

War still rages despite telephone commission

The Committee for Better Service (CBS) has won the battle, but not yet the war.

Telephone customers of Community Telephone, a small pocket in the Erin-Hillsburgh area, are in the midst of a battle with the phone company for better service. The battle came to a hearing in December when a hearing was held in Hillsburgh, with members of the Ontario Telephone Service Commission after Community Telephone tried to raise their rates. Over 200 irate customers stormed the hearing.

Accusations of poor service, inadequate lines coming into the area, numerous toll calls even to neighbors,

and poor directory listings, among many other complaints, were lodged against the privately owned telephone company.

From the Hillsburgh meeting, the Ontario commission ruled the rate increase would be deferred until specified criteria were cleared up. These criteria include: automatic number identification; a schedule setting out firm dates for completion and submission of engineering studies including rate levels required for the provision of extended area service over specified routes; a date for a study on trunk circuit loads on the Erin-Hillsburgh routes; a proposed amendment for an

expanded toll billing format, to include as a minimum level of toll call detail, etc.; telephone numbers for repair service and emergency service in each exchange.

The commission, admitted in their report they were aware of Community Telephone's problems which impair its ability to provide telephone service adequately and efficiently. However, the report went on, following the Hillsburgh hearing, and a similar hearing in Orono, near Oshawa, with exactly the same problems with the same company, "the commission views the majority of complaints raised at these hearings as matters which could have

been and should have been resolved by the local management of the company."

Because of the complaints "...the commission is of the opinion that the local management of the Applicant company is not exercising its authority to deal effectively with specific customer problems." The report continued, "This is directly responsible for the prevailing negative attitude of the subscribers."

The Telephone Commission "strongly" suggested the company review its organization structure, in particular the responsibilities and authority of the managers located within its operating territory.

CBS so-called Heabette Cox admitted few problems are being resolved, but the CBS will not have reached their objectives until their pocket of phone service, some 2000 telephone, receives comparable service as Bell customers for comparable prices.

"Community Telephone owns 21 exchanges in Ontario and is part of Continental Telephone System, an American based company which is the third largest telecommunications company in America." Mrs. Cox told this newspaper. "CBS fails to understand why telephone subscribers in Ontario, who are served by such a major company

should be forced to accept inferior service."

CBS is concerned with Community Telephone's denials they are run by Continental, and are strictly Canadian run. A mistake in a computer, members claim, had one return address for a bill going to Virginia. American representatives of Continental were at both the Hillsburgh and Orono hearings.

According to an advertisement in the October, 1978 issue of Fortune magazine, Continental Telephone had almost \$1 billion in revenues and sales, an increase of 16 per cent from the previous year.

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M.Z. Bennett School grade one pupils were in a stew last week. With some adult help pupils selected and prepared beef stew, tea biscuits and fresh fruit cocktail all of which with milk were on Friday's lunchtime menu. Teacher Ann Mulder offers some biscuits to seven-year-olds Ellitha McLeod, left, and Nelson Hammond.

Across the hall teacher Cynthia Blades' class also enjoyed the meal. The dinner climaxed a three week environmental studies unit. There are 54 pupils in the classes. Parent volunteers helped prepare the meals. Principal Doug Magwood also partook of the repast. Photo by ERIC ELSTONE

Davis' next word his last to ICG

by Eric Elstone

The next words the Interested Citizens Group (ICG) hears from Premier William Davis is expected to add a big chunk of certainty to the hydro corridor issue.

The premier privately told the ICG in his Queen's Park office Thursday that whenever it hears from him next, it will be final, according to Halton Region lawyer Ken Anderson.

ICG lawyer Robert Jarvis made a point of asking the premier for some certainty in the question so people do not keep running from court to court, said Anderson in a telephone interview Friday.

The premier received a delegation of ICG members at the legislature for about an hour and a half. Premier Davis, said Anderson underlined that he does not want to falsely encourage the group. There was a commitment by the premier to get back to Jarvis, said Anderson.

A communication from the premier may come this week after Wednesday. The Ontario cabinet meets Wednesday.

The ICG is concerned about the 500 kV Ontario Hydro corridor which the utility plans to link through Halton Hills. All but the 12-mile section through Esquesing is built. The 109-mile corridor slashes across the province from the Bruce nuclear generating station to Milton, where it is planned to hook up with an east-west corridor of equal power.

Some electricity from the Bruce is transmitted as far south along the planned route to Belwood north of the Esquesing-Erin Township border. From Belwood the 500 kV line is spliced into an existing 230 kV line. Power then is diverted to Kitchener in the west and Essa, near Barrie, in the east. From Essa the power can be channelled into the Toronto market.

"We asked him (Davis) to think of stopping at Belwood and diverting power to Kitchener and Essa permanently," ICG executive Bill Mann said. The group also asked for a concise non-Ontario Hydro study of Halton Hills for an alternate path than the one chosen by the utility.

All the premier said was he would consider what we were saying, said Anderson.

According to another ICG member, John Minns, Davis did not give encouraging answers concerning the line.

The Halton Hills section of the line had an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing in January to determine if an old Esquesing official plan and by-law was strong enough to seal the town from the corridor.

The OMB decided in favor of Ontario Hydro. The ICG traded appealing the OMB decision to cabinet in exchange for the Davis meeting. The meeting with the premier was preceded by a meeting with Energy Minister James Auld early last month.

The premier listened to each man speak: Jarvis, Mann, Minns, Reford Gardhouse, councillors Russ Miller and one or two others.

"We were well received," Anderson said. "He gave us all a chance to talk," said Mann.

One of the premier's comments, according to the ICG's Minns, runs counter to the argument put to the OMB in January by Ontario Hydro's lawyer John Parkinson. He told the board the Bruce-Milton line is a matter of particular government policy. Davis, said Minns, told the ICG that Ontario Hydro could locate the line where the utility chose.

Minns, Schneider and Gardhouse came away from the Davis meeting with the impression the premier envisions Ontario becoming the nuclear generated power source for neighboring American states.

"Well, I think that was put forward alright. Generation here will be for export," said Gardhouse later. Minns recalled the premier saying: "Well, the United States are interested in Ontario with its natural resources. We'd be foolish to export power to the United States to reduce Ontario Hydro's balance of payments."

"We hate to be victims of circumstances," Gardhouse went on to say. He also said it is hard to get information from Ontario Hydro and when one does, it's more difficult to sort the wheat from the chaff.

Even if the premier gives the ICG bad news, it only means the end of one political route. There are others and there remains the courts which the ICG has used profitably in the past.

The main legal lever the ICG has in its hands is a challenge to the OMB's authority to hear matters concerning Ontario Hydro. Minns reports Jarvis telling Davis "The OMB is on shaky ground."

Meanwhile in the legislature the same day Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed's private members' bill designed to make Ontario Hydro accountable, failed to earn first reading in the House.

Elsewhere Ontario Hydro unveiled plans to link Guelph to the western wing of the 230 kV line from Belwood to Kitchener. The new line would run south into the city through Pilkington Township. One member of a community liaison committee in the Royal City suggested the new corridor may be the first part of an old plan to run power from the Bruce to Metro Toronto.

Morrow back

Urges town demand uniform sewer charge

Former Halton regional chairman, Ric Morrow who fought for uniform water rates and a commitment to a common sewer surcharge across the whole region has not given up his fight although he is out of politics.

Monday night he told Halton Hills council the deferral by regional council of the common sewer surcharge is unfair to Acton and Georgetown. He maintained since the region is responsible for water supply and sewer services the cost should be shared equally all over the region. He said net costs of the region for everything rose approximately six per cent this year, but the sewer surcharge in Acton went up 47 per cent, and in Georgetown 22 per cent, while Burlington's went up one per cent.

He urged council to petition the region to incorporate the common sur-

charge which will be fair to the residents of the region. He pointed out the region uses this system only in dealing with the sewage question, while everything else is shared on a ratio to assessment basis. "What exactly do you want us to do?" asked Councillor John McDonald.

Morrow suggested the treasurer be asked to prepare a report describing the inequities, and the region should be asked to confirm the adoption of uniform sewer rates no later than January 1980. "If the region is not prepared to do that, perhaps the town solicitor should be asked if there is legal recourse."

Councillor Russ Miller said Morrow had worked hard to bring about uniform water rates and to achieve the commitment to uniform sewer rates. "Too bad it was not made mandatory," he commented.

Morrow said he was extremely disappointed when he discovered the uniform sewer rates had been deferred. "But after fighting for five years I'm not about to give up."

Councillor Mike Armstrong said Morrow is aware it is a numbers game at the region. "and nobody played it better than you." He praised Morrow for coming and jolting council on the subject again.

Councillor Harry Levy said he understood uniform sewer rates were supposed to go into effect July 1 and asked why the change.

Councillor Roy Booth said the 85 per cent sewer surcharge originally scheduled proved to be inadequate according to the regional treasurer, and predicted it would go to 130 or 160

per cent. "At that point regional council decided on a full report. That report has not been completed."

Mayor Pete Pomeroy said a report from the regional chairman showed extreme inequities to Burlington and Milton, so the "numbers game" was lost, and the question was deferred until January 1980. He predicted the whole sewer surcharge idea could "go down the drain".

He suggested when the motion to have the uniform rates was passed, at the end of last year, it would have been better if the mechanics of it had been set out. He said it is to the advantage of Milton and Burlington not to implement the uniform rates, and claimed Oakville does not care, so the vote would probably be lost 19 to five. "I don't know how to overcome this."



Georgetown Choral Society and Acton Citizens' Band under the batons of A. Dale Wood and Dr. George Elliott respectively presented joint concerts last weekend at Acton, Saturday, and Georgetown,

Sunday, to appreciative audiences. A sparse crowd attended the concert in Acton at the McKenzie-Smith middle school gym, while the sanctuary at Holy Cross church was filled for Sunday's concert.

Trial for man on rifle charge

A preliminary hearing found there is enough evidence to commit an Acton man to trial next fall on a charge resulting from a shooting incident.

Cosimo Mercuri, R.R. 4, was committed to trial by judge and jury, according to Crown Attorney Anthony Vale. The committal resulted from a preliminary hearing before Judge Aaron Brown, of Toronto, at Milton Monday.

There was a ban on the publication of evidence. Mr. Mercuri is charged with an attempt to cause bodily harm with intent

to endanger life. Halton Regional Police laid the charge after a rifle shooting incident in front of the Mercuri home in the early hours of March 4.

The crown and defence on April 26 tried to have the court try Mr. Mercuri on the lesser charge of careless use of a firearm.

Mr. Mercuri pleaded guilty to the reduced charge. However, after hearing statements of witnesses Provincial Court Judge John Robinson waived the plea and ordered the preliminary hearing on the more serious offence.



Things are starting to take shape on the north side of Fairy Lake at the senior citizens development contracted by J.P. Dumarche Construction. The building is scheduled for completion in March of 1980.

Apartments set for March

Acton's senior citizens will have to wait until March, 1980 before they find out if they will be moving into the new senior citizen apartments on Elizabeth Dr.

The apartment building, currently under construction has to be entirely completed by J.P. Ducharme Homes before the Halton Housing Authority can begin to consider applications received, according to Authority member Pat McKenzie.

The March, 1980 date was announced recently by contract superintendent Ken Pollock. He explained the extension from the last date released (October, 1979) was taking into consideration any strikes which might occur by the various trades involved.

In spite of the late date, however, workers are

making good progress, Mr. McKenzie said. Completion date includes the building, landscaping, parking, sidewalks, etc. The 52 unit building will have two common rooms, facing Fairy Lake, three storeys, and an elevator. Apartments are a standard size with a balcony or walkout at ground level. A mansard roof completes the picture.

At present, according to Mr. McKenzie, there are 45 applications on the waiting list. "Even if every application was acceptable by Housing standards, which would be very unusual," Mr. McKenzie explained, "there is still room for more people to apply." He continued to say that as completion date draws near, applications will be reviewed and selections made by the local committee and recommendations made to Halton Housing Authority.