



FALL PLOWING is now taking place all over the country, farmers taking advantage of the fine weather. Russ and Harry Murray plow in tandem.

Crop prediction: very variable

Very variable is the word on crop yield for Halton County this year, according to Ministry of Agriculture representative, Henry Stanley.

Fighting the weather is the farmers' lifelong battle. Some win, some don't and that seems to be the story for 1978.

Any farmers who managed to beat fall rains last year and get their plowing done had a better chance of good corn crops. When seed was in the ground early in April or May, despite the long wet spring, it was a good size to withstand the two month drought of June and July.

However, the dry spell set most crops back two or three weeks in maturity.

Stanley states fields of grain harvested in August were also variable. Early plantings came through well while late crops were very poor. Straw was universally short and there was very little second cut hay, thanks

to the drought.

Most silage corn is off the fields now, Stanley says, and the crop looked good. Warm heavy August and September rains helped here, although some corn was frozen early making it drier than it should be.

High moisture grain corn is being harvested now and is showing effects of the drought by being late to maturity. Sparse corn fields in the southern half of the county are being fed to cattle directly rather than bother with a poor harvest yield.

It will not be as good a corn crop as the county had last year, the agricultural representative concludes. However, it is unlikely prices will be affected too much because of good U.S. corn yields.

It's not all bad news, though. Soft fall rains have left fields in good condition for next year and raised the water levels, Stanley says. Winter wheat looks really good having got off to an excellent start.

Setting own salary awkward

Halton Regional Councillors thought they had found a way around the awkward problem of setting their own salaries when they agreed to peg increases to the Consumer Price Index several years ago.

The idea at the time was to take the decision out of the political arena and avoid

debates on councillor salaries.

What inevitably would happen, was councillors would leave the salary at one level for three or four years without increasing it.

When they did decide to increase the stipend it would be in the order of a 50 per cent increase and the matter

traditionally became a target for newspaper editorials and ratepayer groups. If that wasn't bad enough it opened the door for grandstanding on the part of councillors.

It is clear now that the CPI is not an appropriate lever to peg increases on. With the CPI running at over nine per cent and the region's administration holding staff in-

creases to within five per cent, it is politically unpalatable for councillors to consider themselves entitled to nine per cent.

So the formula that once was thought to be the end of a political sideshow just won't work.

The administration committee found itself deadlocked last week when it tackled the problem. Oakville Councillor Carl Eriksen favored a freeze on councillor salaries at the current rate, just under \$10,000.

He couldn't get enough support to pass the recommendation. A second motion

providing for a five per cent increase failed as well. Unless agreement is reached the increase will be close to 10 per cent.

It is likely the matter will be resolved when it goes before the full council today.

Eriksen argued regional councillors were overpaid as it stands. He and councillor Mac Anderson both claimed the bulk of the work as a councillor is at the local level.

Councillor Walter Mulkevich said councillors shouldn't receive an increase greater than provided for staff, but he couldn't support a freeze either.

CVCA backs NEC

The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) can stay alive as far as the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVCA) is concerned.

The CVCA passed a resolution Thursday which backed the NEC in the face of a call from the Halton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA) to dismantle the commission.

CVCA chairman Grant Clarkson tried at first to have a staff report concerning the HRCA resolution received for consideration later.

"Just a minute," Halton Hills Mayor Tom Hill said. "If the NEC is disbanded, are we gonna support the HRCA?"

A chorus of "No" was the reply.

Mayor Hill said he would favor scrapping the entire recommendation.

Instead the full authority meeting went on record as not supporting "the immediate disbanding of the Niagara Escarpment Commission."

The CVCA struck out a provision on what would happen if the NEC was shelved. It read: "If the Commission is disbanded, the affected conservation authorities would

appear to be the acceptable agencies to administer the necessary regulations to preserve the Niagara Escarpment."

Each conservation authority along the escarpment is being asked for comments by Halton concerning the disbanding of the NEC.

When all the comments are in, including the CVCA's, the request for disbanding will be sent to Premier William Davis and the minister of natural resources.

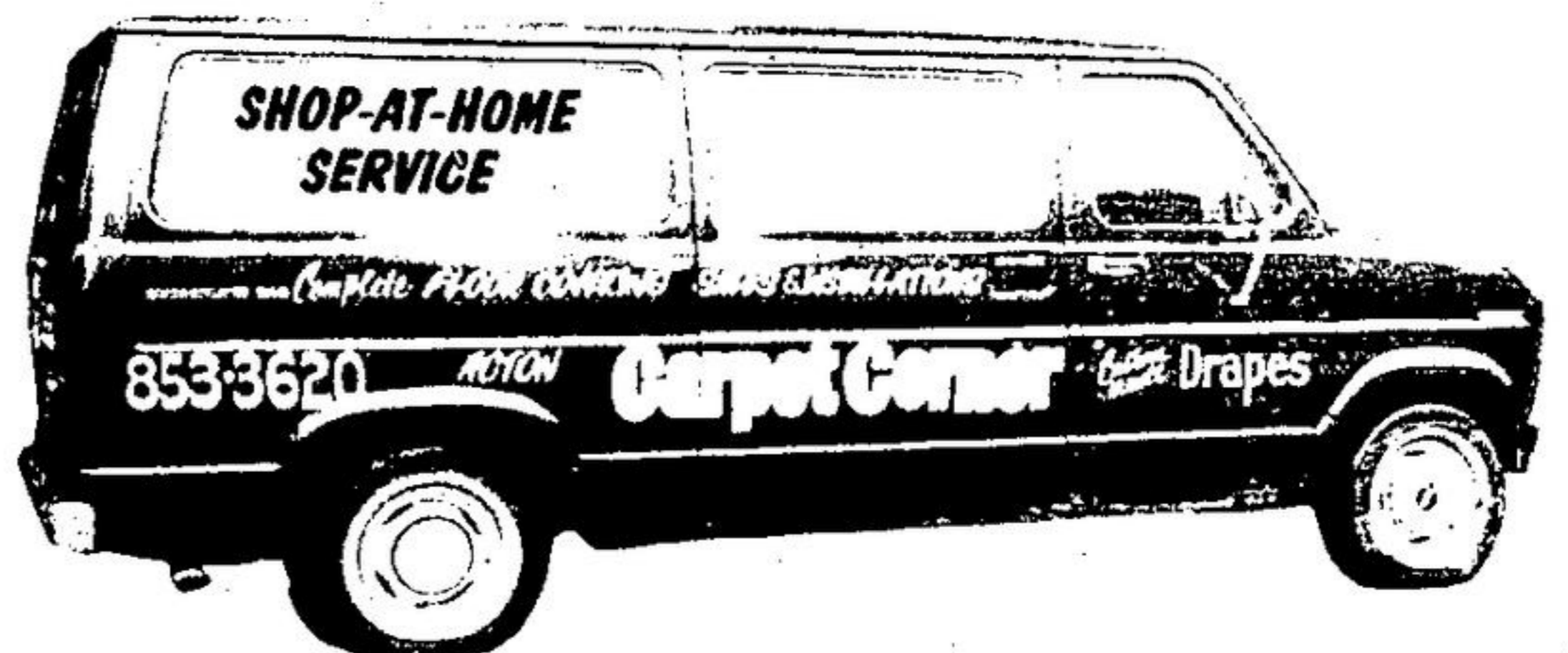
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Ombudsman to investigate Hydro line in Halton Hills

The Ontario Ombudsman's office has agreed to investigate a decision affecting a portion of a proposed 500 kV transmission corridor through Halton Hills.

The investigation will be carried out by Keith Hoilett, the executive director of the Ombudsman's office and temporary Ombudsman. Lawyer Arthur Maloney, who was appointed the province's first Ombudsman three years ago, resigned the position on Monday.

According to Brian Goodman, director of legal services for the Ombudsman's office, the investigation will be into a decision of the Ministry of Housing and a hearing officer about the construction of a towers in that portion of Halton Hills under the development control of

the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC).

Ontario Hydro applied to the NEC for a development control permit which was granted subject to a number of conditions, the most important of which was that Hydro would have to obtain official plan amendments and rezoning from the town of Halton Hills before the permit would be issued.

Goodman said that Ontario Hydro and one landowner appealed the decision and a hearing under John Duncanson was held January 14 and 15 of this year in Milton. Duncanson upheld Hydro's appeal and the contentious condition was removed. The then minister of housing, Claude Bennett concurred with the hearing officer and directed the NEC to issue a

development permit.

Ontario Hydro has permission to proceed with its transmission towers on Lots 16 to 26 on Fifth Line, notwithstanding a ruling yet to be delivered by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) on the validity of the corridor in Halton Hills, Goodman said.

A meeting of the OMB in August was adjourned to January, 1979, because Ontario Hydro had failed to notify all the affected landowners along the path of the proposed corridor.

Goodman said the investigation was prompted by the Interested Citizens Group (ICG) who are complaining in this instance not about the location of the corridor but the decision of the minister of housing and the deletion of the one condition.

"They (the ICG) feel it is incorrect," Goodman said.

In this case as well, he added, it comes under the jurisdiction of the ombudsman's office. In an earlier case, the ombudsman had begun an investigation of the hydro line upon the request if the ICG but was forced to stop when it was revealed that a cabinet decision on the matter was beyond the ombudsman's jurisdiction.

Goodman said there would be a "thorough and impartial" investigation into the matter but was unable to say just when the study would be complete.

Ontario Hydro is attempting to build a 500 Kv transmission line from Bruce Nuclear Generating station to a switching station near the Fifth Line and Highway 401. The ICG have been calling for an independent study of the route and have attacked the need for the line to come through Halton Hills.

Criteria selected for historic sites

To designate properties of historical significance in Halton, criteria developed by the Toronto Historical Board should be used, Regional Planning Committee has recommended.

The committee also endorsed, in principle, a rating system defined in a report on the North Pickering and Toronto Area airports project sites for use in ranking heritage structures based on their degree of importance.

Policy stays

The thorny question of a second house for farm help will be settled each on its own merit as it is now, Halton Hills Planning Board decided.

There had been lengthy discussions on the time involved in allowing a farmer a second home or mobile home for hired help, but planning board decided the alternatives could cause more problems, so each application will require a rezoning.

The problem of defining a bone fide farmer, and the suggestion of the amount of land were both raised. The planner pointed out specialized extensive farming on a small acreage could require help on the farm all the time, as well as on a large land holding.

Additionally, a site may be listed if it is known or thought to be the location of archaeological remains of the pre-history of an area.

The rating system classifies properties into those that warrant preservation at any cost, those that should be preserved, those that could be preserved, and those that merit further research.

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