

Manor staff expected to accept offer

About 235 unionized workers at Halton Centennial Manor voted on a tentative contract throughout the afternoon and evening hours yesterday. 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 deal 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 approximately 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 in the membership's hands."



Power of print

Halton-Peel MP Garth Turner, a former newspaper columnist, knows the power of the printed word and he recently honoured some people who have helped bring that power to others through their work as volunteer literacy tutors. These Milton recipients are: (front row, l-r) Jane Overden, Irene Saunders, (back row, l-r) Ted Drewio, Gordon Hogarth, Mr. Turner, John Gent. Another volunteer, Paddy Fogg, was not available.

OPP RIDE on

With Christmas season approaching, Milton OPP advise that the RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving 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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