

Objections flood Transport Commission hearing on halting last passenger trains

The Acton Free Press

Ninety-Fifth Year. — No. 42

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1970

Eighteen Pages — Fifteen Cents

Will jump hydro rate

For the first time since 1954, Acton will have an increase in hydro rates.

At their regular meeting Thursday, Acton Hydro Commission agreed to a special meeting with Ontario Hydro officials Bob Henry and Jim

Monday meeting on drugs slated

Worried about drug abuse in Acton and parents' lack of information on the subject, a group of concerned citizens formed a committee recently to talk over the problem. They've decided now to hold a series of three meetings so anyone interested may obtain correct information to discuss the problem intelligently with their children.

First meeting will be at the Robert Little school on Monday evening, April 20, the next at the M. Z. Bennett school on Monday, April 27 and the third at the high school on Monday evening, May 4. All meetings begin at 7.30 p.m. and there will be qualified resource people present to assist in the program and discussion.

School children have taken home the first of a series of informative pamphlets provided by the Addiction Research Foundation, and parents are asked to sign a form indicating if they will attend the three meetings.

Mrs. Peg Palmer, of the addiction research centre at Oakville, has met with the local group several times and will be bringing up three films. The first, to be shown next Monday, is "Drugs and the Nervous System," and the subject of the first meeting will be Facts About Drugs.

Rev. Harry Dawson heads the informal committee, set up just for the temporary purpose of helping provide information.

Free Press misleading public Councillor McKenzie charges

Councillor Garnet (Pat) McKenzie accused The Free Press of misleading the public with its coverage last week of the 1970 budget meeting concerning the condition of Acton arena, and asserted publishers of the newspaper should be informed... and the editor, the deputy-reeve said.

Discussing the controversial engineers' report on the condition of the arena, Mr. McKenzie wondered whether Free Press representatives had read the engineers' report.

Discussion at Tuesday's council resulted from an amendment to minutes of the budget meeting which council changed by resolution to read that further money would be available to fix the arena if safety becomes a factor. Most members of council are convinced there is nothing unsafe about the arena part of the community centre.

In no way would we sit back and watch if there is any danger at the arena, Mayor Duby asserted.

Now is it to be determined? asked Councillor Greer.

"You have to read The Free Press to find out. They seem to be experts," said deputy-reeve Ted Tyler.

What Peter (Marks) is trying to get across, said Mr. Greer, is who's going to make the decision?

Stevens to discuss proposals for implementing the rate increase. Mr. Henry and Mr. Stevens suggested the increase, claiming the Commission would soon begin to lose money on the sale of power if they did not. Mr. Henry said he thought the Commission would have been wise to increase rates a year ago.

"As you delay rate increases, you save people money now, but not ultimately," he warned.

Ontario Hydro raised rates they charge municipal hydro commissions 6 per cent January 1, but Acton commissioners felt at the time they could hold the line on increases to consumers.

Power rates have risen for the Commission five times, since 1951, but the Commission has been able to absorb increases on every occasion except one, when a few consumers were billed under a different system. Others found their rates were lower, balancing that raise.

The Commission now appears resigned to implement the increase.

"We're going to have to do it sooner or later," chairman Wilf McEachern said.

Commissioner Ted Tyler agreed. "We have to do something now," he added. Mr. Tyler suggested the rate increase be introduced so that each half of the town would receive it at the same time.

Mr. Henry has suggested August 1 as a date for the increase to begin.

The Commission will meet with Ontario Hydro officials, Thursday, April 23, to hear proposals.

Charges laid

An Erin township man was stopped at Speyside by Acton O.P.P. officer Roy Wood Friday afternoon and charged with impaired driving, driving while his license was under suspension, possession of a dangerous weapon, and refusing a breathalyzer test. Added to this were two charges laid by Guelph police.

A complaint was laid here and Cons. Wood followed the car.

The Free Press is misleading the public, declared Councillor McKenzie who enquired whether they (Free Press representatives) had read the engineers' report. Councillor Marks rose to the defence of the Free Press telling council this newspaper's representatives had an overall



PATRICIA TUCKER clutches a pink bunny at Rockwood Home and School fashion show last week. See inside for story and more pictures.—Staff Photo



FIRE CHIEF MICK HOLMES and brigade members Wilf Duval and Harold Townsley fight the fire which completely destroyed the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert McDougall on the Blue Springs Line last Wednesday afternoon. The family of three lost all their

possessions except the clothing they wore. A fund is started to aid the McDougalls and neighbors and friends are rallying around with furniture and other gifts.—(Staff Photo)

McDougall family loses home, possessions in fire Wednesday

Neighbors and friends are rallying to aid an Acton district family who lost their R. R. 1 Acton, home and possessions Wednesday in a fire that raged out of control before firefighters arrived.

Homeless are Mr. and Mrs. Bob McDougall and their son, 11 year old Andrew, who lived near the corner of 25 Sideroad and the 6th Line, Nassagaweya (Blue Springs Line). Their frame home was a total loss as flames of unknown origin, fanned by high winds, levelled it in little more than an hour.

Mr. McDougall, a pensioner, was outside cutting wood when he glanced in the direction of the house to see it in flames. He tried to enter the blazing home but the intensity of the flames drove him back, singeing his hair.

Nothing was salvaged from the home. Acton firefighters responded quickly to the 4 p.m. call but were helpless to do anything but apply preventive measures. The frame building was an inferno when they arrived. They were also handicapped by the lack of water.

Two trucks ferried water for hoses from the nearest source. It took nearly two hours before the brigade extinguished flames. Mrs. McDougall, employed as a housekeeper in Acton, was summoned home by her son Andrew who alighted from the school bus to see his home in flames. A neighbor turned in the alarm.

The McDougalls purchased the home from Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hill four years ago and the Hill family, nearest neighbors, were quick to assist the family.

The McDougalls have got temporary home at the residence of their son in Morriston. They had insurance on the burned home.

Fire chief Mick Holmes was at a loss to explain the cause of the fire which also destroyed a new

Consider lifting twp. dump charge

Esquesing's new measure to control dumping with a system of charges may be altered if Deputy Reeve Tom Hill and Councillor Ken Marshall are involved.

"My phone is ringing off the wall," confessed the deputy reeve, suggesting council should consider a system of collection which would mean the whole township pay the same, erasing all other charges.

It's not fair to penalize the guy with a half-ton truck who hasn't got a car, he declared.

"We'll have to consider taking charges off if the man with the half-ton truck is only taking his own garbage... the whole idea was to catch the guy with the half-ton truck doing custom work," Mr. Marshall said.

Chased, charged

Acton O.P.P. and two Guelph cruisers were involved before a local man was apprehended and charged with careless driving Tuesday morning at 1 a.m. The man drove into a farm lane and ran from his car.

For three days in Guelph, the Canadian Transport Commission presided over hearings into abandonment of passenger trains 986 and 987, which run between Guelph and Toronto.

Objections were registered by Wellington MP Alfred Hales, MPP Harry Worton, Sudbury MPP Elma Sopha who presented a brief from the Ontario Liberal caucus, lawyer David Duncan with a brief for the Ontario government, Guelph mayor Ralph Smith, as well as many individuals, some armed with lists of hundreds of signatures.

Not objecting was a representative of Gray Coach Lines, who said three additional buses could handle the extra commuters each day.

This was one of a number of hearings planned to investigate CN and CPR applications to discontinue 31 passenger train services on which they claim losses of more than \$41 million in 1968.

CTC can order service

Acton did not make a personal representation, since a hearing was held here in January, but sent a letter of objection.

The Monday to Friday commuters stop at Guelph, Rockwood, Acton, Georgetown, Brampton, Malton, Weston, West Toronto, Parkdale and Toronto.

The hearings were in county court chambers, with chairman David Jones and commissioner John Woodard and Frank Lafferty. By statute, the CTC may order the railways to continue necessary services in the public interest but in such cases the federal treasury is expected to subsidize the loss to a maximum of 80 per cent.

Still lose if fares doubled

Douglas Gonder, CNR vice-president in charge of the Great Lakes region, told the hearing the railway still would not break even if fares were doubled. He said everything had been done to make the Guelph to Toronto service profitable. The service showed a loss in 1968 of \$147,313, he said. Half the passengers travel from Weston on in to Toronto and only a small percentage board at Guelph. Alternative means of transportation are available to commuters all along the route.

Mr. Gonder was the target for many questions, and opposition was sometimes heated.

Rockwood, Elora objections

The railways "owe us this service" claimed Palmerston councillor Nelson Langdon who listed municipal grants to the CNR for development. Approximately \$400,000 in grants was given in 1879 as well as large tracts of land. One of the grants he listed included \$40,000 from Erin.

Mr. and Mrs. George Loney of Elora spoke against the proposals and presented a petition signed by 480 Guelph to Toronto commuters. Mr. Loney makes the trip almost daily. He said being forced to stand in the baggage car was common and complained of malfunctioning locks and dirty conditions.

Mrs. Loney said the federal government should subsidize the service. "It should not be a question of cost."

A petition signed by 364 Elora residents was submitted as evidence of public opposition.

A petition signed by 215 Rockwood and district residents objected. Mrs. R. A. Strong, who submitted it, said her son who was unemployed would be forced to travel by car to another area for work—an unnecessary danger.

Towns expecting to grow

Georgetown said in their brief that the discontinuance of commuter trains would have a far-reaching effect on their area where use of trains is substantial and preferred to other modes of transportation.

A brief from Alan Ross, reeve of Minto township, suggested the application should be denied.

The brief from the Mid-Western Ontario development Association stated removal of train service would slow down commercial development of the region. Clean, comfortable, air-conditioned coaches were recommended, with a program of selling service to the public.

H. W. Allan, Streetsville, said no step should be taken which would interrupt development, citing expected increases in Streetsville population.

Representing Guelph Chamber of Commerce, Gordon Stacey claimed lack of promotion, suggesting no discontinuance of the service for at least three years, a cost-benefit analysis to determine the future role of commuters and no subsidy on the line until losses have been minimized.

Guelph wants GO service

Guelph mayor Ralph Smith felt the GO-service was warranted and urged rail service. He said the city feels transportation is so important, it incurs considerable losses on bus service each year—more predicted for 1970 than the CN claimed as their loss for the trains.

Elmer Sopha, MPP for Sudbury representing provincial Liberals, got Mr. Gonder of CN to admit there was a tremendous potential for growth in the area, but Mr. Gonder insisted still that the CN could not break even.

Attack CN "can't lose" feeling

J. J. Frailey, a lawyer representing the Alberta government and a well-known expert specializing in law relating to railways, took

(Continued on Page 10)

Not much hope for Halton-only region

Darcy McKeough won't be giving any thought to regional government for this area, either Halton-only or Halton-Peel, until after May 1 he announced last week. And he didn't give much hope for a regional government area containing just Halton.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs was speaker at the Association of Counties and Regions of Ontario conference in Toronto, and Oakville Deputy-reeve William Gillies asked Mr. McKeough if he would consider a Halton-only region. Halton County Council had endorsed the county region after

Mr. McKeough announced the proposed marriage of Halton and Peel was off, for lack of a consensus of opinion from the 17 municipalities involved.

The fate of Burlington is expected to be decided in May. Reeves Alan Day of Oakville, Ron Harris of Milton and Gordon Gallagher of Burlington and deputy-reeves Gillies, Art Speight of Georgetown and Gordon Agnew of Nassagaweya attended the conference from Halton. "The Challenges of Change" was the conference theme and several speakers and panel discussions featured the Tuesday to Thursday gathering.



SEED CORN, ANYONE? Things were a bit of a mess on Highway 25 south of Speyside early Saturday morning when a tractor trailer jack-knifed and rolled over into the ditch, spewing its load of farm machinery and 530 bags of seed corn onto the roadway and through the ditch and a nearby bush. The truck received \$10,000 damage

and the load, most of which was ruined, was valued at \$11,000. Driver John D. Clare of Vankleek Hill was only slightly injured but it took a couple of days to clean up the mess.—(Photo by Ray Erickson)