

June 16 1984

# CCL 'doesn't know' if toxic waste seeps into local wells

By John Roe  
district editor

EMBRO -- Canada Cement Lafarge Ltd. (CCL) has dumped 1,500 tonnes of toxic waste on its property without knowing if run-off from the pile will leak into the wells of local residents.

The dry, dusty waste -- produced by a three-month test burn of liquid industrial chemicals last fall -- was dumped above ground in a disposal area on CCL's property eight kilometres south of Embro.

Some of the waste blew off the pile when it was put there. And neither the plant nor the Ontario Ministry of the Environment know if the waste is seeping into ground water, though they say people in the area have nothing to worry about.

But a report issued two weeks ago by the Ontario Research Foundation shows the waste has dangerously high levels of the heavy metal cadmium and local residents are afraid about the risk to their health.

"We're talking about toxic substances, stuff identified as a serious health hazard," said Stratford lawyer Mike Mitchell, now acting as legal counsel for the Embro Concerned Citizens, a group fighting CCL's plans to burn toxic liquid wastes as fuel.

"We're not talking about something that grows roses, we're talking about something that kills people. Once it's there you can't get it out."

In a meeting with ministry of environment and Environment Canada officials earlier this week, Mr. Mitchell and the Embro Citizens learned the waste material produced by the test burn was dumped in the plant, and according to Mr. Mitchell, "up to now just blowing around."

Canada Cement is now testing to see if the waste can be safely -- and legally -- stored on its property.

Company spokesman John Brown doubts dust from the pile is blowing off the plant and thinks the citizens

are over-reacting. He admits, however, the company won't know if the waste is seeping into ground water and local wells until the results of other tests are in.

John Manuel, a district officer from environment ministry in London, said citizens shouldn't worry about their well water.

"It (the waste) hasn't been there that long and even if it leaches through it's unlikely it would have travelled far enough to cause problems," he said.

He said dust, blew from the waste material when it was first dumped, but didn't know if any particles left the plant property. He said after the first rainfall, a crust formed on the pile and kept more dust from escaping into the air.

Mr. Manuel said the environment ministry gave CCL permission to store the waste on its plant when it gave the plant the go-ahead to experiment with liquid industrial

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## Brooksdale women meet.

BROOKSDALE -- Mrs. Allan Shelley, of RR 1 Embro, moved that the institute give a donation to the local agricultural fair board.

Mrs. Willis Matheson, of RR 3 Embro, reported the institute table earned \$123 at the recent Embro flea market and moved the institute donate \$500 to buy new playground equipment at the Zorra Highland Park school.

Mrs. Donald Innes, of RR 1 Embro, moved that the group donate \$30 in prize money to the Embro and Zorra Fair.

Mrs. Grant Innes, of RR 1 Embro, moved the institute cater to the annual Caledonian supper this fall.

Mrs. Newton Bean, of RR 2 Embro, gave the report for the district annual which was held in Hickson recently.



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waste for fuel.

Results of the test burn showed emissions from the stacks were safe, but that the solid waste by-product contained 100 times the level considered safe by drinking water standards. This means the company must find a secure landfill site for the waste -- one that won't contaminate the water table.

Mr. Manuel said the company will be ordered to remove the waste from its property if tests show the waste material is seeping into the water system.

He said Canada Cement is already cleaning up several sources of air

pollution at the plant. More efficient filters are being installed around storage areas and new monitoring devices are being put in to reveal just how often dust from the stacks is blowing over the countryside.

But Mr. Mitchell said he has "no faith" in "the amateurish testing done on the material from the test burn."

He said the Embro citizens are complaining to Federal Environment Minister Charles Caccia.

"The Embro Citizens have had significant results in getting Canada Cement to clean up its act," Mr. Mitchell said.

"We want to ask the minister to justify why the ratepayers had to band together at their own expense, why the federal government turned down their request for help but is funding \$350,000 for the company's test burn."



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this question because during the test period researchers never monitored the burning of liquid wastes when the filtering devices weren't working.

According to Joe Moss, of RR 2 Embro, a spokesman for the Embro citizens Group, this makes the test burn a "farce."

"The company have been their own policemen," he said. "The study was commissioned and paid for by them."

"Now we're saying to the minister of environment the company just can't proceed with burning industrial waste because it's not operating within the law."

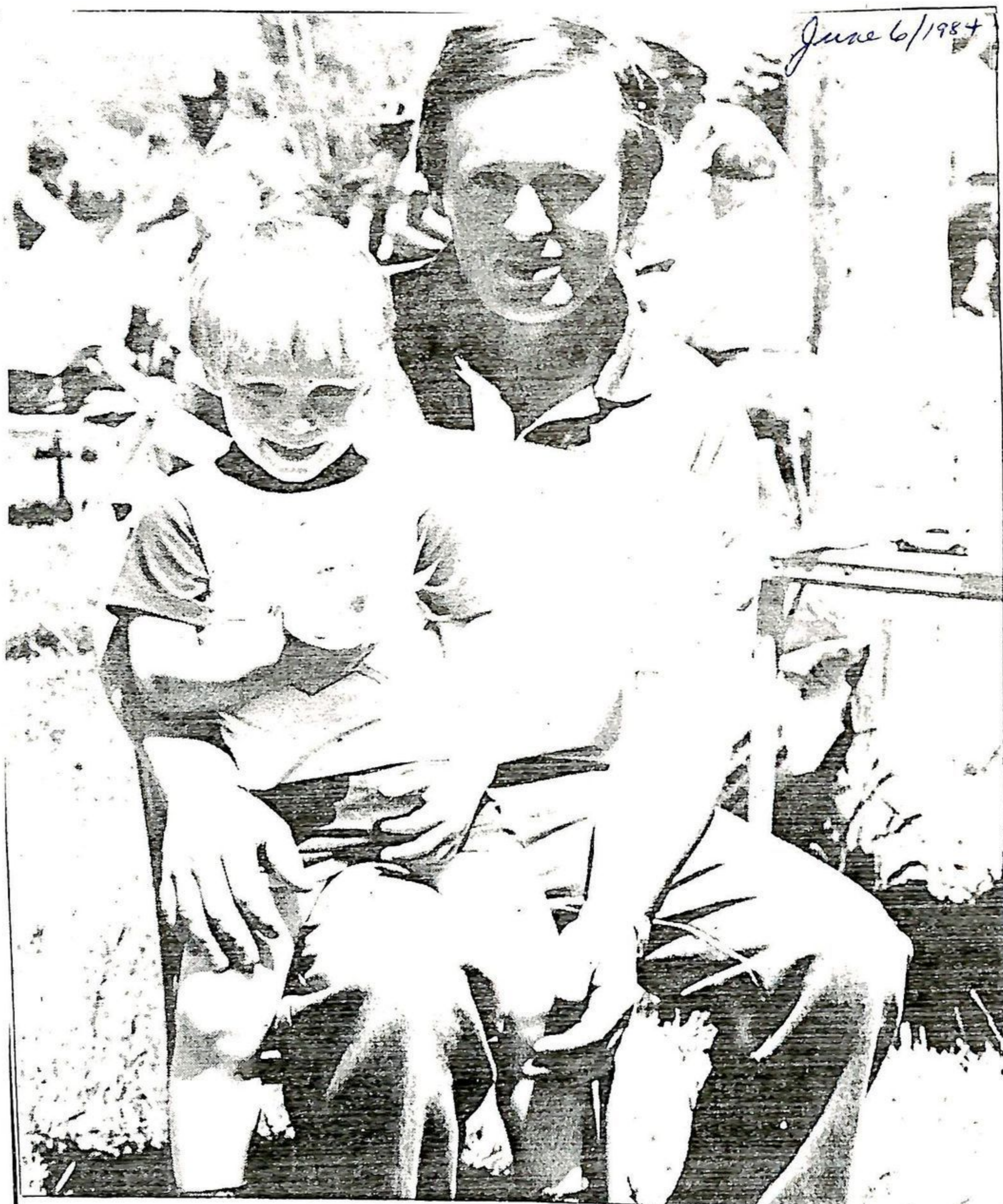
Under advice from the Canadian

Environmental Law Association, the Embro Citizens will now press for an Ontario Municipal Board hearing -- in addition to the already-planned Environmental Assessment Hearing.

Mr. Moss said the OMB hearing is needed because the company must be zoned to burn industrial waste. Now it is only zoned to produce cement.

"We're going to stall this thing," Mr. Moss said. "An OMB hearing will put it back two years."

"We're saying the burning of liquid waste is still experimental and we're saying don't experiment with our lives."



ENJOYING A HOT DOG while sitting on his father's lap is Kevin Morris, 5, of Harrington. Kevin's father Bob is a member of the Harrington Men's Club which held a barbeque and fishing derby for the children on Saturday. (Staff Photo)