

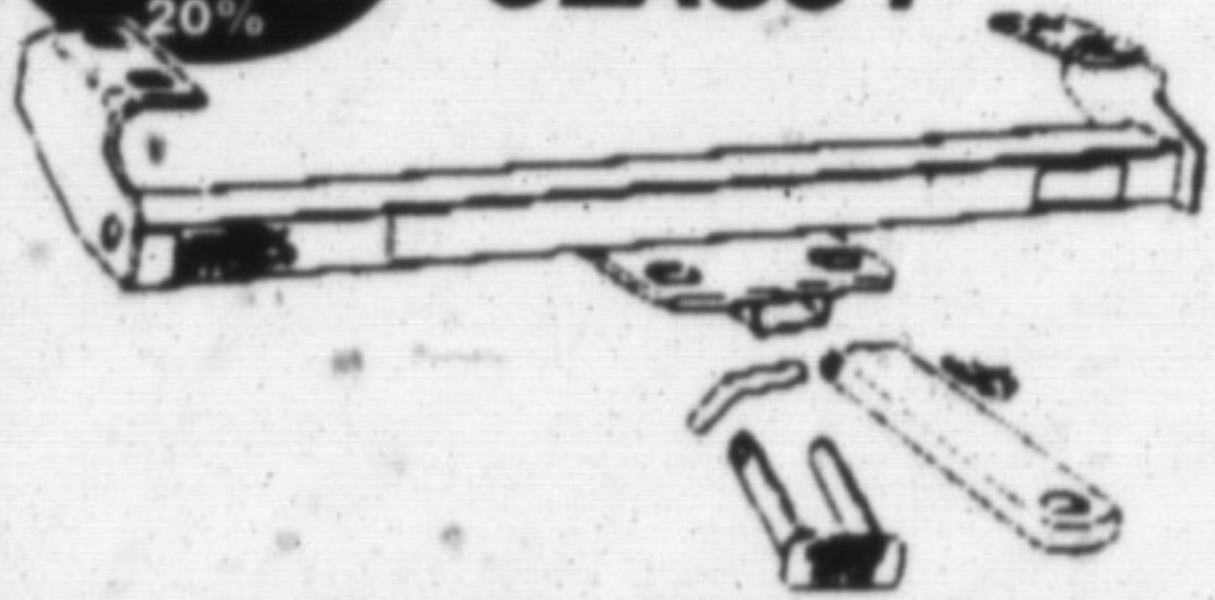
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Hundreds expected to join labour protest in Hamilton

By KAREN SMITH
The Champion

Hundreds of Milton union members are expected to join a massive labour protest in downtown Hamilton today and tomorrow.

Some of the workers, members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), have taken the day off today to attend Hamilton Action Days.

The two-day protest against the Harris government's public sector cutbacks is expected to draw more than 50,000 people. At least 13,000 public sector jobs are threatened by the cutbacks.

"A lot of people from this area are going down there," said Alma Gildea, president of Local 271 of OPSEU, which represents employees of the Land Registry Office, the Provincial Court, probation and parole offices, Milton OPP (civilians) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in Halton Hills.

Other local OPSEU members — including workers at Maplehurst prison, the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf, Allendale and the Ontario Agricultural Museum — will attend tomorrow.

The protest coincides with a provincial Progressive Conservative policy conference at the Hamilton Convention Centre.

Ms Gildea, who's serving as a parade marshal in a massive labour march at the protest, says as many as 1,400 OPSEU members live in Milton.

"What (Halton North MPP) Ted Chudleigh should realize is that 1,400 people spend a lot of money here in Milton," she said, indicating that layoffs could hurt the local economy.

In the meantime, contract talks between the Ontario government and OPSEU were continuing at a downtown Toronto hotel at press time yesterday.

The last government offer included overtures to:

- Double severance pay to two weeks for every year of service to a maximum of 52 weeks.
 - Eliminate unpaid days off, effectively raising wages 2 per cent.
 - Restore 3 per cent merit pay to about one-third of workers.
 - Cut notice of layoffs to six months from 11, enabling government to more quickly chop at least 13,000 jobs.
- The last union position called for:
- Sixty weeks severance pay for employees of five years or more plus one week's pay for each year of service.
 - Up to 50 weeks' pay for employees of less than five years.
 - Job guarantees for workers whose jobs are privatized with existing pay and benefits.
 - Job retraining for laid-off workers.
 - Full pensions for employees over age 50 with 10 years' service.
 - A cost-of-living allowance if inflation exceeds 3 per cent.

OPSEU members are in a legal strike position as of Monday, but the union had not set a strike deadline at press time yesterday.

Moody's still high on Halton

Moody's Investor Service of New York has confirmed Halton Region's credit rating as AAA, their highest level.

Moody's indicated that conservative fiscal policies, low debt levels, an affluent resource base and strategic location within the Greater Toronto Area contribute to the high rating.

"I am particularly pleased that Halton has retained its AAA in light of recent ratings assigned by Moody's to other regional municipalities in southern Ontario and also because Halton's rating has been maintained in spite of the major transfer payment cuts implemented by the province," said regional Chair Joyce Savoline.

Credit ratings dictate interest levels on borrowed money.

In January Moody's downgraded the credit of Metro Toronto by two positions from AAA to AA2, citing increasing social service expenditures, the lingering effects of the recession, a stagnant assessment base and the fact that Metro has used significant reserves to mitigate property tax increases. Moody's also downgraded Hamilton-Wentworth from AA2 to AA3.



WATER CHLORINATION VARIANCE APPLICATION PUBLIC COMMENTS

All comments submitted at the public meeting held Thursday February 15, 1996 in Milton and all comments forwarded to the Region prior to February 29, 1996 will be included in the submission to the Ministry of Environment and Energy with respect to the request for a variance from the order for continuous chlorination of the Kelso well water supply.

Your preference with respect to the chlorination of the Kelso well water supply:

Stand-by chlorination Continuous chlorination

WHY? _____

OTHER COMMENTS? _____

RETURN TO: Office of the Clerk
Regional Municipality of Halton
1151 Bronte Rd.
Oakville, ON L6M 3L1

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	Evenings 7:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m. Not Suitable for Children, Violence
1	TOY STORY [FAM]
	Sat. & Sun. 2:00 p.m.
2	BROKEN ARROW [AA]
	Evenings 7:00 p.m. & 9:15 p.m. Not Recommended for Children, Violence
2	BABE [FAM]
	Sat. & Sun. 2:00 p.m.
3	MUPPETS TREASURE ISLAND [FAM]
	Evenings 7:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m. Sat. & Sun. 2:00 p.m.

Milton Chamber of Commerce

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