

# Children's Aid wants Halton to keep finger in financial pie

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By NORMAN NELSON

Halton Children's Aid Society (CAS) thinks it's important that local ratepayers continue to pick up a portion of its budget.

The Province currently splits the cost with Halton Region on an 80-20 basis, but is suggesting it will pick up the full tab.

It's not that the Province is being unduly charitable.

Rather, it's conducting a comprehensive review of social services and in all likelihood would simply redirect the municipal contribution to other social service areas such as child care.

## Pleaded with Region

On Monday, representatives of Halton CAS were on hand at a health and social services committee meeting to plead with regional politicians to keep them on the payroll.

"It's imperative that we maintain the status quo," said Halton CAS past president Grant Dickenson. "We feel like a pawn that's being shuffled."

Halton CAS want a continued regional presence for two reasons — funding and lobbying.

It doesn't believe the lost municipal funding base would necessarily be replaced by the Province, and it also fears political and community backing in the region will be eroded.

"Unless we speak through regional government we may not be heard at all," stressed Mr. Dickenson.

## Not blinking

Over the years, regional councillors have been prominent on the CAS board of directors, and the CAS credits them with not blinking during crucial funding confrontations with Queen's Park.

That's why Mr. Dickenson dis-

agreed with one rationale of the Province, that municipalities only have a "nominal role in child welfare."

"That is the most incorrect statement that I could imagine, at least in terms of the situation here in Halton," he said.

## Better informed

"Over the years the regional representatives, in many instances, were better informed on the issues than

some of the other board members and because of this carried and persisted in a certain line of action. Because of that I think we're a better agency than we otherwise would have been. Their involvement is indispensable."

Oakville councillor Peter Arch, a longtime representative on the CAS board of directors, agreed, saying that if the Province picks up the entire tab "the Region's role will be diminished and our strong voice will

be diminished."

Mr. Arch added that he recalls several funding battles over the last decade "led by regional councillors."

## Property tax dollar

While Burlington councillor Walter Mulkewich agreed the Region has played an important role, he added that there is also the "matter of what the property tax dollar can pay for."

"I've always been persistent that social services and child care should

not be paid by the property tax dollar.

"I think this council should be persistent in its argument to the provincial government that there are certain things that simply aren't appropriate to be put on the property tax dollar, and that they should be put on the (provincial) tax base, which is more able to bear the load."

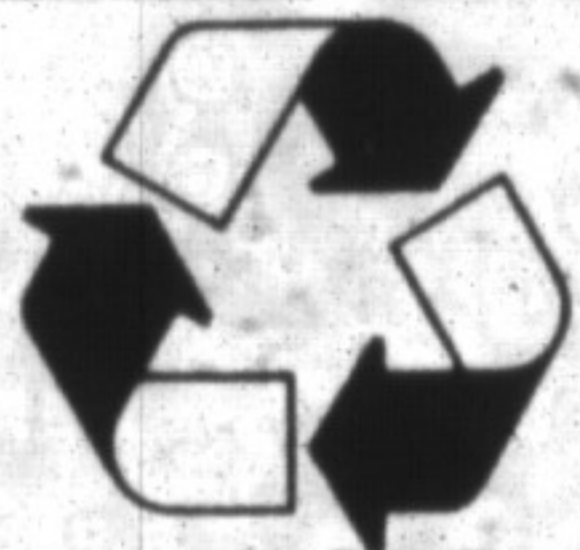
Council is not expected to forward to the Province its stand on the issue until sometime this fall.

## Halton offers Think Green environmental kit

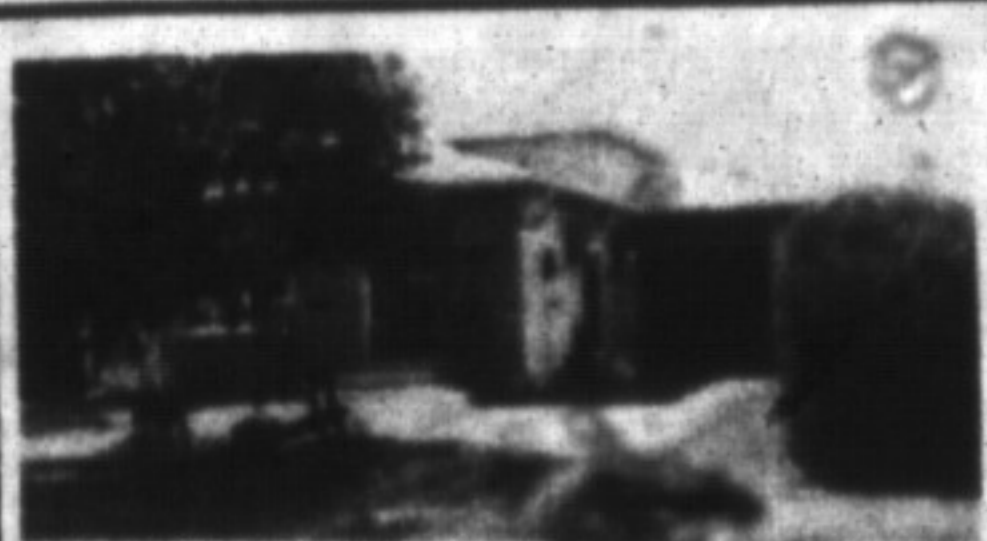
In response to inquiries from the community about environmental protection, the Halton Regional health department is offering a free information kit.

The kit contains the federal publication *What We Can Do For the Environment*, information about the Region's waste reduction and household hazardous waste programs, and a 'Think Green' refrigerator magnet.

To receive the kit, call 878-7261.



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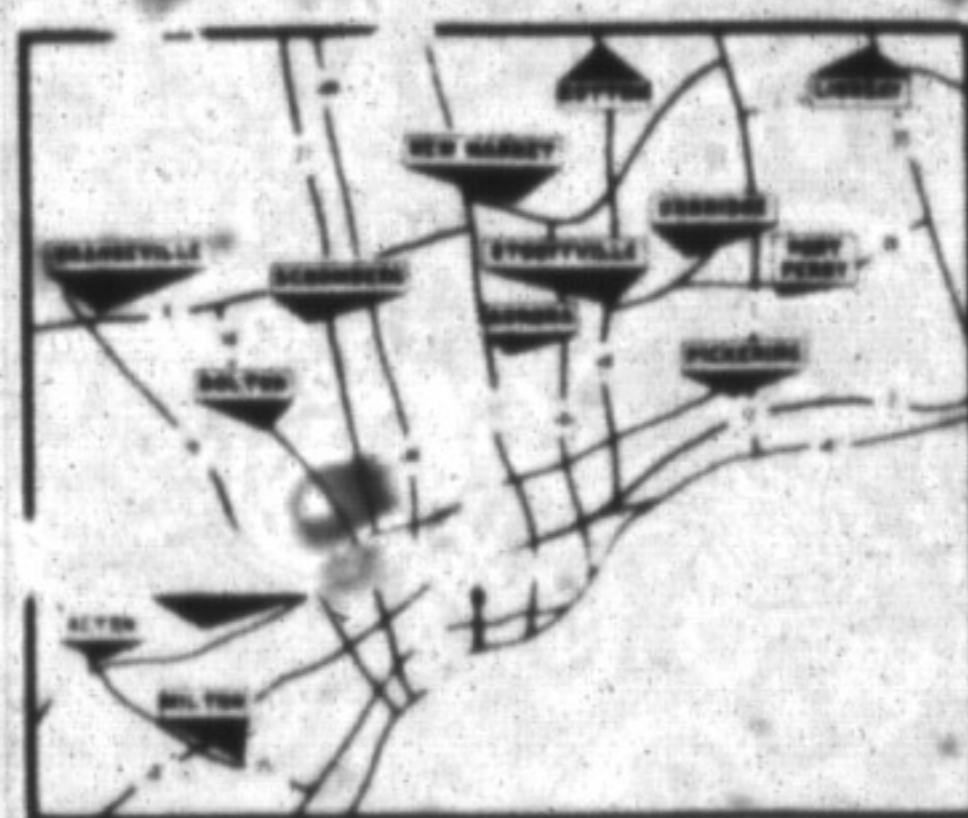
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