

Hornby meeting

Halton farmers flay Ministry over Ag Practice Code

The Ontario Government's Agricultural Code of Practice came in for some sharp digs at a meeting last Wednesday in Hornby for rural residents of Halton. Three representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture fielded flack but convinced few rural residents that the Code, published as a guide, would not soon be implemented as law.

About 50 farmers and rural dwellers at the meeting in Hornby Community Centre were both uplifted about Government intervention in rural affairs, especially guidelines in the Code for setbacks and manure spreading and handling.

Peter Branch of RR 2, Norval, noted that although the Agricultural Code of Practice may be only guidelines, the 1,000 foot setback recommended in the code is now law in the former township of Esqueving and under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Branch said the problem had not been thought out at the municipal level. If a farmer wants to appeal and

loses it costs \$600 or more in fees to get a zoning change even after the zoning change is passed.

"This expense gets us up tight," he said. "Municipalities accept the guidelines and pass them as by-laws and the farmers get stuck."

"You can't blame that on the agricultural code," retorted Howard Nodwell, principal spokesman for the Ministry of Agriculture.

Branch, however, noted the Esqueving official plan had gone to the Ontario Government and been approved, and created problems. "That's why we're up tight," he said. "The unintentional things done in Queen's Park are a problem to rural people."

Halton Hills assistant planner Ron Burnett read the section of the by-law which disturbed farmers and noted it had been brought up before the OMB and is under consideration for change. He thought farmers had a right and obligation to bring it to the attention of the town as some parts of the by-law were restrictive. Mr. Branch suggested rural land owners

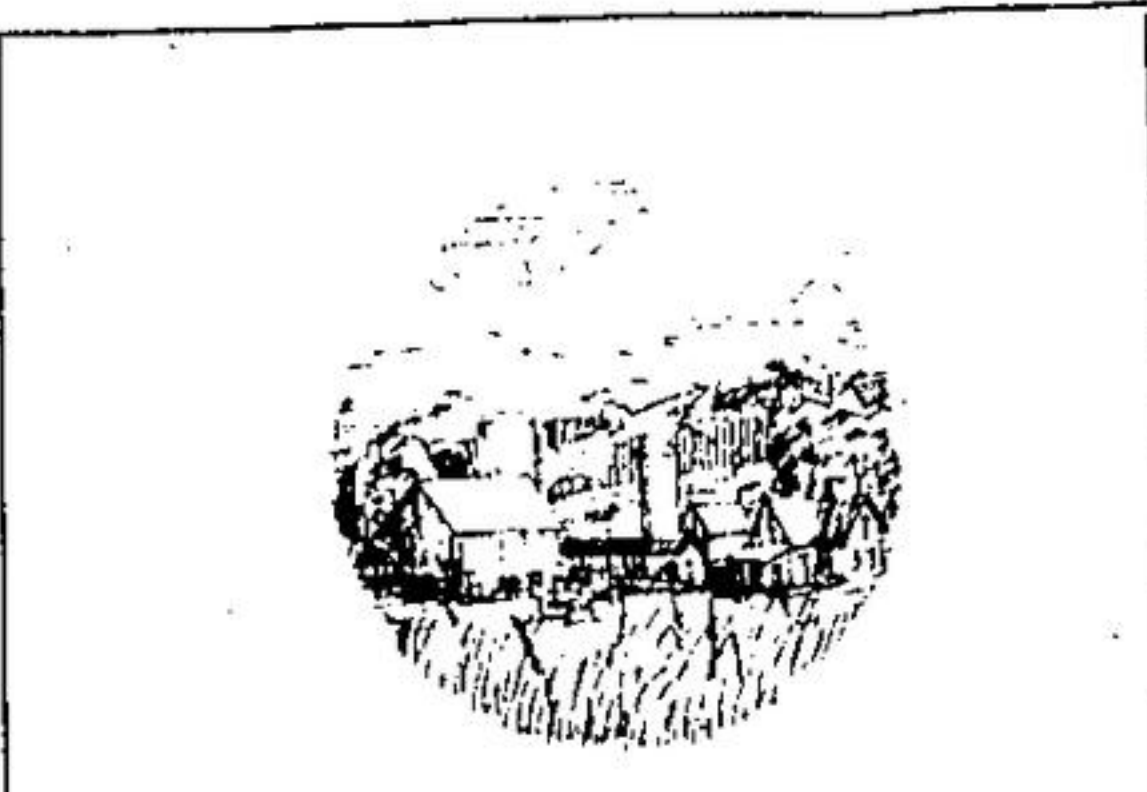
should send letters both to town planner Mario Venditti and to the Region.

Mrs. Phyllis Ferrier, RR 1, Milton, suggested Ministry people say the code is only a guideline but describes getting a dispensation to circumvent it. "Do you realize how that sounds?" she asked Nodwell. "You are already geared for something more than guidelines," she accused Ministry people.

Nodwell denied it. He said he personally had voted against the code becoming rules and regulations.

Mrs. Ferrier said she found this difficult to relate since he worked for the Department of Agriculture and was putting the farmer on the spot. "I don't know how his conscience allows it," she said.

"Civil servants shouldn't make the laws, the Government should," said Rod Pinkney, of R.R. 5, Georgetown, who said conditions are



Agricultural Code of Practice

Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Ministry of the Environment
Ministry of Housing



PETER BRANCH, R.R. Norval, chaired the frank meeting between country dwellers and Ministry of Agriculture reps.

they had rights," she accused the Ministry. "I resent paying people like you to regiment us."

Another woman questioner said the code would prohibit them from putting manure on 43 acres if it was followed. She said if people want to eat they are going to have to get used to manure. "The ethnic people know how valuable manure is," she said.

"They're smarter, because they had to have gardens in their home lands and know what produces food for them and its value."

"What right have you guys got to tell us when to spread manure?" asked Ralph Denny of RR 2, Acton, "coming from Toronto and telling us what to do. Were you raised on the farm? he asked. Given an affirmative answer by Nodwell, Denny growled, "Well, then why didn't you stay there."

Nodwell replied that he came to the meeting to explain the code and would have had more problems if he had not helped draw it up.

Spencer Wilson of RR 1, Norval, wondered why nothing in the code said anything about sewage, especially Georgetown's which flowed past his place. He said farm odors were healthy but sewage hardly qualified. Nodwell said that came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Environment not the Ministry of Agriculture.

Despite Nodwell's statement that there has been reasonable acceptance for the code from both rural and urban people, most at the meeting felt little empathy for it.

The meeting started with the election of Peter Branch as chairman and Mr. Nodwell, from the Extension Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture, explained the Agricultural Code of Practice with the aid of a small explanatory booklet and slide presentation.

He said the code is a tool available to protect and promote agriculture and ensure its future. "The code has never been a set of regulations," he said. Minister of Agriculture of the time (1970) Bill Stewart said all need a few rules and he expected farmers to take it from there. However, Nodwell said, mistakes had been made since it was first drawn up in 1970 by a committee of 10 farmers and people in agriculture.

A second printing with revisions was made in 1973 and the newest came in January of 1976. "We were told it would drive farmers out of Ontario but now British Columbia is considering it with some modifications," Nodwell told the meeting.

He said the Ministry of the Environment had many complaints about the smell of barnyards, hogs and other farm use, and the first code was a crude attempt to put guidelines in use for farmers. Although it provided guidelines for farmers the Ministry hoped someone else would provide protection from encroachment around farms. The final book is based on a period of six years and the work of 10 people on the committee, he said.

Nodwell's slide show, "A Code for Good Neighbors" explained the code simply and he said most things in the code of practice grew out of necessity. Although most people would think problems arose between urban and rural residents, Nodwell said there were also difficulties between farmers with dairy-men not appreciating the smell of pigs. The Ministry of the Environment was also concerned about the amount of time their people spent

Junior Farmers urge non-farmers to join

"You don't have to be one, to be one" is the new slogan adopted by Junior Farmers across Ontario. Clearing up a popular misconception about the organization, Halton Junior Farmer president Frances McLean said this week "you don't have to be a farmer or live on a farm to belong."

Halton Juniors are currently running a membership campaign and Miss McLean invites prospective members to obtain more information from her at 451-3474 or 833-2464 or contact Halton's Assistant Agricultural Representative Mark Leahy at 678-2314. Or everyone is invited to a Junior Farmer Rally this Saturday, April 16 at St. Paul's United Church in Milton, starting at 8 p.m. Under the motto "Self Help and Community Betterment" the Junior Farmer Program provides opportunities for young people to develop themselves personally and to help better their community, she said. "This is achieved through social and educational activities which satisfy the personal needs and interests of the individuals involved, and through service projects which meet the needs of their community."

At present there is only one club in Halton which meets once each month to plan activities such as sports events, social events and community betterment projects, but it's not all business. Social recreation plays a large part at some

meetings, as do guest speakers and films.

"Jr. Farmers provides the opportunity for you to explore your individual talents and potential in almost every area you could mention; whether it is sports, music, square dancing, photography or public speaking. The program helps guys and girls meet and get to know each other while participating in some of the events or at Leadership Training Camp, communications retreat or Provincial Conference," she explained.

Travel plays a large part in the Jr. Farmer program. Whether it's travel to Drummond to play baseball; Nova Scotia on the Inter Provincial Exchange or to the United Kingdom for six weeks on an exchange; everyone has a chance to meet new friends, broaden their "horizons", and have a good time.

Dances and booths at the Steam-Era and fall fairs raise funds to help finance activities and projects. It is also a tremendous opportunity to practice your organizational and public relations skills, she added.

A total of 7,388 young people from all across Ontario found out in 1976 that there is plenty to do and a lot to learn and experience in Junior Farmers. The easiest thing about Jr. Farmers is becoming a Jr. Farmer. All you have to do is be under 30, and over 15, open minded, energetic, and enthusiastic, she said.

Home Economist now supervisor

Halton's Home Economist for the past several years, Lorraine Holding has been named Regional Supervisor of Home Economists for the Central Ontario district, Ontario Ministry of

Rural areas service

"I would like all the rural people to make a note there is activity in the rural area," Councillor Jim Kerr said at Milton Council's meeting last week when a report from the animal control officer was received.

It showed 31 dogs impounded in December, 22 in January and 24 in February, for a grand total of 77 dogs. Of these, 51 were in the urban area and 26 in the rural zone.

The animal control report showed 48 of the dogs were reclaimed, while 42 were sent for research or destroyed and four were placed in homes.

Officers answered 212 calls in the urban area and 178 in the rural area in the three month period.

Canadian flag missing

The Canadian flag was removed from the front lawn of M. Z. Bennett public school on Acton Boulevard.



HOWARD NODWELL defends the Agricultural Code of Practice at a meeting in Hornby Wednesday night.

becoming worse now than behind the iron curtain. Nodwell replied Gordon Hill, and Walter Miller, both past presidents of the Federation of Agriculture, had approved guidelines in the code. That remark triggered a guffaw from the audience, many of them aware both men had recently announced they would be New Democratic candidates in the next election. Many also disagreed with Federation policies at a meeting in 1976.

However, Sam Brown of the Federation of Agriculture, praised both the code and Mr. Nodwell. He said he thought farmers should praise Nodwell because the only reason the Ministry of Agriculture got into the act was because of the Environmental Act which provided fines for contaminating the environment. He said the Ministry's intention was a code of practice to eliminate sharks who took advantage of loopholes in the law.

Brown, an RR 1, Mount Albert resident, said meetings such as Wednesday's gave farmers the opportunity to speak out and get the code of practice changed. He said they should be attacking the Environmental Protection Act because that's where farmers got caught. The act regulates smells, sights and other areas of rural life.

Halton-Burlington MPP, Julian Reed, himself a farmer, suggested that if Mr. Brown was right and the Environmental Protection Act bore the responsibility for restrictive legislation, then he still didn't see anything in the agricultural Code of Practice which would provide protection. "We need amendments to the legislation," he suggested.

Reed said there is a certain

hypocrisy in the Government striving to achieve better agricultural practices and at the same time issuing a Green Paper on the preservation of agricultural land. He said his riding is being hit from both ends saving agricultural land on the one hand and restrictions on farmers on the other. He felt it couldn't be accomplished by shackles.

"We recognized when we came here that not everyone would agree," said Nodwell. "We're not trying to steamroller over anybody. We know there are negative opinions about the Agricultural Code of Practice."

Ward Two Councillor Russ Miller told the meeting consultants had been brought in before the restrictive by-law had been passed but in his opinion it was wrong for farmers to make all the concessions.

Earlier the meeting discussed the recommendations in the code over disposal of manure. The code says manure should be stored and spread in such a way as to cause the least inconvenience to neighbors and called for better management from farmers such as visual screening of manure storage, good sanitation and fly control around buildings and proper transport for manure

on public roads to prevent spillage and leakage. "Reduction of odor levels can be accomplished by the proper design and management of the ventilation system in the building," it recommends as well as proper drying of poultry manure in the barn to keep odor levels acceptable.

Among other recommendations was one which suggested solid manure should be spread on the ground when it is not frozen and incorporated into the soil within 24 hours if it is applied closer than 600 feet from a non-compatible use such as a building for human occupancy or food preparation.

Farmers in the audience flared at the suggestions. One woman said all these problems arose when urban people moved into agricultural districts and complained. She said she had moved from the city 25 years ago next to a farmer with pigs and put up with it and lack of other urban amenities such as school buses and doesn't see why people now cannot accept things as well.

"You should have told people to stay where they were," she told Ministry representatives. "I resent people telling me how to make us over. They only have rights because you told them

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