

# Hydro ignored planning criteria, invites breakdowns, says ICG's lawyer

By PAUL DORSEY  
Herald staff writer

In selecting a route through Halton Hills for the Bruce to Milton corridor, Ontario Hydro ignored planning criteria set out by the Northeastern Power Coordinating Council, thus inviting serious transmission breakdowns that could potentially black-out much of Ontario and northern portions of the U.S., the OMB was told last week.

Patrick Devine, lawyer for the Interested Citizens Group (ICG), which has been opposing the Bruce to Milton corridor since 1973, challenged the corridor's post-fault transmission capability during his final summation before the OMB Thursday.

The lack of adequate system security planning in the selection of the Bruce to Milton route, Mr. Devine contended, leaves the corridor vulnerable to any of a variety of natural or man-made disasters that at the very least would cut off transmission between the corridor's terminus

at the Milton switching station and Metro Toronto.

**SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES**

"This is a serious consequence which should have been of concern to Hydro during the planning and input which led to the formulation of government policy," he said.

Mr. Devine criticized arguments put forth by Hydro lawyer John Parkinson that any shortcomings in the line's planning can be overcome later. The potential for breakdowns will exist for "a long time", he said, before Hydro can move to secure its transmission grid system against failure.

Meanwhile, Mr. Devine pointed out, alternative routes are available now by which Hydro could guarantee the technical safety of its system. He cited a possible route between Bruce and Essa, near Barrie, which the ICG suggested as a superior route in 1975. The suggestion was later endorsed by an independent energy planning consultant.

The alleged shortcomings in Hydro's preparation for the Bruce to Milton corridor, which subsequently became part of the provincial government's rationale for accepting the route through Halton Hills, was among the "cracks in government policy" that Mr. Devine noted during his summation.

Responding to Mr. Parkinson's assertion that such policy cannot be changed and should not be challenged by the OMB, Mr. Devine stressed faults and inadequacies in the information upon which Hydro - and thus the government - based their choice for the corridor route. Hydro, he charged, did not begin gathering the proper information about the corridor's possible environmental and technical capability until after the fact, once government policy was established and the Bruce to Milton route designated by a Cabinet order-in-council.

Mr. Devine questioned Hydro's estimates of the cost to Ontario taxpayers being incurred as a result of delays in the

construction of the corridor. Hydro, he said, has set the cost of bottling up power at Bruce at \$39 million to \$61 million for 1979 and between \$13 million and \$33 million in 1978. In fact, he claimed, costs totalled only about \$100,000 in 1978.

Developments in the corridor issue since the ministry of energy approved the route in principle in early 1972, including recommendations by the 1973 Solandt Commission and more recent revelations regarding the line's potential vulnerability, have not altered the route at all, Mr. Devine said. Both the Solandt Commission and the Bruce Howlett study undertaken about the same time drew conclusions about the safety of the Bruce to Milton corridor long before certain security problems were revealed.

Mr. Devine also pointed out that the expropriation of properties for the corridor was approved by the government in November, 1977, a month before energy consultant Ken Slater released his independent report which criticized the route because of its visual and agricultural impact, calling it "the worst of three possible alternatives examined."

Although Mr. Devine agreed with Hydro technician Walter Iakis that humans can prepare themselves for the occasional electrical shock when working in the vicinity of high-voltage lines, he noted that animals cannot. Besides the direct effects of electrical transmission and discharge, he added, the corridor would pose other hazards to farm activities. The

airial spraying of fields, for example, is rendered impossible in the area of hydro lines, he said.

Mr. Devine further recounted the evidence of Hydro's project engineer, Alex Collins, who testified that Hydro will purchase farms outright where the presence of the corridor renders the farming operation economically unviable, but admitted that there are a number of qualifying factors in such deals.

The ICG lawyer charged that Hydro's sole witness, planner John Bousfield, did not take factors such as the quality of agricultural land being expropriated for the corridor into consideration while examining the line's route through Halton Hills. According to the provincial government's Guidelines for Farmlands, from which Mr. Parkinson quoted extensively, the non-agricultural use of prime farmland such as that found in Halton Hills must be fully justified, and reasons must be stated as to why poorer quality farmland cannot be used instead, Mr. Devine said.

Mr. Devine asked the OMB to have Hydro conduct an independent study of the proposed corridor and route, the security of the grid system as a whole, possible alternative routes and their respective environmental and social impacts. He then asked the board to reserve its ruling on Hydro's application until a divisional court can decide on the ICG's and Halton Hills' motion for prohibition that would preclude the OMB from taking any part in the corridor dispute.



**EFFORTS TO NO AVAIL**

Firefighters aimed their hoses in the back doors at the scene of Friday's \$75,000 fire at the corner of Mill and Guelph Streets, but the blaze had too good a hold on the aging insulbrick structure which had been covered with siding. Firefighters were unable to contain the fire before it gutted the interior. (Herald photo)

## Proper planning impossible town tells OMB hearings

High-voltage transmission lines like the 500,000-volt Bruce to Milton corridor now under consideration are simply "to new" to allow anyone, including Ontario Hydro, to accurately predict the long-range effects they will have upon those who live and work nearby, Halton Hills solicitor Fred Helson told the OMB last week.

The last of four lawyers to summarize their cases before the OMB Thursday, Mr. Helson elected to take a somewhat different route in outlining the concerns which his client, the town of Halton Hills, shares with Halton region and the Interested Citizens Group (ICG).

Mr. Helson focused his remarks on evidence heard during the eight-day hearing regarding the Bruce to Milton corridor's potential impact upon farming in the municipality, from hampering farm operations to creating serious medical problems for the farmers themselves.

slightly different than those of Halton Hills and the ICG.

According to the region's proposed official plan, he explained, Halton wishes to cooperate with Hydro in an effort to find a compatible solution to concerns over the corridor rather than reject the line outright.

Mr. Anderson cited the region's efforts to persuade the ministry of energy to commission an independent study of the corridor route and possible alternatives, described initially as its "concern" and later its "opposition" to the corridor. All such efforts were fruitless.

**TRANSMISSION LINES**

The lawyer acknowledged that Hydro actively seeks to minimize the effects of its transmission lines by routing them along rear lot lines, thus removing them as far as possible from field operations and residential buildings. There are nevertheless some exceptions to the rule, he pointed out, where landowners cannot be so easily accommodated because of the geographical lay-out of their properties.

One such landowner, Mr. Helson told the OMB, is Mr. Reford Gardhouse of RR5 Milton an ICG director and recently president of the Royal Winter Fair.

According to Mr. Helson, Mr. Gardhouse is a fifth-generation farmer whose family has worked the same area of land in the southern portion of Halton Hills for many years. Having developed a prize herd of cattle during past years, Mr. Helson said, the landowners had hoped to somebody turn his farm over to his own son, but now, "doesn't know if he can".

Because of the manner in which the Bruce to Milton corridor will bisect his property, Mr. Gardhouse is uncertain that farming can continue to be a viable livelihood, and there is no possibility that he will receive proper compensation under Hydro's present guidelines.

**REGION'S COUNSEL**

Also asking the OMB to deny Hydro's application for planning amendments that would clear the way for the corridor was Ken Anderson, solicitor for Halton region, who pointed out that the region's interest in the issue is

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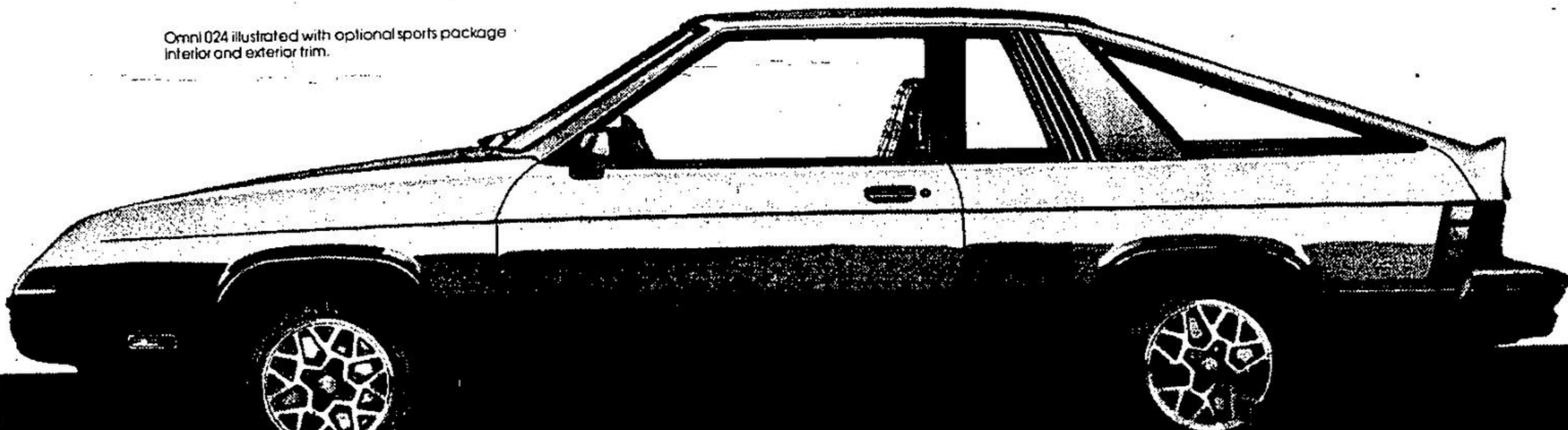
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### Obituary

## Ethel Holmes

Long time Acton resident Ethel Mariam Holmes died in Guelph General Hospital on Jan. 10. She was 83.

Although she was born in England Mrs. Holmes came to Acton with her family at the age of nine and received her education in the town.

Mrs. Holmes was a member of St. Alban's Anglican church and the Duke of Devonshire chapter of the IOOE. She enjoyed sports and curled and golfed as well as being a member of the lawn bowling league at one time.

She leaves two sons, Charles (Mick) of Acton, and Jack of Georgetown, three grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Also surviving are two sisters, Lucy Irvine of Cambridge and Doris Creamer of Brantford. She was predeceased by her husband Harry (Bunk) Holmes in 1972.

Mrs. Holmes rested at the Shoemaker Funeral Home and Rev. Len Ewing conducted funeral services for her from St. Alban's Anglican Church at 1:30 p.m. on Jan. 13. Interment followed at Fairview Cemetery, Acton.