

## Housing project was on shaky ground

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 copy. It was like a long football game. You mess up in one quarter and you can lose the whole thing." The club couldn't afford to pay \$400,000 for the land, which they considered an outlandish price anyway. But the ministry appeared willing to hold firm. "It was like talking to a wall," Mr. Douglas remembered. Finally, the Rotarians went to a meeting with the provincial bureaucrats convinced that "either we were going to walk out of the

room with the project or without it." The ultimatum proved unnecessary. Stunned, the service club members sat across from the government officials only to find, "they had already agreed to our price," Mr. Douglas remembered. There were many times when the Rotarians were discouraged, although they did not let that show despite newspaper stories indicating the project was on shaky ground. "We wanted to appear optimistic," Mr. Douglas said.

But at one point they had been "fully prepared to just blast" the ministry in the press for foot-dragging, Mr. Douglas admitted. "Walt Elliot made it so we didn't have to do it that way." The complex will consist of 14 low-rise two-bedroom apartments and 12 three and four-bedroom townhouses. The project is financed at commercial rates through a loan guaranteed by the province. The loan is paid by rents, a variable percentage of which the province subsidizes.

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Hydro commissioner Bill Rowney (left) and hydro employee Catherine Currie (right) presented retiring Milton Hydro employee Mary Emmerson with a coffee table as a parting gift. She's worked for Milton Hydro for more than 30 years.

## Milton Hydro accountant retiring after 30 years

Fellow Milton Hydro employees and commissioners treated Mary Emmerson to a retirement reception last week to show their appreciation for her 30-plus years of service. Mrs. Emmerson leaves at the end of the year after 30 years of overseeing hydro customers' accounts in Milton. She recently moved to a Burlington apartment where she plans to do more church and charitable work in the community, and "take life easy for a change".

Travel is also in her plans. Staff organized a buffet luncheon in her honour on Dec. 19, where employee Catherine Currie and hydro commission chairman William Rowney presented a coffee table for her new apartment. Co-worker Sherri Crowe baked and decorated a special "happy retirement" cake for the occasion. Staff also put together a humorous 10-minute video, depicting highlights of Mary's work at Milton Hydro from her initial interview to her "retirement benefits negotiating session". Customer Service supervisor Dave Smith dressed as 'Mary' for the hilarious film, a copy of which was presented to the guest of honour.

Mrs. Emmerson recalled when she was first hired by former manager Or Hadley on Sept. 1, 1958, there were only three people in the office. She began as a "girl Friday" doing every job which came her way, but as the office and the work grew, she specialized in accounts payable, later becoming accounting clerk. Prior to moving to Milton from Toronto that year, she had worked for Ontario Hydro for one year. Milton Hydro's service area has grown from the original urban core of Milton to cover a 20-square-mile area. The 1958 population was about 6,000; today it's more than 33,000. The staff of three in 1958 has correspondingly grown to 36 in 1988. Mary recalls Milton's main growth began around 1975. Hydro service was restructured with regional government in 1974, when the local hydro's boundaries expanded. More growth came in 1985. She said she's really looking forward to retirement, but will miss the office and the friendly staff she has worked with over the years. She said she hopes to be back for a visit in 1989 when Milton Hydro celebrates its 75th anniversary of service to the community.

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