

# Sludge bed odor at Beardmore must go by end of 1975 - Ministry



OLD SLUDGE BEDS OF UNKNOWN DEPTH WHICH ARE NOW BEING FILLED IN HAVE BEEN THE MAIN SOURCE OF UNPLEASANT ODOR AT BEARDMORE.

Most recent complaints by Acton residents about unpleasant odors believed to originate from the Beardmore Tannery have prompted a plea for patience from company president Peter Dunham and assurance that the firm is more than keeping pace with a Ministry of the Environment order to have two old sludge beds which cover a total of 7 1/2 acres filled in by the end of 1975.

Mr. Dunham admitted that an unfortunate mechanical breakdown in the plant's three year old effluent treatment system may have complicated the odor situation last week, but he explained that immediate action was taken to rectify the problem.

Main source of odor remains the two huge sludge beds which are no longer being used, but rather being filled in a dumping process which began last summer and now is about half completed. Mr. Dunham said the ministerial order is being followed to the letter and that the beds will be filled in and the source of odor eliminated by the end of 1975. Even now, he says, the odor is decreasing as the filling procedure continues.

Harold Seren, Halton-Peel officer for the Ministry of the Environment told the Free Press this week that since the filling began last summer the number of complaints he has received from Acton and area residents has been reduced

considerably.

"Acton used to be our number 1 problem in the Halton-Peel area, but now it's further down the list," Mr. Seren explained.

He supported Mr. Dunham's statement that Beardmore is following the order.

Mr. Seren said his office in Oakville has heard nothing official about the circulation of a petition by Acton residents.

"Whether they have a petition or not, there's not much to be done," he explained. "Any company working under a government program or ministerial order is protected from all prosecutions under the Environment Protection Act."

Although he said inspectors from his department have not recently checked the town of Acton pollution control plant, Mr. Seren said no odors were detected coming from it at the last check.

"It's not impossible that once in a while something could break down in that operation too," he said. "Once the Beardmore problem is cleared up, we'll find out for sure if the town plant has one."

Some residents, notably persons living in apartments on Churchill Road south near the town plant, believe it to be one of the town's biggest sources of odor.

## Disenchanted...

Continued from page 8

physical health of the child during his growing years? To see that he is fed a balanced diet to nurture bone and muscle to withstand a lifetime of wear and tear, rather than to allow him a free choice to go the 'coke and chips' route?

**Parents' duty**

"If you agree - does it not follow that during these same formative years, it is the parents' duty to see that the child is also nurtured with a healthy diet of literature for his mental and spiritual welfare, rather than allow him to drift in free choice; perhaps to take the trashy trail to intellectual depravity or bankruptcy!"

The comment by M. Robert Sinclair in this connection in the same edition of the Journal-Record, is most relevant:

"The use of professionals for criteria and values may be helpful, but needs to be tempered with common sense. To bow down to the altar of the expert in both sacrilege and foolhardy. The insights which they may bring must be diluted with the recognition of their vested interests and power-dominating philosophy."

Secondly, in the matter of such questionable reading material being optional, Sinclair again makes the point for responsibility:

"There is appropriate reading matter for the appropriate age. The danger in the present set-up is that the child in school could be assigned printed material for study which is both contrary to their value system and repugnant to them. Peer pressure and desire for success could create agonizing pressures for the student."

**What students want**

If, as Trustee Jim Clelland noted, trustees make their decisions based on what the students want, "that's where we place our faith - in the students" -

Clelland), why not let the students elect the trustees, and leave it to the trustees to figure out how to pay for the system. Because here's one parent who refuses to pay another cent of property taxes for an educational system run by the children and dominated by the childish experimentation of the smart-aleck, self-righteous, self-important, self-serving bureaucrats who exploit the immaturity of our children at our expense to build their own snug and snug little empires!

Trustee Tony Goodyear observed that "It seems there is not as much hue and cry from the community as some people suppose." What does he want, marches? book-burnings? window smashings? The public assumes that our elected trustees will quietly and efficiently fulfill their duties in representing the interests of the parents and taxpayers without having to be prodded by power-pressure tactics from the public. But if the trustees are going to cave in to the pressures of our paid civil servants and serve them instead of us, they'll be hearing enough "hue and cry" to satisfy them for a long, long time.

**Constructive reforms**

Since the launching of the Renaissance Committee in late March, we have, at great expenditure of time and resources sought to thoroughly familiarize ourselves with the strengths and weaknesses of our educational system and to prepare constructive reform proposals for the consideration of the Board. We had hoped that by "sweet reasonableness" such a "brief" could be presented and negotiated with the Trustees. But if the Trustees only respond to "hue and cry" tactics from the public, we'll have to consider and prepare contingency plans which take this Trustees attitude into account.

We still hope for better things.

Ken Campbell,  
Chairman,  
The Halton Renaissance Committee.

## Anti-smell petition signed by residents

A petition has been signed by about 400 Acton residents who feel it's time the Beardmore smell is eliminated.

According to Mrs. Brian Iredale of Poplar Ave., in the Crescent, the petition was triggered by one particularly bad evening about four weeks ago, "at just the beginning of summer." She and her husband were putting about in their garden, when the terrible smell began to permeate the air, moving right into the house and remaining for at least an hour.

"It was just vile. We called the air management branch and complained." According to Mrs. Iredale, air management had said earlier that, if enough residents complain they act on such matters. "The smell is so strong around here sometimes it just sticks in your throat and you can't do anything about it," said Mrs. Iredale.

She told of discussing the rank odor of the night in question, with her neighbor, Mrs. Barclay Smith. Mrs. Smith phoned Mrs. Ron Mellon across the road, and asked if she had called the air management branch. They learned that all had, but without results. The next day Mrs. Mellon, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Iredale decided to comb the neighborhood with a petition to try to have the company responsible do something constructive about the smell.

Mrs. Iredale said she and her husband moved to Acton from Georgetown five years ago and didn't know right off there was such a terrible smell. She feels many people in her vicinity have complained individually for years never realizing how strongly their neighbors felt about it.

"The smell has always been bad, sometimes worse than at other times," she said, "but there weren't enough people backing complaints."

Asked if she had not heard that the Beardmore Company was working on solutions to the problem, Mrs. Iredale said she doesn't feel the company is actually doing anything about the cause. "Because," she said, "they have been promising for the last two or three years and it hasn't bettered in that time." She feels the company's promises to clear up the smell is to quiet people down, "but that doesn't get rid of the smell," she said.

Bob Holmes

"In Kingham Hill district we've had 99.9% of the residents signing the petition," said one young man who was raised in Acton. Bob Holmes said he debated about purchasing a home in Kingham Hill area partly because of the smell but was led to believe the promises of the Beardmore Company and newspaper reports that they were going to get rid of the smell.

"We just don't think they're (Beardmore Co.) working hard enough trying to find a solution," said Mr. Holmes who said he purchased his home on Kingham Rd. approximately one year and four months ago. He said the smell wasn't so bad for awhile but the one the people in this area are now getting is worse than it ever was when he was a kid moving about the town. "I can't describe the difference," he said, but explained it is worse than can be imagined especially on particularly bad nights.

Mr. Holmes feels, "It's rubbish to believe that the Beardmore company has reduced the smell," and said the smell around now is even worse than last year. He doesn't believe reports of the air management branch in Oakville that complaints are decreasing but is convinced more people in Acton are complaining than ever before.

**No response**

Mr. Holmes explained that the Oakville air environment office publishes a phone number to call. "But when residents phone to complain they get the answer that an inspector will call back but they never do," said the man who, himself, has called three or four times to the designated number, with no response. He said that many of the people purchasing homes in the Kingham Hill area were not aware of the smell before buying. "Those who had heard, expected something different."

According to Mr. Holmes, the petition had exceptionally good response in the Golden Gates apartment building beside the cemetery. He said the apartment dwellers find the smell gets into their apartments and finally leaves, "but it stays in hallways for some time," he explained.

Another frustrated lifetime resident is Ron Mellon of Crescent St. The father of two little daughters, Ron and his wife Dianne purchased their Acton home about eight years ago.

Ron says that, for the first few years they weren't bothered too much but the smell has become increasingly worse. He explained that residents in his area used to accept the smell as something that came about only after a rain. "Now it's a case of which direction the wind is blowing," he said and added, "it affects different areas of Acton at different times, de-

pending on wind direction."

Mr. Mellon said "sometimes, as I come up the highway from Milton the strong odor is completely rotten." The young Acton man feels Beardmore Co. is taking its own time to solve the problem because they do not recognize its effect on people. He doesn't think what the company is doing to solve the cause is working, "because," said Ron, "it's becoming steadily worse."

One other concern of Ron Mellon is that at one time, residents could phone the air pollution branch in Oakville and get satisfaction with an inspector investigating. "He would acknowledge the smell and ask Beardmore what they were doing about it. In some cases they would lay a violation charge," he said. Ron explained, that "lately, people can't get through even to the inspector. And they seem to be avoiding us," he said.

Ron Mellon is tired of people suggesting if he doesn't like the smell he should move. "I like Acton and we bought a home here because we want to live here," he said. He expressed strong feelings that he and his family do not want to move out but only ask that they can live in the town without the constant concern that the smell is going to hit at any time.

Chief organizers of the petition consist of Brian Iredale and Jean Smith of Poplar Ave., Bob Holmes of Kingham Hill Estates and Ron Mellon. Mr. Mellon explains the purpose of the petition is to make Acton residents aware. The document will be taken to the local council and



## Residents' letter

The following is a letter sent to Gordon Trivett of the Central Region for the Ministry of the Environment by Robert Holmes and Ron Mellon, two of the Acton residents complaining about odors.

Dear Mr. Trivett,

I would like to comment on two recent articles I have read associated with your name in two of our local newspapers (Guelph and Georgetown).

First I would like to point out that Beardmore & Co. is owned by Canada Packers and I think that it is a great injustice putting the name of the company in print instead of the owners. Maybe it would be too embarrassing for such a large food industry to be associated with such a filthy mess. The story you gave the press is really one sided. It almost seems as though you received all your information from the polluters themselves.

The company might have the right attitude but it is not going to solve this stench we have to endure. I believe if this odour was drifting across your yard or some member of Parliament, there would be immediate action taken to have it relieved.

You have a paragraph in this article in which you said and I quote, "the company has reduced to almost zero the occasions when there is a strong odour." This state-

ment is absolute rubbish! The area I live in receives this odour up to three or four times during a week.

If you think this is not true you will find out when you receive a copy of the petition going around the town of Acton. We have 228 names from our neighbourhood alone which is almost one hundred per cent.

Many people who try to contact the Oakville office either get no response at all or they get a sample of the same nonsense that you stated in these newspapers. Many of us feel that this problem is being ignored because of the amount of revenue that the owners have accumulated. We feel that there are politics involved in this case and any complaints are being bypassed on purpose. We realize you may not have the staff available to post someone in Acton at all times but we feel that your attitudes towards our complaints are very negative.

The odour in our area is getting worse instead of better. The progress we've made registering complaints is nil. Maybe it's time we brought this complete problem to the attention of some of the larger newspapers in circulation in order to bring this out in the open.

Yours sincerely,  
Robert Holmes  
Ron Mellon

## Region seeks chief

Halton Regional Council is expected to select an administrator in the near future. A committee appointed to set guidelines and interview candidates has been formed for some time and apparently interviewed some candidates.

The administrator will have to be responsible for overseeing operations in the region and accountable directly to council.

M.P., the air environment people, and also to city newspapers. "To see what can be accomplished," he said and reiterated that about 400 residents had already shown their interest in getting rid of the problem.

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