

## Heated debate in Nassagaweya Alternates branch expensive Hydro tells planning board



A HYDRO RIGHT-OF-WAY across Nassagaweya drew opposition from Nassagaweya Planning Board and ratepayers during a meeting of the Board Wednesday. The broken line in the map indicates approximately the Hydro's proposal for the 140 mile line which will cross 156 municipalities. It will link generating stations at Pickering and Nanticoke. The dotted line indicates the route the Planning Board proposed following lot and concession lines.

Nassagaweya Planning Board continued its opposition to the proposed route for a 740 foot right of way angling across the township in a meeting with representatives of Ontario Hydro Wednesday. They recommended to Council that a brief be prepared for Ontario Hydro and a deputation present it to the Ontario Hydro Commission when they discuss the matter.

About 50 ratepayers jammed into the municipal offices at Brookville to underline local concern about the project. The Board had prepared studies on the effect of the angled route and proposed 11 alternates. One alternate investigated by Ontario Hydro ran from the western township boundary between lots 23 and 24 and north in the middle of the fourth concession, following the fabric of the township.

Ontario Hydro representative R. Miller of the property branch told members the alternate route would add \$1,000,000 to the cost of the project. He also noted the Board's route would affect 40 owners compared with the proposed route's 26. The Board's route would also add one and a half miles more length to the line and involve angles at the west entrance to the township, at the turn north and in the eastern turn.

Mr. Miller disputed Chairman Gordon Agnew's claim the Hydro route would affect 44 buildings compared with the township's route of four buildings. He said the proposed route would require removal of three houses and now one new house under construction and a concrete building owned by the Electrical Historical Association.

Chairman Agnew noted the Hydro route took 18,000 feet of frontage compared with a loss of only 8,000 in the route proposed by the township. Mr. Miller noted the Hydro pays equivalent taxes on its holdings, at commercial rates plus 60 per cent business tax.

The proposed route crossing the township is 140 miles long reaching from the steam generating plant at Nanticoke to the nuclear plant at Pickering. It passes through 16 municipalities and attempts to avoid developed properties. Mr. Miller noted zig zags were expensive in trying to align the route with property lines.

Mr. Miller acknowledged the removal of four houses was

required but in some cases the route would be "brushing pretty close" to some structures. He said Hydro would discuss with those owners whether they wanted to sell out in total or sell the minimum and continue to live with the line.

He also indicated Hydro foresters would study the route when it is established to remove as little tree cover as possible. Spraying practises of Ontario Hydro are currently being reviewed in the light of recent announcements, he explained.

Opposing the plan to triangulate properties, Reeve A. MacArthur asked how many townships would "be decimated like Nassagaweya and Puslinch".

Discounting the decimation, Mr. Miller said the line was not following the fabric of the township in six of the 16 municipalities crossed.

Pat Redgrave spoke of the Planning Board's attempt to preserve the scenic beauty of the township. "If we can conceal the line it is to the better."

Councillor Allan Ackman denounced the Hydro route and maintained the large map used didn't reflect other jobs which had been provided for in the more detailed route. He degraded the "Meccano-set towers," which the Hydro proposed for the township and warned of dangers from such a high voltage line. He noted the 750 foot swath would ultimately contain five sets of towers "near houses in the lightning-prone area". He denounced the line being put in a beautiful area and within 2,000 feet of Eden Mills which would stifle its development.

The councillor also noted the Planning Board doesn't allow separations of irregularly shaped parcels but the proposed angled route would create many of them. He argued the million dollar price increase projected for the longer line proposed by the board would not be realistic when measured against the damage to other properties by the triangulated route.

"If that's the kind of presentation you're going to make to your superiors it's not going to be honest", he declared.

Councillor Ackman garnered the only applause of the evening for his denunciation of the plan, from the 50 ratepayers filling the available chairs, and lining the walls into the hall of the township offices.

Ted Wadge of the engineering branch of the Ontario Hydro discounted the lightning hazard mentioned by Councillor Ackman and in heated exchanges with the councillor charged him with inaccurate statements.

At the suggestion of the ratepayers and agreement of the Ontario Hydro officials, Chairman Agnew agreed to allow questions from the audience.

The problems of rumors and so few facts troubled Mrs. Wilkinson and Mr. Miller explained the Hydro problem was to consider with the Planning Board whether any development was considered in the route proposed and then to discuss with the people involved. He suggested it was really a problem of who to approach first.

It was predicted construction would begin in 1973 and every effort would be made to purchase property for the right of way by negotiation. As the deadline for construction approached it might be necessary to expropriate.

The possibilities of underground construction were described by Mr. Wadge as being not feasible at this time. He noted the size of the line and its capability could not be handled in underground installation. He said there are short lengths of 230 KVA in service but the line proposed is 500.

Questioned about its consideration of those making their living from the land, Mr. Miller noted the land on the right-of-way is generally leased back to a farmer and continues in agricultural use.

Leonard Chandler charged the Hydro officials as being "a couple of con men". He asked how adjacent land owners would be compensated.

Mr. Miller dismissed the "con men" reference and suggested Hydro would not compensate owners who property was not affected by the line. He outlined expropriation procedure for Mr. Chandler.

One ratepayer asked the Board to keep citizens involved. Mr. Agnew noted all meetings were open and the Champion and Free Press had been covering the meetings for the past six weeks. (This paper first carried stories on the hydro-right-of-way on January 7, 1970.)

### Study groundhogs

## Acton graduate involved in unique University project

Curious Sunday drivers have been asking what is going on in the north-east corner of the University of Guelph campus. Structures resembling forestry fire towers stand on the corner of College and Victoria Road.

Believe it or not the towers are observation platforms for a groundhog survey.

Three men, one of them Murray Smith Jr., an Acton man who is working towards an M.Sc. thesis on whether groundhogs have territories, are studying the animals for more understanding and what they hope may be eventual control of the increasingly troublesome creature.

The 22 acre field has an abnormally high groundhog population of three per acre. Animals are trapped, checked over, marked individually and freed. Then, from the 25 foot observation towers, their behavior and social conduct is being watched.

Groundhogs have always been considered a pest because of the holes they dig which cause injury to livestock and damage to farm machinery. Moreover, they reduce yields by eating farm and garden crops and recently they have begun to attack apple orchards by girdling large trees.

"One apple grower in the Collingwood area reports he has been virtually knocked out of business by these animals," says Professor R. E. Walker of the Department of Zoology who is conducting the research project.

Grid stakes set out last summer enable observers to record the spot where each groundhog is seen. This information helps determine whether the animal has a definite territory on which other groundhogs will not encroach, as humans and wolves do.

Trapping and marking the animals also began last summer. Each groundhog enters the box-shaped wire mesh trap either to get the apple bait or out of curiosity. The fur is marked with a coded number which can later be seen from the towers. One of the claws is also clipped. The number disappears when the groundhog sheds its fur in a year's time but the clipped claw remains and is used for later identification.

Main task during the two summers during which the study will continue will be watching the animals. A schedule has been arranged so that over a 10 day period every daylight hour of every day of the week will have been covered at least three times.

The work falls on Arnold Boer, a Ph.D. candidate who is studying aggressive behavior in groundhogs, Murray Smith, and Glen Pugh, a Guelph graduate who is serving for the summer as a research assistant. They spend up to six hours a day observing and trapping the animals. "No one watches for more than three hours at a stretch," says Professor Walker, "because after that his observation capabilities flag."



MURRAY SMITH, left, weighs a trapped groundhog while it is recorded at the groundhog range at the University of Guelph. (Photo Audio Visual U. of G.)

"On some days, cars pull up along the road so that people can watch the groundhogs", he says. "One of the first warm weekends this spring, about 45 groundhogs were out in the field. The cars on the road were practically bumping into each other, as people slowed down to see."

The groundhog is in several ways distinctively North American. Both the species and the name are apparently peculiar to this continent, although marmots of a similar type are found in other parts of the world. A common name for the groundhog that of woodchuck originated with the Indians. The Ojibwa name was "otchig" or "wuchak." White settlers corrupted the name to woodchuck.

In the Guelph area, the groundhog does not come forth until the end of February. Then, with the first warm days, all heck breaks loose!

The males spend whole days running about looking for females. When they are successful, there is a brief courtship ritual above ground, followed by a more private ceremony in a burrow below.

Groundhogs are both polygamous and promiscuous.

Law of the jungle seems to be the order of spring days. Groundhogs are very aggressive at this time of year. When they fight, they go at it hammer and tong, so that much blood is spilt on the field of battle. Veterans are often heavily scarred from

past engagements. Human beings, although remarkable for their peaceful and orderly lives, do on occasion show similar traits. For instance, this spring at around the time university exams ended, one species pulled up 200 of the grid stakes and scattered them around the field, then attempted to set fire to one of the towers.

Female groundhogs are gentler in their life styles. They retire to their burrows in late spring and give birth, after a month-long gestation period, to an average of four young.

Overpopulation among groundhogs has no solution, even from the human point-of-view. It has been estimated that more time and money is spent hunting groundhogs than any of the other animals in Ontario. However, hunting does not curtail numbers.

As summer wears on, groundhogs turn to gluttony. Grass is a main part of their diet but, as the weather gets drier, they switch, when they can, to the succulent alfalfa.

Groundhogs don't have to depend on free water. Their bodies can absorb moisture from the food they eat. By eating copiously they may double their size, from five to 10 pounds by the end of the summer.

Hibernation comes early.

In early October the elder groundhogs retire beneath the earth. There they sleep as safe from everything that goes on above, as men in their fallout shelters.

Smoke may turn the skies to winter grey, and radioactive ash may fall in cold white flakes, but groundhogs rest in secure and unconscious peace. Then, come spring, life again awakens them to the violence of these first warm days.

Condensed from the News Bulletin of the University of Guelph.

### Red Shield also bargain

The early days of spring bring with them sales at all the stores—bargain days when your money goes farther. New drapes for the living room are cheaper—paint for the house, garden tools for the lawn and flowers.

Spring also brings with it the Red Shield campaign of The Salvation Army.

Nineteen services to humanity are supported by the Red Shield. A young boy taken off the streets and put into a home where love and warmth replace suspicion and disinterest. That's a bargain, because the other road, courts and jail are expensive.

A girl helped back to self-respect, a family tided over a period of misfortune—all these and others are real bargains in human welfare, and to you as a tax-paying member of the community.

Watch for announcements of the Red Shield—it's the biggest spring bargain of all this year.

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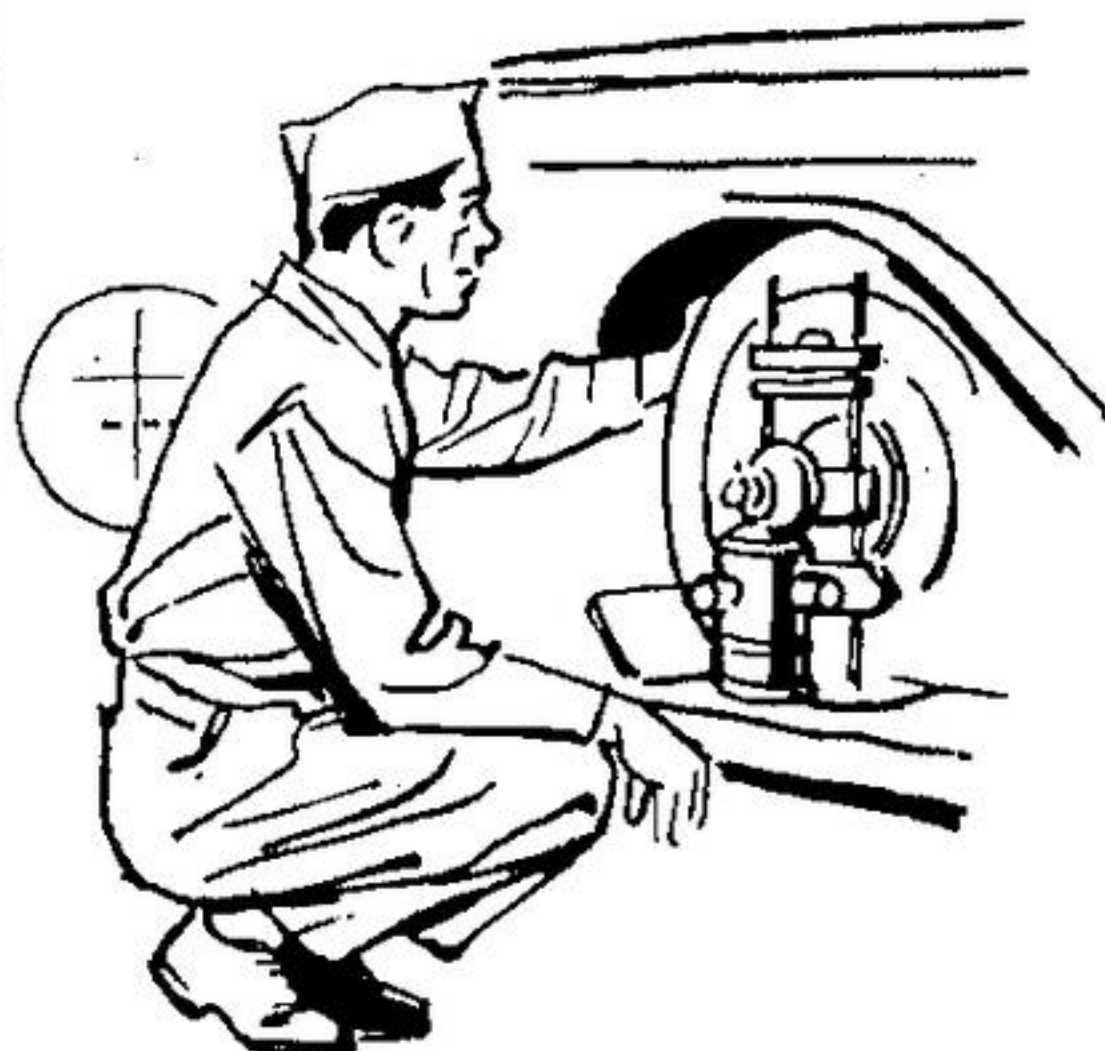


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CONTROL Tower where the survey is conducted hides watchers from the groundhogs who live a normal life under the eyes of the research team which hopes to find measures to control the creature. Murray Smith is at right. (Photo Audio Visual U. of G.)