About 235 unionized workers at Halton Centennial Manor voted on a stract throughout the tentative vening hours yesterafternoon day. Results had not been tabulated at press time.

Mary Edwards, president of Local 261 of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), declined to elaborate on the agreement until after the ratification vote, although she confirmed it was a one-year deal.

The union represents non-nursing employees who are seeking wage increases of about 7-8 per cent and im-

proved working conditions. Wage rates currently range from \$9:94 an hour for housekeeping staff to \$16.12 for a stationary engineer.

Halton Region's commissioner of human services, Greg Hughes, also declined comment until Halton regional council considers the agreement at its regularly scheduled meeting this afternoon (Wednesday).

Both union and management negotiators recommended the deaf be accepted.

Although-progress has been made, Ms Edwards promised the same is-

sues will be back on the table when negotiations for the next contract get underway in the spring.

"Out of the frying pan and right back into the firepit," she said.

The union, which has been without a contract since May, filed for provincial conciliation when contract negotiations broke down in September. There had been aproximately half a dozen day-long negotiating sessions prior to that, stretched over a period of several months.

Under regulations in the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act, the workers cannot strike.

The mediation talks, held last weekend, stretched from 10 a.m. Friday morning to past 5 a.m. on Saturday.

Mr. Hughes said the two parties went back and forth with offers until they reached some "common ground.

"It was tough at the beginning," said Ms Edwards. "We had a 21-hour session trying to get a tentative agreement. Now it's membership's hands."

#### OPP RIDE on

With Christmas season approaching, Milton OPP advise that the RIDE Driving Impaired. (Reduce Everywhere) program is in full swing.

Last week, Milton OPP charged two motorists for drinking and driving offences and two motorists with having open liquor in their vehicles. Three drivers had their licences suspended for 12 hours as a result of having consumed too much alcohol.

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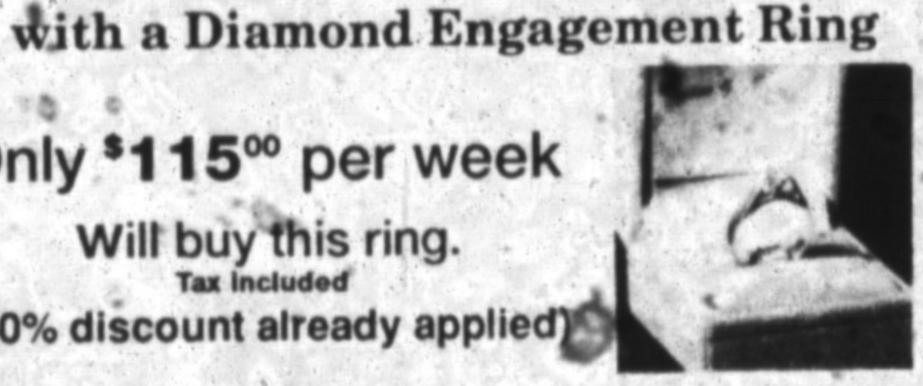
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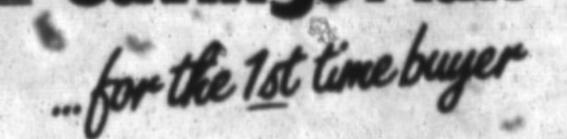
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