

Letter to Editor

Citizens oppose route through Halton Hills and Erin township

R.R. 2, Acton, Ont.
March 18, 1974.
Gentlemen:

As most people will now have heard, the Solandt Commission has recommended, in its report, that the Bruce to Milton Hydro corridor should cross the escarpment at Limehouse.

After reading this 93 page report I would like to bring to your attention the paragraphs which relate to the decision that the Limehouse crossing should be selected. Although I may not agree with some of the conclusions in this report; it is fair to say that some very progressive decisions have been made.

Because of the complexity of the problem a brief review of the overall project might be in order. The Hydro at the present time are in the planning stages for major hydro corridors and generating stations which will be required in the next 20 years.

An expenditure of greater than ten billion dollars will be made during this time to complete this program. At the present time it is essential that a corridor be established from Nanticoke on Lake Erie to the Toronto area. It is also essential that a corridor be established from Bruce on Lake Huron to the Toronto area. The juncture point for these corridors is below the escarpment near Milton.

At the outset it was the hope of most citizens that these two corridors could be incorporated in the existing crossing of the escarpment with Highway 401. Dr. Solandt's remarks relating to this dual crossing are as follows:

"Although it is dangerous to generalize from a small and self-selected sample, I think it safe to say that public opinion as heard by the Commission was strongly in favor of putting all the lines through the Highway 401 corridor in accordance with 'System R'. Ontario Hydro were strongly opposed to this alternative on grounds of both security and aesthetics. BHI reluctantly accepted Ontario Hydro's views on security and did not recommend 'System R'. During the Commission's hearings, Ontario Hydro were further cross-examined on security problems and presented a convincing but not over-

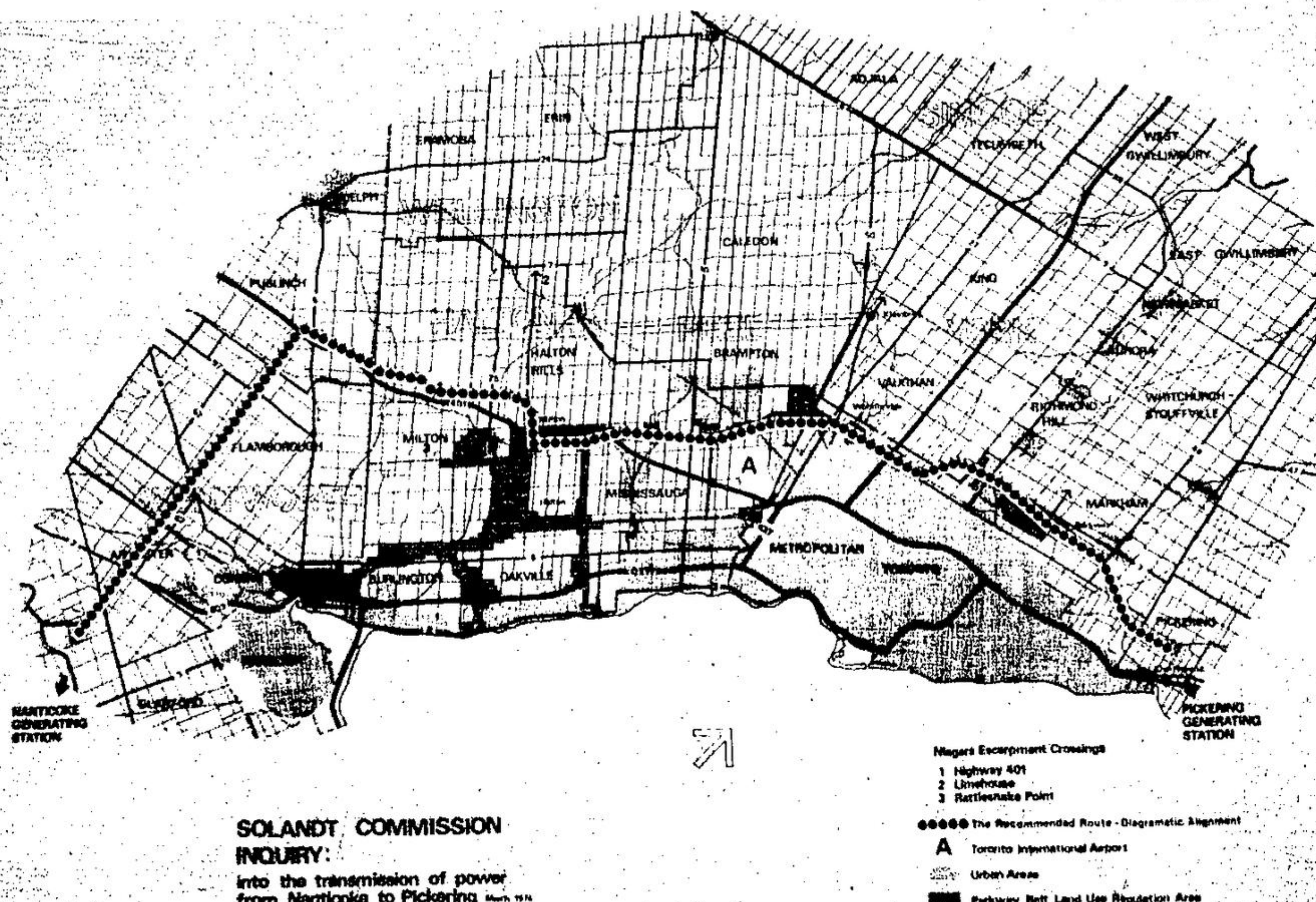
whelming case against putting all the lines together beside Highway 401. In addition, they argued strongly on aesthetic grounds against putting four double circuit 500 KV lines side by side in such a prominent location. After carefully considering all the evidence presented, the Commission does not support 'System R'. The most powerful argument against 'System R' is Ontario Hydro's view on systems security."

It is interesting to note however, that this system could be made possible through additional transmission lines from Bruce to Essa, although more costs may result at this time and I refer to a recent Hydro communication to Dr. Solandt after the Commission's hearings concluded.

I do not believe that this alternate was fully and completely explored. Particularly when you consider the recent information which indicates that the Hydro will be obtaining a new corridor from Bruce to Owen Sound and from Essa to Collingwood for needed power transmission. To dead-end these lines in these locations is contrary to Hydro security and it is reasonable to expect that the Bruce to Essa corridor will be established at some later date. We therefore cannot concur with Dr. Solandt's most powerful argument against the dual crossing as being Hydro's view on systems security.

The second alternate for bringing these two corridors to Milton would be a crossing at Rattlesnake Point for the Nanticoke line with a crossing at 401 for the Bruce line. This alternate was recommended by the environmental consultants BHI in their report to Dr. Solandt. At the Erin meeting Dr. Walker, the Hydro ecology specialist, confirmed that for the Bradley Junction Georgetown study area, the best environmental route for the Bruce to Milton line would be west of Guelph. We therefore conclude that both independent environmental studies indicate that the Bruce to Milton line should go via the 401 crossing. It is interesting to note that the total mileage for both routes, with the Bruce-401 crossing, is also the shortest. Dr. Solandt, however, reports the following:

"Your very truly,
John C. Schneider
Interested Citizens of Halton Hills & Wellington.



SOLANDT COMMISSION INQUIRY:
into the transmission of power from Nanticoke to Pickering March 1974

Solandt Commission recommends:

Power corridor to be in Parkway

After careful consideration of all the evidence presented to it, the Commission recommends that the proposed 500 KV power corridor from Middleport to Pickering should wherever possible be located in the Parkway Belt.

The recommended route is shown in detail in the above Map. It corresponds generally, but with some important modifications, to BHI's "System Q" which Mr. Howlett chose as his second option. The most important change from BHI's recommendation is that the Commission proposes that the line be built north from Middleport through the Beverly Swamp on the right-of-way presently owned by Ontario Hydro. It then crosses to the north side of Highway 401 and thence eastward to a transformer station near Milton.

Just before reaching the Milton Station this east-west route is joined from the north by the lines from the Bruce Generating Station that cross the Niagara Escarpment at Limehouse. From the Milton Station there is a southward link to the Halton Station, while the main route proceeds eastward south of Brampton and north of the airport to Woodbridge, thence eastward across Yonge Street to a new Parkway Station and thence to a point south of Markham. Thereafter, west from Milton to south of Markham, the route will be in the "Parkway Belt: West". From there to the Cherrywood Station a route has been tentatively selected but it is expected that this section of the line will be included in the "Parkway Belt: East" when it is designed.

The principal factors that influenced this general decision will be outlined.

The first decision to be made was whether to accept BHI's general recommendation of following the Parkway Belt or to reject the "Parkway Route" in favour of some modification of Ontario Hydro's original "Middle Route". In approaching this decision, it was obviously necessary to consider the 500 KV transmission line as a part of the total land use planning for the entire area. It is quite impossible to consider this transmission line in isolation since it is one of the biggest if not the biggest single linear land use that has yet appeared in southern Ontario. The selection of the route will have a great and lasting impact on land use planning in the whole area. Ever since the publication of the Toronto-Centred Region Plan in 1970, the Parkway Belt has figured largely in discussions of planning in the Toronto region. It has caught the imagination of the public and virtually everyone who appeared before the Commission whose land would not be directly affected by the Parkway Belt strongly supported inclusion of the 500 KV transmission line in the Parkway Belt.

BHI's strong recommendation that the transmission line be combined wherever possible with the Parkway Belt was also supported by a number of professional planners who appeared before the Commission. Apart from those whose land would be directly affected by the line the only opposition came from a few who felt that inclusion of the 500 KV line would intrude upon the park-like aspects of the Parkway Belt, which figured among the purposes of its design, and would convert it instead into a complete utility corridor. On the other hand, many pointed out that the inclusion of the 500

KV transmission line, which will necessitate widening of the Parkway Belt in some areas, would greatly strengthen its function of acting as a divider between adjacent communities.

The "Parkway Route" is also very substantially shorter than any of the other alternatives. Bruce Howlett stated in his testimony that analysis of the "Parkway Route" for the 500 KV line shows that it is a very satisfactory route from the environmental and social point of view on purely geographical grounds. He pointed out that past government actions had kept the area open and comparatively free of possible conflicts with the transmission line. Even if no Parkway Belt had been designated, he feels that it would be a readily defensible route for the line.

The absence of conflicts, combined with the advantages of joint use of the Parkway Belt corridor, make an overwhelming case in favour of the "Parkway Route". This decision to adopt the "Parkway Route" fixes the location of the transmission line in a general way from where it enters the Parkway Belt just east of Milton to the end of the "Parkway Belt: West", just south of Markham.

The selection of the route east and west of these points involved further choices. The section west of Milton immediately poses two very difficult choices. The first is whether to go north through or around the Beverly Swamp, and thus avoid use of the alternative east-west route south of Rattlesnake Point, and the second is to decide on the number and location of crossings of the Niagara Escarpment.

720 foot swath through town of Halton Hills

One of the most important decisions for people of this area was the choice of an Escarpment crossing for the north-south power corridor from the Bruce power station which will hook into the east-west Nanticoke to Pickering lines.

The Solandt Commission decided the lines should cross the Escarpment at Limehouse and proceed south to Milton and northwards through former Esqueuing township in the centre of Concession 5 into Erin township.

This means a 720 foot right-of-way dividing the new town of Halton Hills—600 feet for three double circuit 500 KV lines (2-1977, 1-1980) and 120 feet for two later 230 KV lines.

The report says: "Almost everyone who has considered the problem of building a transmission line across the Niagara Escarpment has selected the vicinity of Limehouse as an area where a crossing can be made with relatively little environmental damage or social disturbance. However, as is the case with all the desirable crossings of the Escarpment, the problems of getting to and away from the crossing are complex.

The details of the route to the Limehouse crossing from the north have been worked out by Ontario Hydro, in public meetings in connection with the Bradley Junction to Georgetown study. The details of the route south to Highway 401 have been discussed with the public by BHI in earlier public hearings and were the subject of many submissions to the Commission by municipalities, organizations and individuals. The Commission supports the route selected by BHI approximately

in the centre of Concession 5 of Esqueuing Township. The Ontario Hydro study to recommend a route from Bradley Junction to Georgetown also concluded that the centre of Concession 5 provides the best approach to the Limehouse area from the

north. This alignment crosses the Escarpment just west of the village of Limehouse and continues down the centre of Concession 5 to a junction with the east-west lines from Nanticoke just north of Highway 401.

In this section, from Limehouse to Highway 401, the exact location of the route and tower locations should be adjusted to minimize the impact on local landowners. The decision to recommend a route running south from Limehouse to the vicinity of Milton was not an easy one, since this is certainly a very attractive part of rural Ontario containing both good farms and fine rural estates.

They argued the use of this route would greatly increase the security of the power transmission from Bruce to the Toronto load centre and would make it reasonable to concentrate the rest of the Bruce power and the power from Nanticoke in one corridor parallel to Highway 401.

This proposal received considerable popular support at the hearings. As far as the Commission knows there was no one from the area affected

Representatives of the Township of Esqueuing and several local residents put most persuasively the case against bulldozing the line in this area. All available alternatives were carefully considered before the Commission reluctantly came to the conclusion that, on balance, this was the route that the transmission line should take.

For this section of the route Ontario Hydro requires a 720 foot right-of-way; 600 feet for three double circuit 500 KV lines (2-1977, 1-1980) and 120 feet for two later 230 KV lines. Because of the nature of this area every effort should be made to reduce this width if new technology makes this possible.

Bruce to Essa route unacceptable

The proposal by a group of citizens from North Halton and Wellington county that Hydro should use the "R" route for their towers and a Bruce to Essa route was turned down by the Solandt Commission. The proposal could have eliminated towers from Erin and Eramosa townships as well as Halton Hills and diminished the lines around Milton.

The report says: "A group of concerned citizens in Wellington County and North Halton have strongly supported 'System R' (four double circuit 500 KV lines carrying power from both Nanticoke and Bruce and crossing the Escarpment in the 401 corridor). When BHI reluctantly abandoned 'System R' because of Ontario Hydro's objections to

it on security grounds, this group set out to devise an alternative plan."

Briefly, they proposed that one of the three 500 KV circuits from the Bruce Generating Station should go eastward across country to an existing transformer station at Essa, just west of Barrie. This transformer station is on the existing 500 KV line from the north to Kleinburg and there is at present ample space in the right-of-way to put in another 500 KV line from Essa to Kleinburg. In the course of its study of the route from Bradley Junction to Georgetown, Ontario Hydro has already demonstrated that there is a possible route for a line to the vicinity of Fiesheron, in the north-east corner of the area studied for

the Bradley to Georgetown route. From there to Essa the group had not studied the route in detail but felt sure that a route could be found since the country is very hilly, relatively thinly populated and not the best agricultural land."

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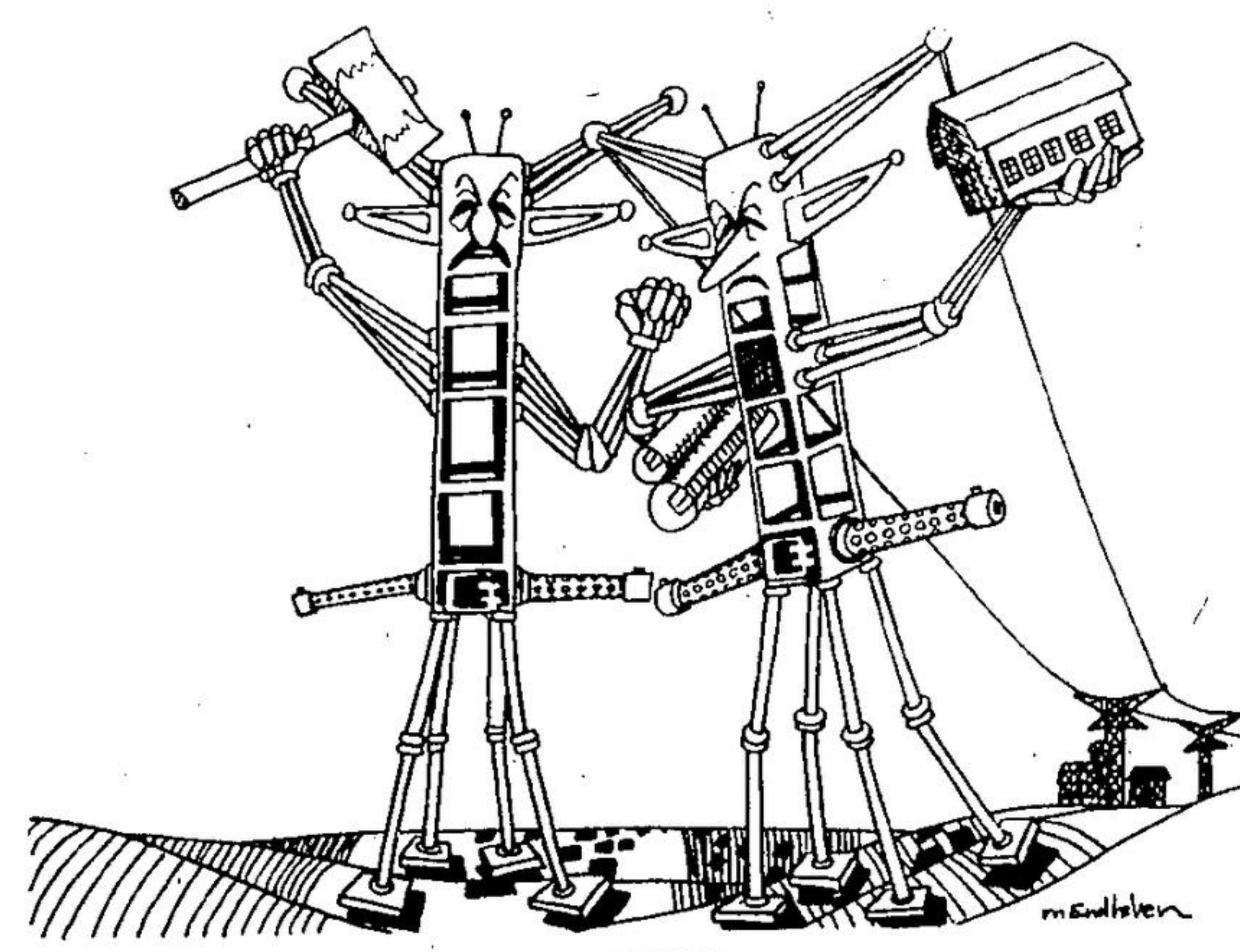
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Principal Recommendations:

Summary of Principal Recommendations:

1. The Recommended Route—The recommended route is shown in detail on Map.
2. Transmission Tower Design—Single shaft, "improved appearance" towers are to be used throughout the recommended route, except in the section from Middleport Station to Highway 401 through the Beverly Swamp, where lattice towers are proposed for use.
3. Underground Transmission—The Commission concludes 500 KV underground cable is not at present an attractive alternative and that neither the cost nor the security risk are justified by the improvement in environmental impact that would be achieved.
4. Urgency—The proceedings of the Commission have already seriously delayed the construction of the transmission line. Further delays should be minimized by the following actions:
 - a) The hearings of the Solandt Commission should be accepted as adequate public exposure of Ontario Hydro's plans and adequate justification of the need for the line and, therefore, the "hearings of necessity", required by The Expropriations Act, should be waived in those cases where the acquisition of property by expropriation is required.
 - b) While it is a complex legal problem beyond the terms of reference of this Commission, the Commission recommends that any exemptions to The Planning and Development Act that will help to speed up the fair and orderly acquisition of land for this route should in this case be granted to Ontario Hydro.
 - c) In order to obtain the earliest possible approval for the construction of the lines from the Bruce Generating Station to a new Milton Station and on to a new Halton Station, the Commission recommends that, if possible, the public hearings on those sections of the Parkway Belt which include this part of the route for the 500 KV line, should proceed even before all the "Parkway Belt: West" planning is complete.
5. A General Data Base for Land Use Planning—There is an urgent need for the centralization of all the data needed for land-use planning and control, so organized as to provide information not only to government agencies but also to the public.



WHAT FARM?

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