approaching the critical stage.

"If the government doesn't do something soon there are not going to be any farmers around to produce food for us," says federation president Ed Segsworth.

Mr. Segsworth is a cash crop farmer north of Burlington with more than 900 acres under seed and is carrying a large debt load.

While not giving specific figures, he did note that "we're paying the going rate of interest on our debt load and we are currently looking at 20 per cent."

"It varies from Thursday to Thursday when the new Bank of Canada rates are announced."

"If we were like any other industry, we could pass our costs on."

"But we don't set the final prices for our products and we have to work in between the buyer's prices and our costs and hope we make a profit."

He says prices are set by buyers according to a variety of factors, in-

cluding world supplies and that the farmer is at the mercy of the buyers who sets prices without regard to the farmer's costs.

"The only stabilization in farming is anything that has marketing boards."

"It doesn't make the farmer rich but it does stabilize prices."

This adds some predictability to the process and allows the farmer to do some planning.

While he hasn't heard of any specific cases involving farm foreclosures, Mr. Segsworth does know that some are, particularly hog and beef farmers, are hurting.

Ministry of Agriculture and Food representative for Halton, Henry Stanley, agrees and says that foreclosures aren't significantly higher than the two or three experienced annually over the past few years.

Several farmers have called his office to see what help the government is going to offer.

"Some feel quite strongly that the government should do something to help them."

They see inflation as a government problem.

"Rightly or wrongly, they are blaming the government for high interest rates and want to know what they will do to help them out, which I suppose is reasonable."

In contrast to times past, Mr. Stanley finds that farmers today are more price conscious and are shopping around more before purchasing their supplies.

In fact, he says farmers are becoming very good bargainers and in general they keep better

track of their financial affairs.

Halton's farmers are carrying an average debt load in the \$100,000 to \$250,000 range, with much of that borrowing being for seed and fertilizer, he says.

The other big area for borrowing is on farm machinery, and he advises making do with the old equipment until interest rates come down.

"There seems to be a psychology of 'we have high interest rates now but it could go higher, so farmers are buying anyway.'"

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has several suggestions about the form government aid should take, including interest rate reductions, the immediate suspension of foreclosures, an emergency refinancing program with loans at eight per cent and a loan forgiveness program, says Mr. Segsworth.

Bank manager Garry Schlaht says there are no hard and fast rules regarding foreclosures since it depends on each individual's particular set of circumstances.

In his two years as manager of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Milton, there have been no farm foreclosures.

He says farms in the area are well-established and he anticipates few interest-related problems. "In my opinion we try to help people and we have never walked in and just thrown a farmer off his property."



## He's no ham

Thirteen-year-old Timothy Brackett of Nobleton looks over some equipment at Hamfest, an impromptu convention of ham radio operators, at Milton fair grounds over the weekend.

## Gymnasium size won't be limited

Halton board of education trustees shot down an administration proposal to limit the size of general purpose rooms and gymnasiums to 3,200 sq. ft.

A discussion by the board on the merits of the policy found that there was a questioning of the entire policy, especially in the areas of loading capacity before a second gym is considered and overall size. The policy was tabled for future consideration.

Oakville trustee Bill Herd said a lot of people were concerned about the size of gymnasiums and that the administration

should show a more innovative and enlightened approach.

Director of Education Emerson Lavender responded that 3,200 square is enough space. If the trustees don't like that they can vote to change the recommended size, he added. "Our position has been that 3,200 sq. ft. has been acceptable."

Mr. Herd moved an amendment that the size these rooms be 4,000 sq. ft. "I would like to see the board, especially with this addition at E.J. James Public School, take the initiative and add another 800 square feet. It would provide that much

more flexibility for programs and community use," he said.

But trustee Marg Bullock said amendments to enlarge the size of this school's gymnasium have already been turned down twice by the board and she can't see why the issue keeps coming back to the board.

Chairman Bill Lawson pointed out the intent of the amendment was that all future intermediate schools shall be 4,000 sq. ft. and not just E.J. James.

Ann Fairfield noted that this amendment won't apply to E.J. James until the plans for

it come back before the board for tender calls.

Trustee Betty Fisher supported the amendment because it will enable schools with more than 360 pupils to provide physical education to everyone on a daily basis. By going to 4,000 sq. ft. the gym can be divided in half for some activities to accommodate this daily schedule.

However, questions on a minimum size and the number of students to be accommodated by these gyms led the board to

table the policy for future study.

The Maple Grove Area Ratepayers' Association supports the need for a 4,000 square-foot gym. In a letter to the board the association states that in the interests of safety and for better community use the board should consider enlarging the proposed size of the gym. It suggests that any additional costs may be paid by Oakville since recent discussions with local politicians have revealed a positive interest in the larger facility.

Another letter from the E.J. James Home and School Association pointed out that a study on the need for daily physical education submitted to the board by the Georgetown University Women's Club in 1978 calls for a greater emphasis on physical education.

The association believes that the current recommendation of 3,200 sq. ft. is inadequate to achieve a program of quality physical education on a daily basis for every elementary school child.

The college paid \$32,000 to have the original work done with only some books destroyed and some minor damage to the cafeteria.

Under the contract with the exterminators, the work was guaranteed for a year and was thus done for free.

Currently the school is considering the possibility of putting Royal Pest Control of Toronto on a yearly retainer for 10 per cent of the original cost in the event of any future outbreaks.

"What happened with some of these termites was they got inside the expansion joints inside the concrete walls and travelled through that," she said.

So when the entire college was sprayed, the termites may have escaped to the roof of the building and returned

later, she said.

Al Moncton, of Royal Pest Control explained that the way the college is built, wooden forms were originally put in to hold the concrete in place and the termites travel along these wooden forms in the expansion joints.

"Their big problem at the school is that the building and the grounds should have been pre-treated and then it wouldn't have happened," said Mr. Moncton.

He advises such treatment for any new buildings pointing out that some of the groundfill now being used in Oakville comes from Toronto and may be infested with termites.

College officials believe the termites entered the school via a shipment of books and then spread from there, but Ministry of the Environment entomologist Geoff Cutten disputes that theory.

"We are checking to see if the infestation was caused by books being brought in."

But I doubt that, it's more likely they were brought in by contaminated soil or through the portables that were transported to the school," explained Cutten.

Since the college is isolated from nearby residences, the threat of the infestation spreading is minimal. Oakville's building department has been alerted to the problem and is on the lookout for any signs of its spread.

So far, neither the town nor the region's health department are aware of any similar infestations in the area.

The ministry is planning to conduct a survey this summer of neighboring residences and adjacent areas in an effort to control the spread of the termites.

Mr. Cutten said there is no cause for alarm and the survey is just a preventative measure.

Termites are one problem that can be controlled and their presence won't necessarily affect house values, he said.

"Termites are becoming a wide-spread problem right across southern Ontario."

But they can be controlled and the province contributes to the cost of chemically treating a house on the basis of an average cost of \$500, Mr. Cutten said.

## Sheridan's termites trying to take over

By Jack Dinardo  
Just when they thought they had them licked, Sheridan College officials discovered a new outbreak of termites late last week on its main campus.

The problem first surfaced last August when termites were found in the walls and bookshelves of the bookstore and in wooden beams in the cafeteria.

Exterminators were called and the whole perimeter of the college was drilled and filled with pesticides to control the problem and prevent it from spreading.

"But we found more termites last week under the control room in Sheridan Hall, where the controls for the lighting for the stage are held," said director of information Joanne Emerson.

## Christian youth want post office

Milton staff will look at, but council doesn't hold out much hope for, a plan to turn the old post office into a young Christian drop-in centre.

Evangelist Rev. Ken Campbell, on behalf of the Golden Horseshoe Youth Association, has informed council his group would take over the old post office at Main and Martin Sts. and use it during the summer for a drop-in centre.

Clerk Co-ordinator Roy Main said that as far as he is concerned, he hopes the building will be demolished.

"The building, as it stands now, is not fit for use," he said.

Mr. Main said there are a number of structural faults with the old post office and he said "I'd like to see it demolished."

In the recent Chamber

of Commerce Civic Study, the building is seen as part of an expanded farmers' market.

Councillors said they probably would go along

with Mr. Main, but asked him to have the building checked to see if it can be put to any use and that might include the request by Rev. Campbell.

Pit request rejected

Milton Council will inform Bot Construction the town is opposed to the firm taking aggregate from the John Eaton property for use in building Highway 403 in Mississauga.

Both had written a letter requesting permission to extract granular material from the quarry pit in the Nassagaweya area.

Although Milton can object, it is not likely to make any difference.

## Changes confirmed

Regional council has confirmed a number of staff changes within the newly reformed Department of Social

Services. Margaret Weightman becomes Manager of Administrative Services.

## Johnson lashes response

Councillor Bill Johnson wants to have Milton lodge an official complaint and send a delegation to Queen's Park over what he has called "a typical example of the civil service mentality."

Mr. Johnson was referring to a letter sent by D.E. Bogart, Director of Policy Development for the Ministry of Health.

The letter was a comment on a Milton request for support on identification cards for the chronically disabled.

Even though the Ministry supports the International Year of the Disabled, Mr. Bogart said "although the issuing of such cards is an interesting concept, from the Ministry of Health's perspective, there are a number of

problems which make implementation difficult.

After listing the problems and a number of other Ontario Government support programs, Mr. Bogart said "in conclusion there are substantial practical obstacles to the provision of identification cards."

"Moreover, because of the varying program definitions and various jurisdictions involved, such cards would not prove of universal value in obtaining services."

"Nevertheless, I appreciate having this expressing on concern of the Milton Town Council."

Mr. Johnson said he found the letter distressing and he asked council for a delegation to go and protest to the Minister.



## Scouts camp out

First Milton Scouts take time out from a busy camp schedule for a group picture. The Scout group was revived, after being dormant for several years, by Scoutmaster Glenn Bragg, assistant Carl Starks and assistant Peter Schandan. The boys represented Milton at the Scout-Guide camp, hosted by Acton members at Blue Springs Scout Reserve on the weekend.

## Two are posted

Regional Council has confirmed two new appointments in the restructured Clerk's Department.

Mrs. Pat Crimmins becomes the Recording Secretary while Farida Daruwala becomes Assistant Secretary.

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