

First power pulses through, one farmer apprehensive

by Jennifer Barr

Clarence and Wilma Coles don't like the idea of a 500 kV Hydro line running smack through the middle of their 270 acre farm on Highway 7 so they have asked Ontario Hydro to purchase all their property, not just the 23 acres forming Hydro easement.

The hearing with Hydro took place February 8 and Mr. Coles expects to be receiving the results any day now. Hearing results have been delayed by lack of report from one witness.

Effects of farming adjacent to a massive power line are yet to be felt, the power only went on recently, but Clarence doesn't

particularly want to find out.

"The effects are an unknown quantity," he says adding that farmers have had trouble with such lines in the States.

The Coles farm, occupied by the family for 41 years, consists of Lot 23 and both halves of Lot 29, Esqueving Township, totalling 270 acres on the north side of Highway 7 between the Fourth and Fifth lines.

The 4,000 foot portion of the hydro line bisects his property and comes within 200 feet of his feedlot and barn. Nearly 300 head of beef cattle are raised on the Coles farm.

Hydro crews were very careful about staying within their own boundaries while laying the line this spring, Mr. Coles points out. He found planting crops around reels of wire a real "inconvenience," and crews were "very much in our road," but they tried to be co-operative. It's the "unknown concerns" Clarence is worried about.

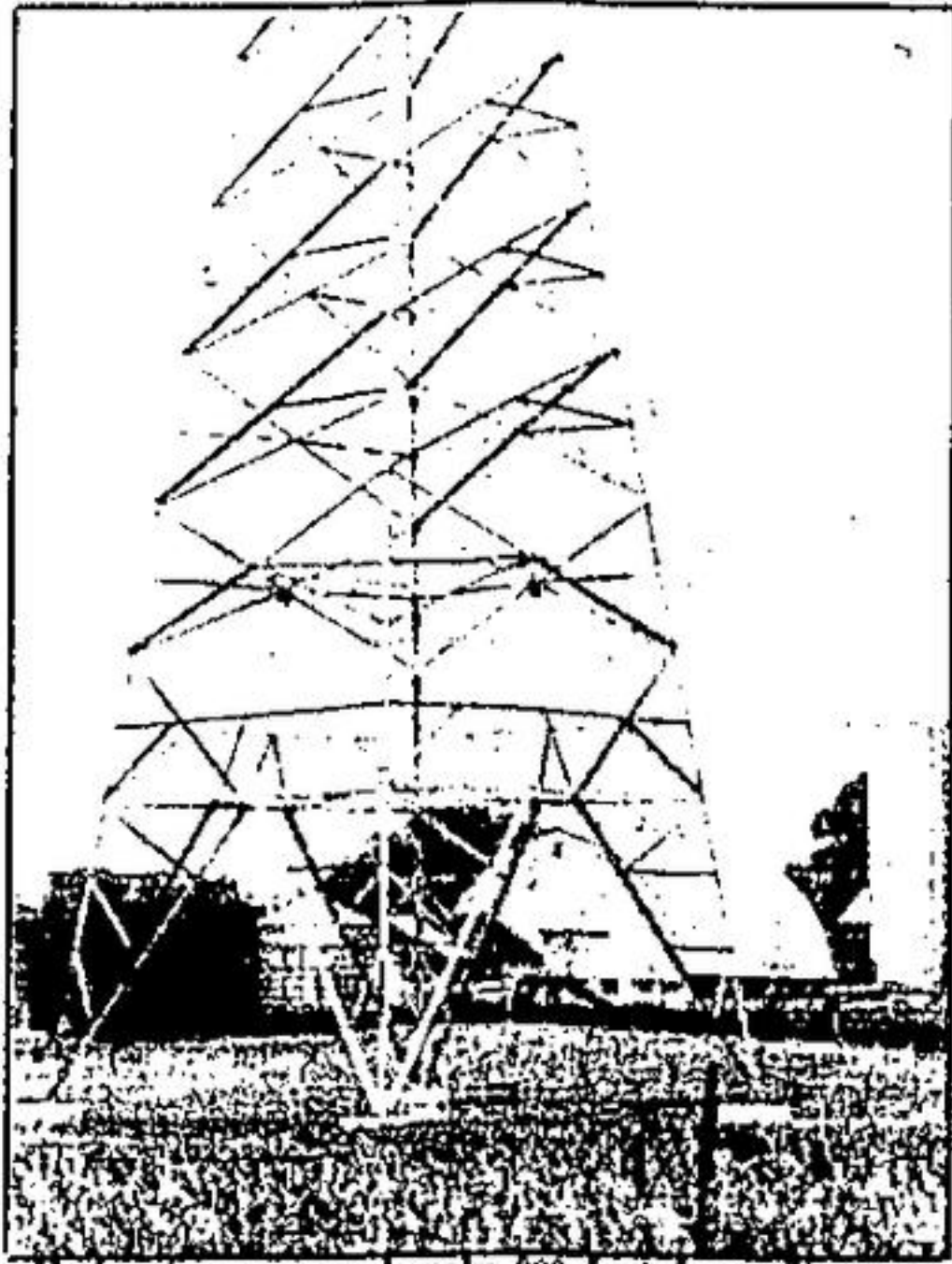
"They say we won't know the power's on," he comments. "We're kind of in the dark."

However, he'd have qualms about putting his 150 cows and calves in the field under the 500,000 volt lines. He feels the easement area would have to be fenced off with a cattle pass-through.

Mr. Coles is also worried about winter feeding of the stock in a feedlot 200 feet from the lines. He's also concerned about stalle on his steel barn roof.

Resale value of his farm is bound to be affected. Mr. Coles notes farms on the north section of the line have had their value depreciated by 15 to 30 per cent.

"Hydro have tried to reassure us they will deal with complaints—we've found Hydro officials w/easy to deal with and very considerate," he says. But he's yet to find out if Hydro



Hydro towers are barely 200 feet from Clarence Coles' farm on his Highway 7 farm. He is awaiting results of a Hydro hearing concerning his request for Ontario Hydro to purchase his entire 270 acre farm.

is considerate enough to buy his whole farm.

The attitude of the Coles family is probably indicative of a change in attitude by farmers towards Ontario Hydro operation through foodland. In the early stages of construction for the Bruce to Milton hydro corridor one Hydro official had manure dumped on his car,

surrounded by farmers angry at the tactics of the corporation at that time.

In contrast, the Coles family found Ontario Hydro co-operative and eager to stay on good terms with them as they worked on construction of the corridor through the last year.

Many rural dwellers still resent the intrusion of the 737 towers which march 100 miles from the Bruce nuclear power station to the farm of Reford Gardhouse, near the urban area of Milton. The line bisects the 500 kV east-west corridor which runs from Pickering on Lake Ontario to Nanticoke on Lake Erie, at the Gardhouse farm.

The concerns of farmers and other land owners along the corridor have been voiced by the Interested Citizens Group (ICG) which proposed an independent study to determine whether the corridor was necessary. They maintained the corridor should have followed an existing route from Colbeck, north of Orangeville, east to a spot north of Toronto. However, their appeals both to the Ontario Cabinet and the federal energy board were turned down.

A succession of Ontario energy ministers repeatedly maintained there was not enough time to institute an independent study. It was not lost on the ICG that the ministers said this over a six year period, although they maintain a study could have been done in six months to a year.

A plea by farmers Reford Gardhouse and Walter Scott to the National Energy Board to stop the Bruce to Milton corridor because power from it would be exported to the United States without an export permit was also lost. The NEB contended the Bruce-Milton line is not an international line under their definition of the NEB Act.

With the last barriers lifted, Ontario Hydro

finished the corridor and power was turned on at 12:04 a.m. Sunday on one circuit. The other was activated Monday.

Farmers along the route are sitting now with fingers crossed.

Ontario Hydro maintains that delay on the Bruce to Milton corridor has "bottled up" needed power from Bruce and cost consumers tens of millions in dollars because expensive fossil fuels had to be used to generate electricity. The ICG points out Ontario has a power surplus and any extra power could only go to the U.S., which Hydro maintains is not the intention of the Bruce to Milton corridor.

Region votes keep Halton

By Jim Robinson

There now appears little hope Milton can expect any assistance in its disagreements over regionalism from the rest of Halton Regional Council.

In two separate votes, Regional Council decided 15 to 7 to keep Halton Region intact; and to re-study the question of representation which is to be discussed today at the Administration and Finance Committee.

On the question of representation, a number of changes suggested by the Bill 151 Committee had proposed no change in the number of councillors from each of the four member municipalities, despite repeated attempts by Milton to increase its number on Regional Council from three to at least four.

Despite the double setback, Milton Mayor Don Gordon and Councillor Bill Johnson say the very fact their requests were turned down is damning proof that Milton is not being treated as fairly as it should, within the Halton Region framework.

Councillor Gus Goutousky, who voted in favor of retaining Halton Region, said afterwards he supports the idea of municipalities working for the common good under a regional form of government.

He said this did not conflict with the fact he has attended several meetings of Milton Council's regional review committee. Although listed as a member of that committee, he said he has only attended as an interested visitor.

The meeting at regional headquarters also saw a change of heart by Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett and Burlington Councillor Dave LaCombe, who prior to last Wednesday, had both been highly critical of regionalism. Mr. Barrett, in fact, has been the leading proponent of a referendum on regionalism to be placed on the Oakville municipal election ballot.

"It would be the easiest thing in the world to opt out... but to opt out is a cop out," he said.

Mr. Barrett said he could not support the motion by Mayor Roly Bird to ask the Province to disband Halton Region and let each municipality go its own way, because that did not offer an alternative.

The Bird motion stemmed from a Regional Administration and Finance Committee two weeks ago today at which time Mr. Bird said

Teachers, board still negotiating

The Halton Separate School teachers' negotiating team met with the Board on July 2, defining a number of items as issues of mutual agreement. The teachers estimate their requested increase at 18 per cent across the grid, taking into account the current cost of living at 9.7 per cent and comparing wages of other boards.

Other major items of negotiation are staff reduction, and the deferred-salary leave plan, neither of which are cost items. Although declining enrollment is not affecting the separate school system, the teachers have approached negotiations with the view much can be done now to plan for contingencies that have occurred in other boards.

The staff reduction article is a formula that teachers say control fair treatment of all employees should declining enrolment ever occur.

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