

I.C.G. eyes election while helping groups fight Hydro

An Erin man, who never before offered his time free for any cause, did so last Wednesday to lead local farmers against Ontario Hydro's land assembly here for its power corridor.

"I've never volunteered before", David Coleman told about 60 people at Ospringe School when he offered to chair tonight's (Wednesday's) meeting at the same place at 8:30 p.m. Fifteen people indicated they would come to talk about sharing the newly-formed Halton Hills' group's lawyer in expropriation hearings and funding.

The Ospringe School meetings mean that another group of area residents joined what appears to be an Interested Citizens' Group (ICG) strategy to turn the proposed Bradley-Georgetown hydro corridor into an issue for the next provincial election.

Up and down the route of the proposed 500,000 watt line, the ICG is helping local groups unite. At Stewarttown two weeks ago, at Durham's hearings later this month, and soon, too, in East Luther,

the ICG offers support. Reford Gardhouse, of Milton, who heads the Halton Hills' group, welcomed the Ospringe people to share the services of lawyer Dick Howitt, of Georgetown, at expropriation hearings. Both he, and Mr. Howitt, however, insisted that there be a group in the Ospringe area.

Last Wednesday's meeting was called to inform citizens of the steps Ontario Hydro usually takes in its land acquisitions. For this purpose ICG chairman Bill Mann invited Mr. Howitt and Durham lawyer Peter Fallis. Both men had already talked to the Halton Hills' group at Stewarttown.

On what to do about Ontario Hydro and its expropriation notices, the advice was—delay.

"Delay is what's needed because somewhere down the line is an election", Mr. Fallis said.

"The more time you can get us, the more chance we have of getting the corridor out", Mr. Mann said.

All three men advised area farmers to file for a hearing

as soon as they receive notices from the public utility. "You must file an objection within 30 days. Without a notice, no inquiry is held", Mr. Fallis said.

Concerning Ontario Hydro's attempts to survey farmers' land, Mr. Fallis informed the group that surveyors must have identification. "You can't interfere with them. There's not merit, though, in letting them on your land to do work now. Hold out as long as possible", he said.

The Durham lawyer also advised residents not to sign any documents relating to compensation. "You probably won't get paid for a long time, and you'll probably find your neighbor has gone to the compensation board and gotten more", Mr. Fallis said.

Mr. Fallis invited listeners to attend the three day hearing of necessity for Durham farmers which starts June 28 at 11 a.m. in Durham District High School.

Mr. Fallis, however, was not optimistic about the hearing's outcome. He

described the inquiry officer, F. L. Miller, of St. Catharines in these words: "We understand he (Miller) has a habit of rubber stamping things that are presented to him".

Even if Mr. Miller does not run true to the form which Mr. Fallis sets him to, there is Ontario Energy Minister Dennis Timbrell.

"We fear it (the hearing) will be a charade and a farce because Dennis Timbrell says he's fed up with hearings and says it (the line) is going ahead no matter what the inquiry officer says", Mr. Fallis said.

Mr. Howitt, who is also a Halton Hills councillor, hopes to make it two wins in a row against Ontario Hydro. He and another lawyer succeeded in the courts at getting a route for a proposed power corridor changed in the Chatham area in 1973-74.

Based on his Chatham experience, Mr. Howitt detailed some of the utility's tactics in land acquisition. "Once they get into expropriation hearings, hydro starts with elderly people,

who may not want to fight. Then frequently they went to people who don't understand English too well. They'd leave the tough cookies to the end, to create the impression that there are 30 cranks at the centre kicking up a fuss", Mr. Howitt said.

Hydro appears to have divided the farmers along the proposed route into three groups. The north, Durham and area, is set for a hearing; the south, Georgetown, Milton and Acton area, is receiving notices, but no date for a hearing is yet set. The middle is just starting to receive notices.

Mr. Howitt said that the division is a classic hydro tactic. Hydro acquires land at either end and works towards the middle and the hearings are held at different times, he said.

The ICG, Mr. Mann said, is not against hydro corridors. The ICG wants an independent, non-Ontario Hydro study of the alternatives of taking power out of the Bruce nuclear generating station on Lake Huron.

Mr. Fallis said that the north, too, wants an independent inquiry because he said power could be transported along a utility corridor which would share the 66-foot wide Canadian National Railway line which passes through Guelph and Fergus.

"It's not beyond engineering capabilities to bring power that way", Mr. Fallis said.

The ICG proposed another alternative of bringing the nuclear-generated power to the south at the Environmental Hearing Board

sessions at Hillsburgh last summer. The group maintained that Ontario Hydro can use an existing 230,000 watt corridor as a first line and add a parallel 500,000 watt line to Essa, near Lake Simcoe where it can link with major north-south route.

Bill White, R.R. 2 East Luther, asked for and received ICG help in canvassing people in his area. Once a list of names is given to the ICG, Peggy Mann and Catherine O'Donnell will start knocking on doors.



LAWYERS PETER FALLIS (left) and Dick Howitt spoke to about 60 area farmers at Ospringe School on Ontario Hydro's land acquisition tactics. Area citizens are meeting tonight at 8.30 p.m. in the school to discuss what to do and funding.

The Acton Free Press

Farming under 500 kV lines? hydro demonstrates at Essa Fri.



ELECTRIC FIELDS exist under 500 kV lines, Ontario Hydro admits, but claim they are low at ground level and cannot normally be felt. Walter Inkis demonstrates a slight tingle can be felt when an umbrella is used to magnify electrical effects.

By H. Coles
The working press was invited to Ontario Hydro's demonstration site at Essa, near Barrie, last Friday and this reporter attended to watch demonstrations conducted by Walter Inkis, a Hydro development engineer. Demonstrations are designed to duplicate conditions experienced by people work-

'Concern' for corridor in report: MPP

The all-party Ontario Legislature's select committee on hydro rates report will contain a statement on what is termed "the continuing concern for the Bradley-Georgetown power corridor". MPP Julian Reed says.

Mr. Reed (L. Halton-Burlington) told about 60 Erin and Ospringe area farmers Wednesday at Ospringe School that the statement will include other hydro corridors which are not as far along as the 500,000 watt Bradley to Georgetown line.

Mr. Reed sat on the select committee. The main thrust of the select committee's report is aimed at a 34 per cent rate increase next year. The jump in hydro rates is required by Ontario Hydro to cover expected costs.

"It is an accomplishment to get this concern (for the hydro corridors) included in the main body of the report," Mr. Reed said.

The MPP's remarks preceded a meeting called to inform local residents of Ontario Hydro's land acquisition tactics. Interested Citizens' Group chairman Bill Mann and two lawyers who will be representing farmers at Durham and Halton Hills' expropriation hearings detailed the Crown Corporation's methods.

under high voltage lines, with an emphasis on farming operations, principally because of the concern in the farming community over the extra high voltage (EHV) transmission lines such as are proposed for the Bradley to Georgetown hydro corridor.

The four hour program invited questions and there was no doubt Ontario Hydro came out smelling like the Rose of Essa.

Demonstrations took place directly under the only 500,000 kilowatt lines in Ontario and Hydro officials, including engineers and an M.D. Dr. Black, fielded questions from skeptical reporters.

Dr. Black pricked ears up when he told the press and TV representatives he would have no worry about living in a house directly under the 500 kV hydro lines. "I'm convinced there is no danger or genetic effects," he said.

He said Russian studies on switchyard workers indicating there were dangers to health were unscientific and would not apply to exposure under hydro lines. In fact, he said one study done in the United States seemed to indicate that electrical fields such as were generated by hydro lines helped bone growth and the healing of fractures. But, he said, these conclusions were hypothetical and he knew of no beneficial effects.

One Ontario Hydro lineman supervisor told the press he has been working on hydro lines since 1965, including 500 kV and he had experienced no ill effects and his family continued to grow, challenging statements that exposure to electrical fields could cause ill health and sterility.

Dr. Black said he had never seen symptoms yet from any lineman which would indicate they were affected by exposure to hydro lines.

Demonstrator Walter Inkis also made light of charges that ozone manufactured by hydro transmission corridors could affect the atmosphere. He said quantities were so small there was trouble measuring it. He proceeded with a demonstration to also show that small devices containing ozone were used to purify air in office buildings and homes.

Higher concentrations of ozone are harmful, he said, but government regulations ensure there is no generation over eight parts per 100,000,000 parts of air.

Corona fall-out would also be policed strictly by Hydro, officials said, because it also indicated losses to the system which would decrease efficiency. "We try to keep it as low as possible."

Radio and TV reception? Hydro had a small, cheap radio and a TV set in their demonstration hall directly under the 500 kV lines (attached to a 40 foot aerial) and demonstrated there was little interference.

Most problems for people near or under hydro lines, they said, were attributable to old aerials, damaged lead-ins and old sets or fluorescent lights, electric drills, skill saws or other such apparatus. Ninety per cent of such interference emanates from the homes, Hydro claims. When Hydro does encounter outside interference, men are dispatched to find out where it originates and clear it up.

Static on radio and T.V. interference mainly originate from weak stations, especially on rainy days. Problems also multiply on old lines where technical expertise has not been updated.

Asked why Hydro had no cattle under the lines to test whether there were any genetic effects, Mr. Inkis said it had been considered but because of financial outbacks was not feasible. Told there was much concern especially from Bruce County cattle farmers, Hydro officials indicated they would do so at some time in the future when the financial situation was better.

Is it safe to ride horses under high voltage electrical lines? According to Ontario Hydro it is safe and if there are problems they can be corrected by using a semi-conductor type of insulation under a saddle. Charges have been made by Halton Hills farmers that any metallic items in tack (bits, buckles, etc.) will pick up an electrical charge which may give the horse a severe electrical shock, causing unpredictable actions by the horse.

It is also claimed voltage build-up in the ground near lines may also cause a current to flow between the front and rear legs of a horse, between a rider and horse when rider is mounting or handling. Riders have been cautioned not to allow their horses to touch any ungrounded metallic objects such as a car, machine or fence because under certain sets of conditions the horse could become electrocuted.

Ontario Hydro says riding horses under 230 kV lines has never shown any ill-effects either for horse or riders but no demonstrations were made.

Also asked about a notarized statement of an experience of a Mount Forest farmer under a 230 kV transmission line, where contact between a steel bar and a tractor hitch

produced a blue flash similar to that of an arc welder of approximately two seconds duration and burnt through the rust exposing shiny metal, Mr. Inkis said they had tried to simulate the conditions described but with no success.

Elmer Echlin, the farmer, swore that on June 29, 1975, at about 10 a.m. he approached his forage harvester, which had been parked under the 230 kV line overnight. He said the tractor was hitched and the forage harvester was resting on its jackstand, under which was a piece of wood. Equipped with two rubber tires, it was insulated but being suspicious of the machine having picked up a charge he took a half-inch by two foot steel bar and standing in such a manner it struck the ground and fell against the rear hitch of the machine. That precipitated the blue flash of two seconds.

He said that he feels if he had not taken this precaution he would not be alive today. He swore the notarized statement at Mount Forest on March 3, 1976.

Mr. Inkis said he was familiar with the notarized statement but they could not repeat it and get a charge at the demonstration centre. He offered no other explanation.

Demonstrations shown to the press included those with various types of farm fences under the line, to illustrate that the fences drain static charges through metal or wood posts or contacts with the ground or grass. Generally, Hydro claims, the residual voltage and current in fences is less than that available from a small flashlight battery.

Vehicles were under the lines including a farm tractor to show that under some circumstances a charge can build up on the vehicles if entirely void of any grounding contact. Normally, Hydro says, any charge would be drained through tires, a plow in contact with ground, or through chains.

Hydro warns against refuelling vehicles under hydro lines although the demonstration with gasoline illustrated the difficulty of igniting fuel directly under the lines.

Demonstrations with farm buildings, including metal covered, showed they are grounded through electrical service, plumbing, the frame or contact with the ground. Induced charges caused by the electrical effects from transmission lines can occur inside non-metallic buildings but Hydro says usually they are small, less than those produced by air circulation.



TRYING TO light gasoline with an electric spark under 500 kV lines is Walter Inkis. He says it can be done but only under extraordinary conditions.

MacDonald says Reed is too late for study

According to Donald C. MacDonald, chairman of the Hydro Select Committee, Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed was two months late in asking for a report on the Bradley to Georgetown hydro corridor. MacDonald said Reed was injecting politics in the issue when the committee faced a deadline for reporting on May 31 and had unanimously decided it would hear no further witnesses because it had substantial testimony on all answers central to terms of reference.

Mr. Reed last week accused the New Democratic Party, of which Mr. MacDonald is a member, of taking one attitude in public and another at the Select committee on Hydro Rates, when two of the three NDP members of the committee voted against an independent study and a 5-5 tie vote was broken by the chairman, Mr. MacDonald's vote—against the resolution.

Reed noted NDP leader Stephen Lewis had made a

number of dramatic speeches emphasizing his party's determination to fight the government on the question of hydro corridors, and said the NDP was two-faced.

However, MacDonald in a statement issued this week, said it was not a policy matter but the lateness of the resolution after the committee decided to hear no further testimony in order to meet the May 31 deadline.

MacDonald said: "The Committee voted down that resolution partly because the issue was, at best, peripheral to our terms of reference, but more important, because we had heard no testimony on the question. The Committee felt, quite rightly, that the integrity of its report would be questioned if it reported on questions on which it had heard no testimony. At this late stage, it was impossible to re-open hearings since the deadline for our report is already past."

"Furthermore, MacDonald

continued, when another member, James Renwick, suggested that the committee should consider including an addendum, acknowledging Reed's concern with the issue of the Bradley-Georgetown Corridor and voicing the strong view that the planning and routing of Hydro corridors should be carried out only with the fullest public participation. Reed refused this alternative at the firm insistence of David Peterson who, though not a member sat at his elbow during the Committee's discussion of the issue.

"If Reed wanted, or was going to insist that the Committee should include the Bradley-Georgetown Corridor in its report and recommendations, the least he could have done was so inform the Committee of his intentions in early April. Now that the hearings are over he is trying to compensate for his earlier neglect by bringing the issue in at the eleventh hour", MacDonald said.



TESTING THE electrical field next to a wire fence under the 500 kV lines draws only a frown from Walter Inkis.