

Town shows its backbone in hydro fight

It's nice to see that in this ever-increasingly complacent world, the Halton Hills council has not abandoned the anti-hydro corridor fight simply because it's a tough battle.

Between big governments and big business many people feel it is futile to take on major powers in society no matter how just the cause. It would be easy to think like this in the anti-hydro corridor fight. When one considers that opponents of the hydro corridor through Halton Hills are battling the combined forces of Ontario Hydro and the Progressive Conservative provincial government the task seems pretty formidable.

But despite the odds, opponents of the corridor have managed to hang tough in their seven year fight and, with last week's pledge of continued support, the Halton Hills council has stuck by their side.

Halton Hills council agreed to pledge up to \$10,000 more to the anti-hydro corridor fight. This is in addition to the thousands they have already spent, along with the use of the town's lawyers, lent to the Interested Citizens Group by the town council.

Some may get cold feet at the thought of the town council spending so much on the hydro corridor battle, especially because it's a fight that would be so difficult to win.

But considering that the hydro

corridor is probably the most important issue to face Halton Hills' rural residents in years, the expenditure is not out of line.

The town of Halton Hills is obviously dominated by the urban areas of Acton and Georgetown but now, when the rural residents are in need of support, we're glad to see the council has not let them down.

Sure the anti-corridor fight is a tough battle, but it's one worth waging. As local MPP Julian Reed told last week's council meeting, "For the town to withdraw at this time, understanding that we are all victims of this runaway truck (hydro) is to accept the kind of justice that this system is handing out".

To give up the fight now is simply to say that sure, the provincial government and Ontario Hydro are wrong, the council has officially said that before, but the cards are so heavily stacked in their favor that the battle is not worth waging.

Autocratic bodies like our provincial government and the power corporation depend on that kind of thinking to get away with their heavy-handed way of operating.

It's the people and the organizations that don't fight when the government is wrong that give them the confidence to operate independent of the wishes of the people.

Mistakes repeated with closed meeting

It's a bit ironic that, at the same time town council is engaged in a battle with a government that does not seek enough input for their decision making, and that operates with a closed door mentality, council itself is guilty of these same sins.

Town council has justifiably been called on the carpet by almost every group in town that is involved in renting Halton Hills arena time. Council, drew the ice-users ire by jacking up the costs of rental time without the minimal courtesy of consulting with these groups to determine the implications of a fee hike and, without even inviting them to the council meeting where the matter was discussed.

Not only at which the matter was discussed at a council meeting without being on the agenda and, after the press had been given the impression that the rest of the council business to be discussed would be held in camera.

In fact, the press could have been present for the ice rates discussion, had they known about it.

Understandably, the local sports groups particularly objected to what appeared to be council's attempts to slip the fee hike through council undiscussed and unnoticed.

Because of the council's attempts at undemocratic actions they were recently forced to reopen the issue and properly discuss it at a special meeting with the sports group. Council even struck a special committee to study the problem.

It sounded great and we were happy to see that council would at least attempt to make amends for past mistakes.

Then we tried to send a reporter to cover Thursday night's committee meeting. It was to be the "air clearing" meeting where the controversial issue would be thoroughly discussed and ironed out. The meeting was supposed to

help clear-up everyone's concerns about the controversy.

Only problem was, the Herald reporter was not allowed to attend the meeting, nor were any other members of the public except for delegated representatives of the sports group.

It seems council's doesn't learn from its mistakes after all. Certainly an issue as important and controversial as the ice rate increases should be discussed thoroughly and openly so that the public can intelligently assess council's actions. This cannot be done when the press is unable to attend the meeting and bring the information out in the open.

In discussing possible reasons for keeping the meeting closed, town councillor Roy Booth said that perhaps members of the sports groups would be intimidated and less likely to talk with the press present.

That's an insult to the members of those groups. As adults we credit them with enough self-confidence to express themselves in public.

After all, if the councillors can manage to articulate themselves every week in front of the press why should councillors expect members of the sports groups to be any different?

It was because of the articulate objections of the sports groups, raised both at a council and a sports council meeting, that led to the matter being re-opened at all.

Perhaps council members were more concerned with the things the sports representatives would be saying at the meeting and therefore preferred the press not to be present. It's an obvious assumption whenever a council feels it is necessary to meet behind closed doors, without the presence of the public and the press.

Council bungled the arena rate hike in the first place and it looks like they're on their way to bungling it again.



Politicians' distrust of Hydro illustrated with Shultz letter



Queen's Park
By Derek Nelson

Queen's Park Bureau
Of The Herald
TORONTO — During a committee meeting here to discuss the recent "Shultz letter," Ontario Hydro gave a good illustration of why so many politicians distrust them.

The Shultz missive came from an anonymous, disgruntled employee of Hydro and was sent to Opposition Leader Stuart Smith.

It said Ontario Hydro's CANDU reactors have the potential for causing an accident worse than the Three Mile Island nuclear incident at Harrisburg, Pa.

Shultz listed seven incidents at Bruce nuclear station that he said could lead to such a situation.

Hydro's reasonable response, by chairman Robert Taylor, was that "none of them represented a radiation risk to the

public and none represented any type of emergency situation."

And Hydro officials wanted to meet the legislature's hydro affairs committee, where Smith released the letter, to give their side of the story.

EVENT REPORT

So Hydro's operations general manager Lorne McConnell went before the committee to explain each of the incidents in detail.

All the happenings are recorded on what is called a "significant event" report in Hydro files, and McConnell's first question came from MPP Evelyn Gigantes (NDP-Carleton East) seeking a definition of just what such a report is.

She also wanted to know the difference between an "abnormal event" report and a "significant event" report.

At first McConnell replied there was no "essential" difference, but when questioned about the meaning of the word "essential" modified that to read "no difference."

This was all part of a meandering question-and-answer discussion, and it was an hour before MPP Julian Reed (L-Halton-Burlington) politely asked the same question again.

REED ASKED

Why did the report in front of him

have separate little boxes for "abnormal" and "significant" if they were the same, he asked?

That's when McConnell called in another Hydro employee who conceded in an obscure fashion that they are different.

Understandably, Gigantes was furious. Dragging accurate answers from Hydro was like pulling teeth from a horse.

Not that the Hydro people were giving deliberately muddled responses, but they looked bad as they fumbled with basic information about how Hydro works.

NEED CHANGES

Their approach, in fact, made them look guilty of something, as though they were trying to dodge questions or hide facts.

One doesn't expect engineers to have the verbal dexterity of politicians, but they should either know how to answer simple questions simply or else immediately refer them to someone who can.

The cumulative affect of dragging information out of Hydro officials is to leave a definite negative impression in political minds.

This is not to give the Shultz letter a credence it shouldn't have, since most of it is anti-nuclear propaganda, but Hydro is going to have to learn to handle its political public relations better.

Canada's federal election provides no unified approach



Ottawa Report
By Stewart MacLeod

Ottawa Bureau
Of The Herald
No doubt everyone would feel more comfortable if voters in Quebec and the rest of Canada, particularly those in the West, had followed similar voting patterns in the general election. With a separatist government in Quebec, and its referendum just around the corner, we would probably feel a lot better if the election had indicated a more national, unified approach to the problem.

Instead, Quebec voters gave overwhelming support to the Liberals of Pierre Trudeau while most other provinces decided it was time to throw them out of office. Since the Liberals had campaigned largely on the national unity issue, suggesting that only Trudeau could halt the separatists, it is understandable that the party's unceremonious rejection by western voters would raise some worries about our future.

And those concerns go beyond our own borders. Look at what the Detroit News had to say: "... Where the spacious land to the north is going is anybody's guess, but there seems little doubt that it has begun to wheel on the outer edge of a potentially ruinous political maelstrom." The Milwaukee Journal said Trudeau went down to defeat "and perhaps so did Canada's best hope for unity in the critical months ahead."

RUSSIANS, TOO
Even Pravda, the Russian Communist newspaper, got into the act, suggesting that the coming days will represent a "grave trial" for Canada. The Guardian of Manchester said Canada could become a sort of Northern Ireland with 10 disparate regions going their own way.

There is probably an immediate panic

reacting after any change in government but our foreign friends, not to mention some of our own domestic assessors, seem to be going a bit far this time. Sure it's unfortunate that voting patterns appear to have been influenced along linguistic lines, but it's ludicrous to suggest the country will fall apart because of this.

In fact, it could grow stronger because of the election.

Quebecers may appear out of step with their fellow Canadians in other provinces this time, but the fact is they gave an unprecedented endorsement to a party that campaigned four-square for Canadian federalism and a strong central government. In doing so, they clearly turned their backs on the separatists who were running under the Creditiste banner with the support of the Parti Quebecois.

And while voters in other provinces were giving Trudeau the heave-ho, not even the most partisan observer would suggest this represented any rejection of federalism. The Tories and New Democrats are as firmly committed to the integrity of Canada as Trudeau's Liberals. And the fact that Clark has a different approach to our constitutional difficulties might not be a bad thing.

Even the fact that he has been given embarrassingly little cabinet material by Quebec voters may not be a detriment. Since he is being forced to pluck ministers from outside, perhaps he will fulfill his determination to recruit people "who can reflect a contemporary Quebec."

DIFFICULT TARGET

There are many who feel that the Liberal Party, despite its awesome strength in that province, may still reflect the Quebec of the 1960s. And it's interesting that in recent weeks there have been scattered suggestions in the province that even Premier Levesque may be losing touch with contemporary Quebec. At the moment there is every indication that provincial Liberal Leader Claude Ryan is outpacing Levesque with his plan for a "renewed federalism." And Levesque has recently acknowledged that he would lose any immediate referendum on sovereignty-association.

A conciliatory Joe Clark may prove to be a more difficult federalist target for Rene Levesque than inflexible Pierre

Trudeau. If Clark carries through with his commitment to meet the premier "in a spirit of co-operation, not confrontation," it might not be easy for Levesque to convince his followers that federalism won't work.

Claude Ryan will be there to help the federalist cause.

And we shouldn't overlook Trudeau. As leader of the opposition, whose party got more voters than any other last Tuesday, he can have an enormous influence on the cause for unity. Without the partisan pressures of the prime ministership, but with an immense personal following, he now can rise above all political considerations in his campaign for Canada.

All things being considered, I don't see much cause for gloom.

Halton's History

From our files

LAURIER VISITS ROCKWOOD
THIRTY YEARS AGO — The closest point touched by Prime Minister St. Laurent on his election tour of Ontario was Rockwood last Wednesday morning. The Prime Minister was en route to address meetings in Arthur and Owen Sound and his party left the train at Rockwood to go by car to Arthur.

Associated with the Orangeville Banner since 1895, Alexander D. McKittrick died after a heart attack at his home last Wednesday. Mr. McKittrick had been a former Orangeville mayor and county councillor and had served on many other community groups such as the board of education.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Kercher are leaving tomorrow for Tottenham where they will make their home. Mr. Kercher has purchased the business of Thornton's Grocery in that town, which includes a store and living quarters. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Biehn and family are moving into the house on Queen Street which the Kerchers are vacating.

Look at last week's summary and then either say it was HOT and dry or DRY and hot. The month of May was considerably out of normal in all lines. The average maximum for the month of 70 degrees was five degrees below normal and the minimum was 3 degrees below the normal of 43.

ST. GEORGE'S CONFIRMATION

TWENTY YEARS AGO — Summer town is having its share of summer weather these days with temperatures in the nineties. It is one of the hottest Junes that people can remember, and those lucky few who take early vacations can crow this year.

A Milton youth who is well-known locally as a member of Georgetown's junior hockey team, Douglas Black, is in Milton hospital with head lacerations suffered in an automobile accident Saturday that claimed the life of Elgin Murray, also of Milton. Black, 19, was the driver of the car, which plunged over off an elevated detour on Highway 25 just north of Milton.

Fifty-nine candidates were confirmed on Sunday evening at St. George's Anglican Church where Bishop W.E. Bagnall administered the ancient church rite. It was the largest class to be confirmed in the history of the century-old parish. They will make their first communion this Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Assistant principal at Chapel St. Public School for the past three years, Hazel Allen will be moving into the principal's office of Weber Drive School when the building is completed next fall. Mr. Allen was appointed to the position at a meeting of the school board on Wednesday June 3 at Harrison Public School.

Georgetown will be represented in the Navy's Queen's Colour Guard when they accompany Queen Elizabeth II on her tour of Canada this summer. Dave Smith, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norm Smith, 12 King St. East, who joined the navy in April was chosen for the guard shortly after his arrival at HMCS Cornwallis.

Local Kinsman Sam Melzer received a glowing tribute in the widely-read Ajax Kinsmen bulletin recently when columnist Bill Legros referred to the local "Kinnews" editor as Canada's Mister Kinsman. Legros wrote: "If Georgetown Kinsmen Club has had a successful year, and from their news bulletin, it appears to be tops, I would say from this distance that bulletin editor Sam Melzer has been a driving force. Sam in my opinion is Mister Kinsman across the nation."

COUNCIL BEEPERS

TEN YEARS AGO — Council bought the beepers Monday night despite the objection of Coun. Ern Hyde, who termed them "toys." The "beepers" are a radio alert system, which will be carried by every fireman. They will do away with the present fire alarm system. The cost of the new system will be \$5,901 with \$3,000 paid immediately and the remainder paid on the anniversary of the sale.

Five Limehouse residents representing 50 petitioners attended Monday's Esqueving Council meeting to make council aware of the hazardous situation in that village which has them requesting that the load limit be enforced. George Morrison, speaking on behalf of the petitioners, urged council to use their influence in having speed limits and the load limit on Limehouse bridge over the CNR tracks enforced before a serious accident occurs.

The recent Girl Guide cookie day in Georgetown produced an individual record that won't be topped. Sandra Freeman, a Guide with the 5th Georgetown company outdid all the other local Guides and Brownies in salesmanship selling 84 boxes. Every box of Girl Guide cookies sold helps the individual pack or company, the area and the provincial council.

Nearly 42 per cent of Halton County residents are under age 20. This is among the findings of a report prepared by Halton Assessor Robert Beach and presented to county council. Total county population rose by 8,079 or five per cent in 1968, this year the report is based on. Population as of September 1968 was 169,731. The most popular age bracket in Halton is 20 to 29.

SUMMERFEST A SMASH

ONE YEAR AGO — Georgetown residents will be asked to choose from several alternatives just what kind of library service they want in town. Halton Hills library board decided last week to put the question to the people after listening to a lively public meeting to advice which ranged from proceeding immediately on renovation and addition of the present library — a 101-year old church — to doing nothing but contemplate for six months.

Canadian National Railways intends to cut passenger service and close down the landmark station in Georgetown. Company vice-president A.R. Williams told Halton Hills council Monday that CN has applied to the Canadian Transport Commission for permission to close the station in an effort to reduce costs.

Summerfest organizers are well satisfied with community response to the day-long program at the Fairgrounds Saturday. Although numbers were difficult to assess because of the area over which the crowd could scatter, it is estimated that 1,500 people attended the event.

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