

Decision day for Commonwealth Games bidders

BY JOHN CUDMORE
Staff Writer

Bill Crothers knows where his vote would go if he was allowed to cast a ballot today to determine the host for the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Mind you, that could be

considered a conflict of interest in the utmost degree on the part of the York Region District School Board chairperson, who is also leading a York Region delegation attempting to land the host role for the 10-day sports festival nine years down the road.

It is a time for finger-crossing and hopeful thinking for the York Region delegation as it awaits this morning's announcement by the Canadian Commonwealth Games Bid Review Committee for the winner of the four-way competition.

"They said we had an excellent bid, but one doesn't know whether they will say the same thing to the other groups or not," said Mr. Crothers, whose group presented its case during sessions Monday and Tuesday morning.

"We had a good day yesterday and again with our presentation this morning. I

think we did as well as we can. Now we just have to trust the committee to see if they feel the same way we do."

York Region is competing against Hamilton, Ottawa and Halifax to host the Commonwealth Games, which ranks as one of the world's largest sports competitions. The winner of the domestic bid will enter a three-way race against Glasgow, Scotland and a city in Nigeria.

While some new venues would have to be built, the York Region bid would incorporate several existing facilities in the GTA.

"I think we would have set

the standard high, but there is no sure thing or accounting for how it works out," said Mr. Crothers, an Olympic silver medalist in 1964. "All I know is that if it was up to us, we'd pick us."

Hamilton, which hosted the inaugural Commonwealth Games in 1930, was an unsuccessful bidder for the 2010 Games, won by New Delhi, India.

"It is geared very much toward the international bid," Mr. Crothers said. "They're interested obviously in picking the best city to the extent that they think has the best chance at winning (the international bid)."

Staging the 2014 Games is expected to cost in the neighbourhood of \$1 billion with the province and federal government to be heavily involved in the financing of the event.

The Commonwealth Games are held every four years and are open to countries in the British Common-



BILL CROTHERS: Head of York Commonwealth Games bid delegation awaits results today.

wealth. The event is expected to include more than 6,000 athletes representing at 70 countries.

Canada has hosted the Games four times, most recently in 1994 in Victoria, B.C. In addition to Hamilton, Vancouver (1954) and Edmonton (1978) have also played host.

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