

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton's John Challinor (right) raises Ralph Scholtens' arm after Mr. Scholtens handily won the Progressive Conservative nomination in the new federal riding of Halton.

Scholtens gets Tory nod

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John (Challinor) for helping to rebuild a true blue machine in Halton. Now, let's turf out the Liberals!"

Mr. Scholtens' camp was clearly the more visual and vocal of the two. Those arriving at the school were hit with a barrage of sign-toting "Ralph" supporters before they even found a parking space.

"Ralph is number one on my list because he says what he means and means what he says" stressed PC member Peter Koning. "He has integrity and an excellent track record in both municipal and regional government."

Inside it was more of the same, with Mr. Challinor severely outnumbered in both signs and buttons. His Burlington opponent even had two bagpipe players escorting him in for his opening address, where Mr. Challinor had just one.

Mr. Challinor admitted a late start to his campaign gave his rival an early advantage, but said he was still surprised at his wide margin of defeat.

"Burlington makes up only 15 per cent of our registered party members while Milton comprises 35 per cent, so I don't think coming from a more populated area really gave him (Mr. Scholtens) an advantage," said the Milton candidate.

"I actually sold more PC memberships than he did, so in theory I went in with the upper hand. Those votes just didn't come out though. I'm a little disappointed, but still pleased," Mr. Challinor said.

This final point referred to the influx of Tory supporters Tuesday night. A total of 609 registered members showed up for the meeting — with 90 per cent casting votes — while nearly 1,000 additional Halton residents jammed their way into Drury's gymnasium.

"There's a lot of community leaders that are members of this party, which is a good thing," Mr. Challinor added. "I have no regrets. Ralph ran a classy campaign, and I

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JOHN CHALLINOR

wish him well."

While his introduction and address were comparatively low-key, Mr. Challinor was the more direct nominee. During his opening speech, he touched on plans for taxation and fiscal responsibility, job creation through international trade strategies and constitutional amendment.

He offered up his political experience, business expertise and commitment to voters before he was defeated.

Mr. Scholtens spoke briefly about Canada's debt and ideas for government restructuring and lowering taxes, but focused more on his credentials and past experience.

"I've spent three terms on regional council and know-how to build the necessary relationships to get things done. It's all about taking ideas and selling them to the people you have to deal with," he said.

In addition to his nine years as a Halton regional councillor, Mr. Scholtens talked about his upbringing — keying on the values that have molded him into someone with "integrity" and "character".

Halton's new PC candidate said he was more surprised with his margin of victory than with the meeting's turnout, and added he is optimistic about another election win later this year.

"All it'll take is telling people about the hard-working values" of both the candidate and party, Mr. Scholtens said. "That's not very difficult."

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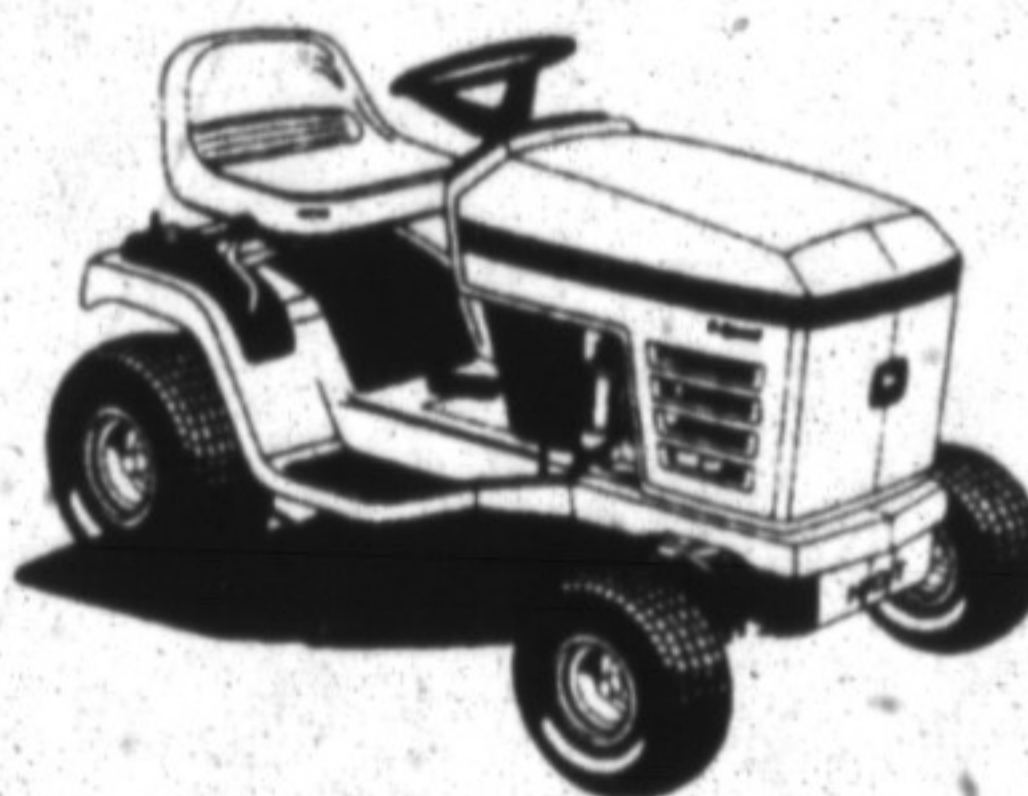
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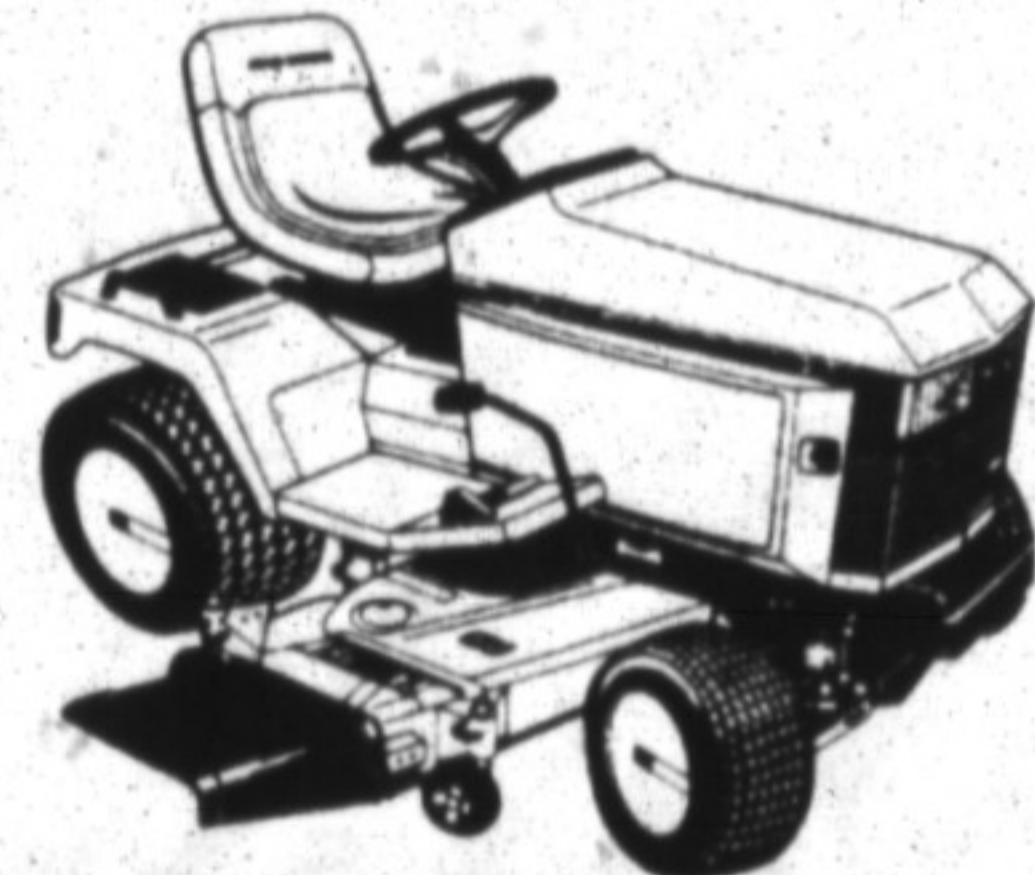


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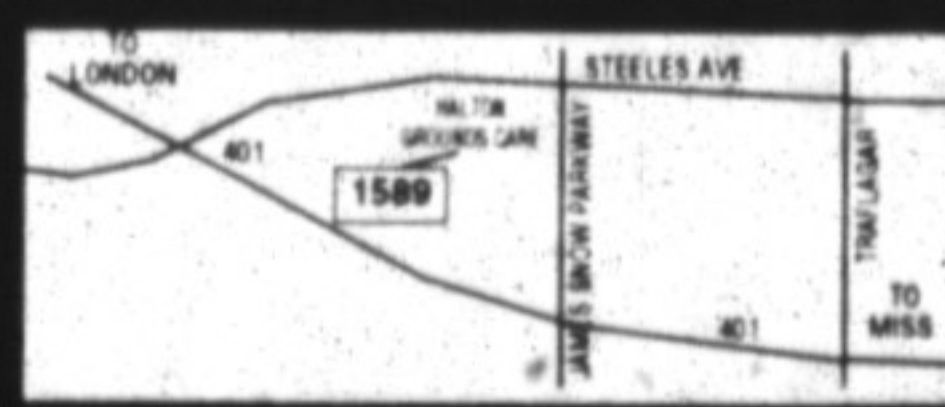
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