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Esch says opponent too poorly schooled for job he's chasing

Brian Esch, a candidate seeking the nomination of the Reform Party in Halton, may have buried his campaign before it really started with comments during a party rally Tuesday night at Lions Club Hall.

Mr. Esch a longtime teacher, and more recently a horse breeder and businessman, created a stir when he bluntly told the 50 people in attendance that one of his opponents, Clay Downes of Georgetown, is not well educated enough to understand or draft complex legislation in the House of Commons.

Mr. Esch said that in friendly games of Scrabble he had played against Mr. Downes, his opponent mounted a solid strategy and even beat him, but proved so inept at spelling that Mr. Esch had to help him with "about every third word."

The Campbellville resident also called his other opponent, Milton's Rick Malboeuf, unelectable because his candidacy has been unsuccessful in several elections at various levels.

Clearly shaken by the attacks, both Mr. Malboeuf and Mr. Downes pointedly refused to engage in similar tactics.

After the meeting Mr. Downes said that he felt that Mr. Esch understood that he made an error and that such tactics are unwarranted "unless you are pretty damn sure of yourself."

"I think he regrets it," said Mr. Downes. "He's not a bad guy, he just made a mistake."

Mr. Esch, however, did not so easily back off his remarks, saying his comments needed to be made because, "people need to know those things about the candidates they might vote for."

Mr. Esch was not sure if he would take the same approach in Georgetown next week. That all-candidates meeting is



I've "taken steps to apologize" and would no longer use personal attacks in the campaign.

BRIAN ESCH

scheduled for Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at the Georgetown Cultural Centre on Church Street.

The next day Mr. Esch, in a telephone call to *The Canadian Champion*, said he had "taken steps to apologize" and would no longer use personal attacks in his campaign, either in public or private.

Mr. Downes defended himself during the meeting, saying he is a self-made successful businessman with no debts. He said his main education had been in the "school of hard knocks" and implored people to look at his record, which includes three terms as Reform Party riding president.

Mr. Malboeuf said after the meeting that

• see MUDSLINGING on page 4



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Gift of sight

Halton Regional Police Sgt. Jackie Gordon shows off some of the dozens of pairs of eye-glasses dropped off at Milton's police station as part of a program to help others see. Lens Crafters will collect and repair the donated glasses, which will be sent to developing countries. Glasses can still be dropped off at the King Street station until January 15.

NEWSLINES

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The organization needs volunteers to serve meals to seniors on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Drivers are also needed for rural routes. If you can help, contact Mary Cooke at 878-6639.

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