

The Acton Free Press

Ninety-ninth year - No. 43

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 1974

SECOND SECTION



TORONTO LAWYER Harold Elliott and Ontario Federation of Agriculture president Gordon Hill urge those at last Wednesday's meeting in Guelph to sign a form letter urging the Province to consider routing hydro corridors from the Bruce generating station to Essa near Camp Borden using existing corridors instead of cutting up from Milton through Limehouse, Halton Hills and Wellington County. The proposal runs counter to the recommendation of the Solandt Commission but would make a large substation near Milton unnecessary.

Hydro towers taking arable land out of production

Gordon Hill, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture told 500 farmers and land owners meeting in Guelph Wednesday that Ontario Hydro's proposed

Bradley Junction to Georgetown corridor is taking some of the best cultivated land in Ontario out of production.

meeting arranged by citizens from North Halton and Wellington County, Hill said farmers look on power provided by Ontario Hydro as important and they had no desire to halt its flow or delivery, but they felt the present proposals were taking land which should be used for producing food. Towers should use land unsuitable for agriculture, he said.

Ontario Hydro. Hill said farmers have been threatened that if they didn't sign offers to sell the Hydro representatives would tell them they would take it anyway.

"And who wants to get into the courts with Ontario Hydro?" he asked, charging the farmers' rights were trampled on and almost "stolen" by the pittance they got for it. Then every time the farmers think they are in a position to deal equally with Hydro "they come at you in another way."

He pointed out development had been taking 26 acres of land out of production every hour in the last five years at a time when food was desperately needed. The proposed Bradley to Georgetown corridor is slated to go through some of the best land in Halton and Wellington.

"Land is our most valuable resource next to people," Hill told the meeting at the John F. Ross Collegiate, Guelph. Farmers and land owners attended from areas along the route of the proposed corridor and listened as Hydro was roasted by seven speakers and from the audience in a subsequent question period.

Hill said the presence of so many towers in agricultural land posed a problem for farmers using machinery up to 60 feet wide which left boat-shaped areas uncultivated because of the difficulties negotiating around them. He also took a crack at Hydro's land negotiating teams which he claimed took advantage of farmers' inexperience in land deals. The buyers are professionals who have no concern for farmers' problems, he charged.

"The speaker said farmers having to deal with Hydro feel completely alone since the buyer is backed by Ontario Hydro which in turn is supported by the Ontario Government. The method used puts the farmer in the position of asking Hydro to buy his land and contributes to the bad feelings against

hydro corridors in Guelph. They included Lee Symmes, chairman of the Coalition of Concerned Citizens who first opposed, Ontario Hydro's original east-west corridor from Nanticoke to Pickering, Harold Middlebrook, a North Burlington farmer, Ian Barrett, Gordon Ridd of the Halton Federation, John Schneider and Harold Elliott.

All of them took strips off Hydro for their policies and most criticized the Solandt Commission's recommendation to cross the Niagara Escarpment at Limehouse and cut through prime agricultural land.

Lee Symmes, first speaker said Hydro's mandate is to produce power at cost but the value of the environment and the cost of pollution was never considered. He said the large increase in power sought was largely to benefit Toronto and Hamilton, centres he thought should bear the brunt of the disadvantages of the corridors instead of rural people.

Symmes also felt the Government should be planning power sites in areas of south-western Ontario to divert growth from Toronto and take advantage of power

produce nearby. He said the direction of growth was not all Hydro's fault—much of it belonged to the Ontario Government.

Harold Middlebrook called for a land use program to preserve number one and two agricultural land. He noted only four per cent of the land in Canada was suitable for agriculture but it was gradually being eaten up by development while the population continued to grow — a situation he found senseless.

Ian Barrett said the Ontario Premier should remember what happened to the last man who proposed to ram through a utility corridor — C. D. Howe. He questioned the need of additional power. He noted the bulk of Ontario Hydro exports go to the U.S. and a new agreement had been signed to increase the amount of export while Hydro continued to say Ontario needed the power.

In a brimstone and fire address, Barrett challenged the accuracy of Hydro's growth figures and the preponderance of it destined for Toronto. He saw the day when there wouldn't be any farm land left below the Escarpment if development continued spurred by the direction of the growth of hydro power.

Follow agriculture. Gordon Kidd said he was dismayed the hydro corridors seemed to follow agricultural areas and the vague reassurances Hydro gave to farmers. He claimed studies at the University of Oregon showed a marked effect on production near voltages over 250,000, radio and TV interference and one Tillsonburg study showed sterile seed resulted.

Kidd wondered why rural people had to put up with the visual impact of the towers when it made more sense to him to have them strung along highways where drivers only got fleeting glimpses. Rural people have to look at them the year around, he noted.

John Schneider outlined his proposal to run the corridors from Bruce to Essa and avoid the central Ontario farm lands altogether. He urged those attending to sign the form letters to urge the Government to consider a Bruce to Essa route.

Final speaker was Harold Elliott, a Toronto lawyer who lives at Lot 19, Con. 3, Erin township, who urged an independent study for the North-South corridor which could be impartial using a retired judge or other arbiter to preside. He also argued in favor of corridors traversing the circumference of the area to avoid the farm land. He forecast residents would end up with both lines around the perimeter and intersecting corridors if strong action wasn't taken now.

Elliott also took issue with the Hydro suggestion that no hearings be held in this area. "What they are saying is don't give hearings here because hearings have already been held 30 miles from here." "It's baloney," he said.

The meeting, chaired by John Schneider, concluded with questions from the floor, much of it devoted to comments from farmers from the Wingham and Listowel areas who had banded together to oppose the hydro corridors.

Wellington-Dufferin M.P.P. John Root and several Hydro officials were in attendance but made no comments.

The North Halton-Wellington group told this newspaper they succeeded in arranging a meeting with Allan Grossman, secretary of resources management, to further discuss the Bruce to Essa proposal which the Solandt Commission had turned down.

An estimated 500 people attended.

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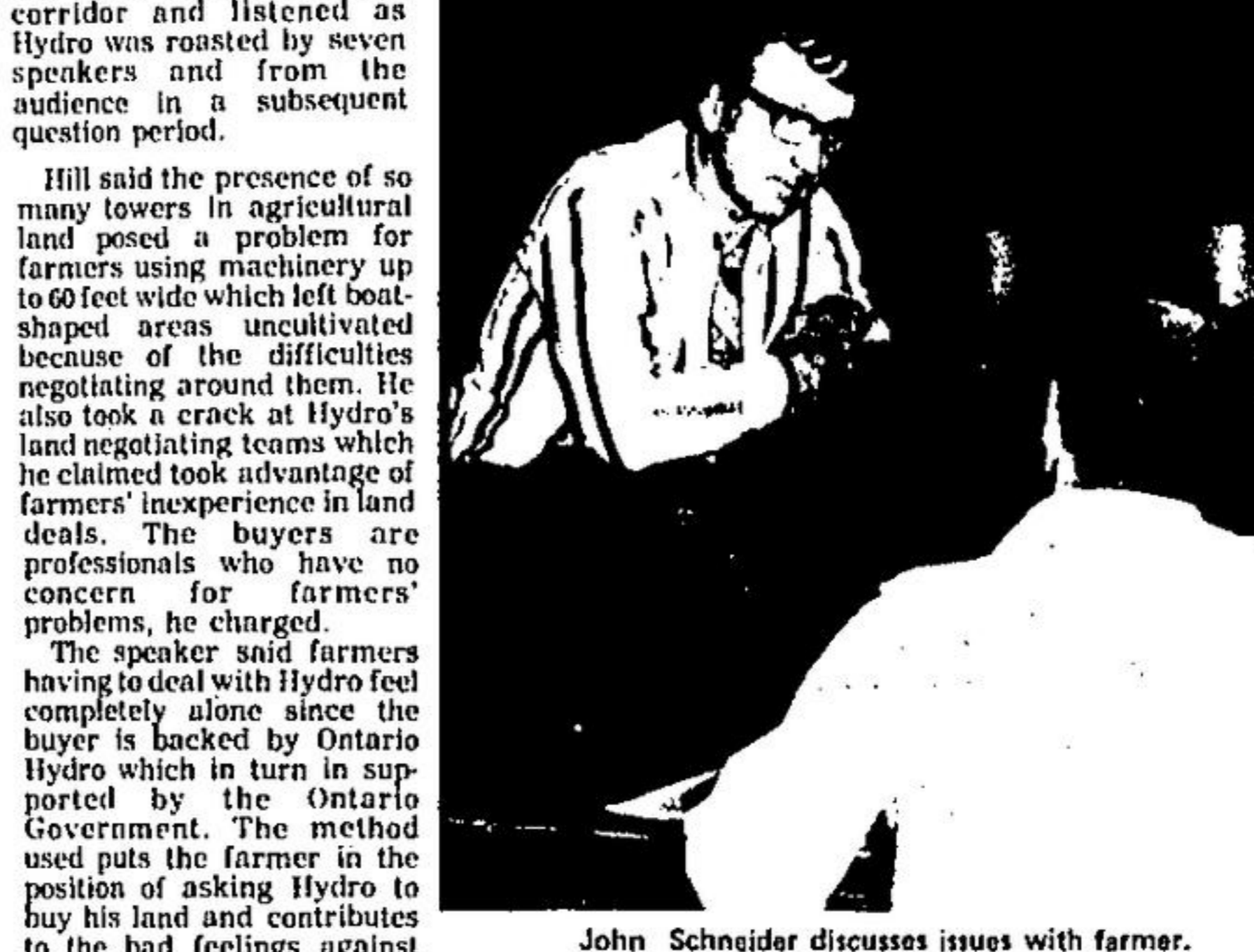
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John Schneider discusses issues with farmer.

Route in May

Residents of Acton can expect to see route evaluation people of the Canada post office laying out letter carrier walks about May 7, according to Acton postmaster Gord McKeown.

Mr. McKeown says the actual mail delivery service will probably be in operation commencing September 1. "Anybody wishing to install their letter boxes should do so well in advance of that day," said the postmaster. He explains there will be no delivery beyond 40 yards, however, from a street side walk. "Beyond that, regular mail boxes will be required," he said.

Six speakers tear strips off Hydro

Six panelists followed Gordon Hill, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture at last Wednesday's meeting to discuss

hydro corridors in Guelph. They included Lee Symmes, chairman of the Coalition of Concerned Citizens who first opposed, Ontario Hydro's original east-west corridor from Nanticoke to Pickering, Harold Middlebrook, a North Burlington farmer, Ian Barrett, Gordon Ridd of the Halton Federation, John Schneider and Harold Elliott.

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