

Farmers on north leg of corridor eye Hydro's conduct and money

Ontario Hydro's ambitions for a power corridor from the Bruce nuclear generating station to Milton depend equally on the manner and the amount of money the utility offers farmers along the northern section of the line.

A general meeting of farmers from around the generating station to Colbeck, near Orangeville, took a cautious look at what is described as principles put forth by Ontario Hydro in a series of closed meetings with the Grey County Corridor Committee (GCC) executive.

In three closed meetings—at Cambridge and Orangeville before and after June 9 election—Ontario Hydro for the first time had systems planners, the people who decide where a line will go, on hand to explain why they feel the Bruce-Milton line is necessary and also why, according to Hydro, the Bruce-Essa line would be soon useless.

Hydro may also loosen its purse strings to encourage farmers to either sell their lands or allow easement.

Hydro is also taking aim on the southern end of the proposed 500 kV corridor with its systems planners. A meeting is slated for Friday at Toronto between the umbrella organization of opposition to the line, the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG) and Hydro.

The GCC executive of the ICG, the ICG's proposed construction of the line, also calls for an independent study of the proposed route, like the one carried out by the Solandt Commission on the Nanticoke-Pickering line.

"We have to be convinced that Hydro is working in good faith," Jim Dunlop of Conn said Monday night. If Hydro is not on the level, Dunlop said, GCC will press a divisional court writ it has to halt work on the line.

The GCC executive agreed to hold the writ in abeyance during three meet-

ings with provincial utility brass which took place around election time.

During meetings Hydro proposed to sweeten deals with northern farmers by paying for injurious affection, on an easement, that is the loss of value on the remainder of the farm because of hydro towers on the easement.

Ontario Hydro, up until the closed meetings, always refused to consider injurious affection on an easement.

Also Hydro has offered to buy entire farms where owners find it unprofitable to continue, something the utility has always been in a position to do, according to Hydro's Director of Property Martin Pask.

Offers on lands from Hydro will be made well before July 25 when the utility has the legal right to enter the lands.

Ontario Energy Minister James Taylor OK'd expropriation of the northern section of the lands in March.

Ontario Hydro, Dunlop said, claims its offers will be of fair market value.

As the meetings were taking place, and the election winding up, cement trucks poured footings for hydro towers in some farmers' fields, and steel workers erected girders.

Dunlop and another long-time opponent to the corridor, Leonard Manion, of R.H. 2, Conn expressed guarded optimism about the talks with Hydro. Manion, who was at all three meetings, was given the reasons why Hydro insists on coming this way. He said he may have been given a snow job, but he felt he wasn't.

Dunlop said his confidence stems from the rank of the government and Ontario Hydro officials at the closed talks. Another source stated that William Stewart, a director of Ontario Hydro and a former agriculture minister, was present with deputy energy minister Malcolm Rowan and Hydro's president

Douglas Gordon.

Also present were George McCague of the Porter Commission on long-range Hydro policy; William Hodges, president of Grey County's Federation of Agriculture and the reeve of Proton Township Grant Preston.

Regardless of the feelings up north, members of ICG's executive in the south feel Hydro's tactics in the secret talks were shady from the start.

"There's been some dirty pool," ICG chairman Bill Mann of Acton said. According to Mann and another source, the ICG and MPP Julian Reed (L. Halton-Burlington) met energy minister Taylor at Queen's Park to discuss a recent appeal court decision on the southern section of the line, which is planned to pass through Halton Hills.

Manion said he was told by systems planners the Bruce-Essa line was not chosen over the Bruce-Milton route because of security reasons. In ten-12 years the Bruce-Essa line would be of no use to Hydro, Manion said he was

told.

Hydro, he said, plans another nuclear generating station near Blind River, in northern Ontario. When this new station starts producing power around 1990, it'll run south along the Essa-Kleinberg 500 kV line. Power will also come from the Bruce to Toronto.

What we've been saying, Manion said is if you're taking power from the Bruce to Sudbury, you don't go via Milton. Hydro tells us that if you're taking power from the Bruce to Toronto, you don't go by way of Essa.

Once the new nuclear plant comes into production, Manion was told, any Bruce to Essa line would be too long and too unreliable.

Manion, whose farm is already crossed by one hydro corridor, is moving. He's

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looking at farms in Rainy River. As of Monday night, his barn was about to come down, he said, for the line.

Though the GCC has the writ to hit Hydro with if negotiations go astray, Dunlop said the farmers realize they might delay the line, but sooner or later they're going to get it. "And as long as Hydro treats us honorably, as they indicate they will, we'll go for it," Dunlop said.

"We sincerely regret the fiasco in the south feel they've been left out on a limb," Dunlop said.

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TEST DAY

WINNERS OF THE RED Cross Water Safety poster making contest were presented with their awards Monday at Acton Lions Pool. The awards were presented by Red Cross Water Safety chairman Jan Bruton, left. In front are Pierre Agnes of Limehouse (left) with Andreas Thiel of Speyside. In back are Jenny MacDonald of M.Z. Bennett school and Lynda Wingfield of Speyside. Winners who were absent were: Hal Martin, of Limehouse and Helen Holland of M.Z. Bennett school.

Cars bump near school


A collision opposite Acton High School put about \$200 in damages on a car owned by Brian Marsh, 171 Tidey Avenue, last Wednesday afternoon. Another car driven by Melanija Bray, 142 Elizabeth Dr., was involved in the accident. Police say the Marsh vehicle was parked.

Flags gone

A three by six foot Canadian flag was stolen from the front lawn of an Elmore Drive resident.

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