

# *There was a hot time in the ol' town last week for Tony*

By TINA IVANY *MAY 12/15* and furious.

Although the evening air was cool outside Huron Park Recreation Centre last Wednesday night, inside the Mohawk Room it was anything but cool.

But then some like it hot. And the heat, generated by discussion of those same issues that had predominated a similar forum a week earlier, seemed to appeal to Liberal MP for Mississauga, Tony Abbott.

It was the second in a series of public meetings which Abbott will hold to keep in touch with his constituents. The purpose of the meetings is to allow voters a chance to question their MP on issues of concern.

The purpose was fulfilled; the questions came fast

Terming the proposed 33 per cent increase in MP's salaries a "catch-up situation", Abbott reiterated his stand of a week earlier that he would indeed vote for the increase.

## EMBARRASSING

"It's an embarrassing situation," he said, "to have to vote in your own increase, especially for an MP serving his first term.

"But, I must take into account those members who have been in the House since 1970 and who have not received an increase since then."

Abbott admitted that the timing of the original pay

increase was abhorrent, coming at a time when Canadians generally were being urged to practice wage restraint.

Abbott agreed with the view of one member of his audience that the proposed \$10,500 tax-free allowance, an increase of \$2,500, should be taxed.

"MP's, as everyone else, should be held accountable for their expenses," he said.

But he did point out that, in his case at least, the expense money was a necessity.

"Although we are allowed one trip a week back to our constituency from Ottawa, more often than not, more than one trip a week is made.

"For instance, this week, alone, I have made four trips to Mississauga from Ottawa."

He warned that, if inflation continues, many MP's including himself, would have to seriously reconsider running again for office.

"Maybe you don't think that's such a bad idea," he quipped.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The laughter however soon died down as the issue of capital punishment was raised. A number of the audience proposed that a referendum be held on the issue to "prove to government that the majority of people are in favor not only of retaining capital

punishment but also in having the law that is on the books now carried out."

The point that the government was perhaps lessening the credibility of our system of law by commuting the death sentences, without exception, was repeatedly hammered home during the lengthy discussion.

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Said Abbott, "I share your frustration that the law is there, yet is not being carried out. There are six to eight convicted murders waiting now and they too will probably be pardoned.

"But I couldn't be very easily persuaded to change my stand."