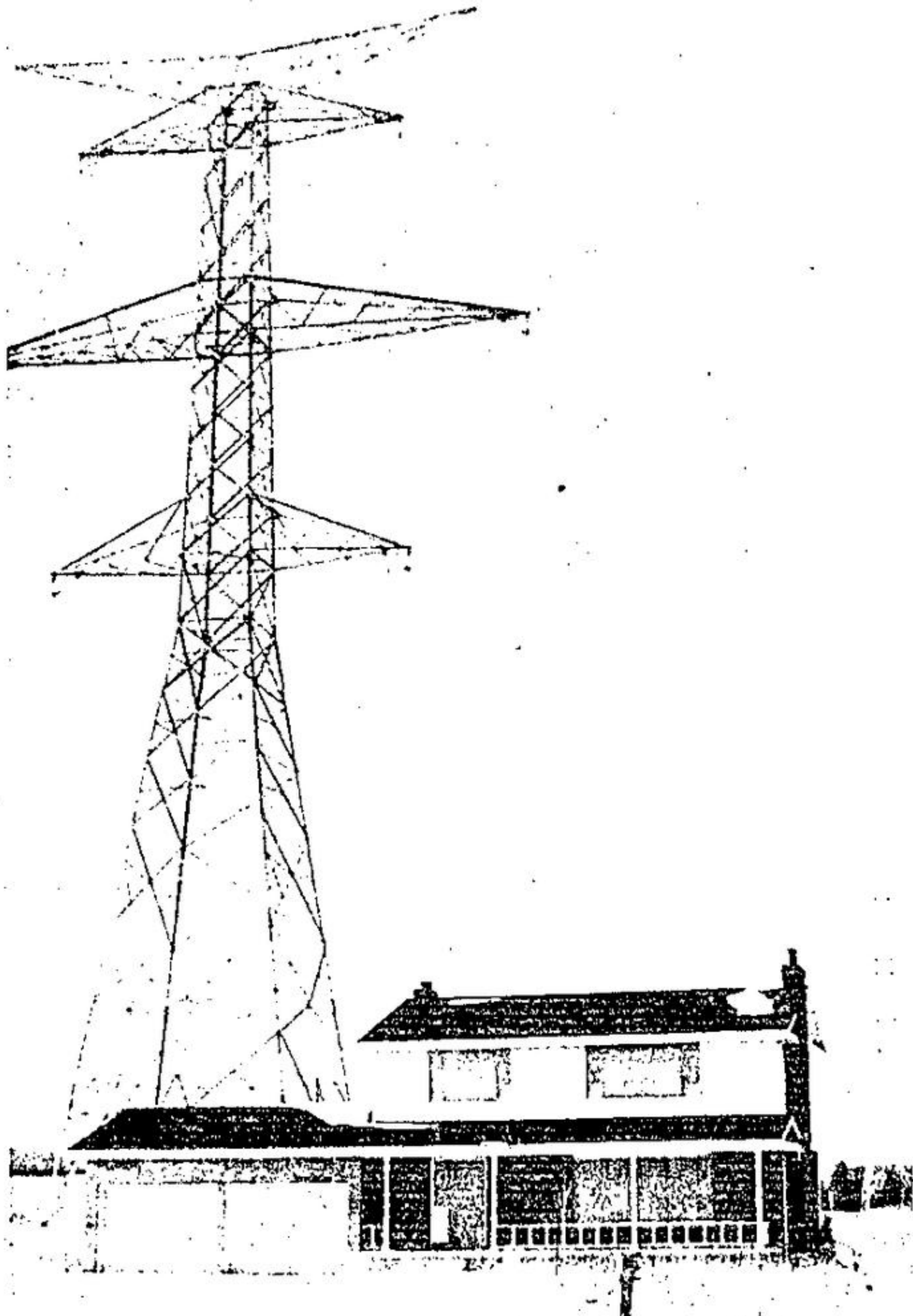


Nearly a decade has passed

Corridor battles leaves bitterness



By MAGGIE HANNAH Herald Staff Writer Many landowners involved in the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG) battle against Ontario Hydro, are bitter as they reach the end of their options.

"To say it's been an education is about the kindest way I can put it," Dave Moffatt, a market gardener on the Fifth Line at Steeles Avenue, told The Herald.

The Moffatts own 20 acres and farm half of it as a pick your own garden produce operation. The line doesn't actually touch their property but runs through the land adjacent to their line fence, close enough that they are concerned not only with its visual impact but also with possible ground currents under the line.

Because of the relatively large distance between the Moffatt farm and the towers, Mr. Moffatt never actually joined the ICG, but did assist its cause.

In order to keep their produce growing during the summer, it is necessary to irrigate the fields regularly, Mr. Moffatt said. Since irrigation pipes must be moved at least once a day, however, Hydro's suggestion to ground the pipes to prevent them picking up electrical discharge

from the line is impractical. "I can't get an answer to who would be responsible if someone were electrocuted by touching an irrigation line," Mr. Moffatt pointed out.

The question of how much the line will devalue his property is another question for which Mr. Moffatt has no answer.

BUYER'S CHOICE

"As you realize when you're selling property, all it takes is one buyer," he said. "Now the question is, will that one buyer object or not object to the line? It will all depend on what he has been conditioned to. If he were raised in downtown Toronto, for instance, where there are more lines overhead than clear spaces, he'll not even bat an eye at this. But there are others who might not be prepared to live near it. It seems to be the penalty you pay. The closer one lives to civilization in this country, the more one can expect some sort of disruption."

Mr. Moffatt said he first became involved with the corridor battle in 1975 when Hydro had a display in Stewarttown Hall showing the route the corridor would take through Halton Hills. He now has a bookcase full of reports, letters and other material concerning hydro and this route.

The battle with the ICG has proved an eye-opener for Hydro as well, Mr. Moffatt believes. In the beginning, Hydro didn't expect anything like the input it has received from the citizens, but over the years has discovered the farmers "aren't just a bunch of ignoramuses," he contended.

Energy ministers and Hydro officials alike have tried to put Mr. Moffatt down for his lack of qualifications. Letters he has received from them only prove that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing, Mr. Moffatt said. For example, the very day he was to testify at the Ontario Municipal Board hearing in Georgetown, Mr. Moffatt received a letter from then-energy minister Dennis Timbrell saying the Linehouse crossing had already been exhaustively researched and it was now time to get on with building the line. The hearing wasn't even finished, but already Mr. Timbrell had decided on its outcome, or presumed the result and wanted to by-pass the process, Mr. Moffatt complained.

SLATER REPORT

The Slater consultants report was the closest Hydro ever came to giving the ICG an independent study, and

even then, Hydro ignored part of the findings, Mr. Moffatt recalled.

Hydro excerpted the first portion of the report which agrees that the Bradley to Milton line is better than other choices under certain conditions. However, the utility ignored the second portion, which states that it is only equal to the other choices if certain other conditions are imposed, such as losing the use of the Milton switching station.

Loss of the Milton station is far from the remote possibility Hydro implies, Mr. Moffatt said. The train which derailed and set off the fire in Mississauga recently passed within a very short distance of the station. Had such a fire occurred in Milton near the switching station, the situation might have had a smaller number of people involved, but the fire and gas problems would have been greatly complicated by other factors.

For starters, there is a storage area for Superior Propane directly across the road from the station. Hydro warns farmers not to light fires under the lines in case the smoke ionizes the air and acts as a conductor so that arcing occurs between the lines or between the lines and the

ground. If a fire started under the planned 500-kilovolt line because of burning tank cars on the railroad, the tracks could carry the electricity for miles.

Once the developers get into action the area west of the 401 will become an industrial mall. Hand Chemical, which had a fire recently, is not far from the tracks and it is quite possible that other industries of a similar nature may move into the new Milton industrial park. Highway 401 is just yards from the Milton station and the James Snow Parkway will intersect with the 401 very close to the station.

CLOVERLEAF

"They're even putting a tower for the corridor in the clover-leaf of the parkway and the 401," Mr. Moffatt said. "And where do all the accidents with big tankers and tractor trailers occur? Just as they are pulling off or onto the highways, according to statistics. They're just asking for trouble putting it where they have."

Mr. Moffatt feels that the Mississauga disaster simply proved that, despite assurances to the contrary, such accidents can happen and Hydro can no longer ignore the possibilities at Milton.

"I think they'll put the line through here even if they never string it," Mr. Moffatt added. "It's a face-saving gesture. I think we're getting a clunker with the blessing of Ontario Hydro and the minister of energy, and I just hope someone sees the light before long and does something to make it right."

What Mr. Moffatt would like to see is back-up lines installed from the Bruce generating station to Clairville and from Bruce to Nanticoke. This would give an alternate route to get power south out of the Bruce if anything happened to the Milton line or station.

What he fears will happen is the widening of the corridor as more lines are laid down through the Milton to Bradley corridor.

"It will be so much easier to rubber stamp more lines through an existing corridor than to battle for a new right of way," he noted. "I expect that will be the route they'll follow when they need more lines. Hydro keeps saying all they want is one line, and we say for now. They've never denied it (the possibility of future lines in the same corridor)."

The possibility of a disaster at the Milton station leaves Hydro wide open for a class action suit if anything did happen, Mr. Moffatt suspects, since Slater plainly warned in his report that the station was not the best possible route to serve Hydro's needs.

The public is getting angrier and angrier as prices rise and shortages continue, he said. If there ever is a disaster, the public could get pretty mean.

"When the public has warm beer, a freezer full of rotting food and a cold house because there's no power, Hydro could face a real problem," he warned.

Mr. Moffatt isn't sure changing governments would ease the situation much, however, and points to the way the federal turn-about has resulted in few changes or improvements. It won't matter much which party is in power, he said; the bureaucrats still get the last word.

Hydro considers battle won, construction due any day

By LORI TAYLOR Herald staff writer

The battle between Ontario Hydro and citizens opposed to the construction of the Bruce-Milton hydro corridor is virtually over, as far as Ontario Hydro is concerned; Hydro spokesman Chris Taylor has told The Herald that construction of towers on some properties may begin here in a week.

Towers have already been constructed within Halton Hills boundaries, but entirely within the Niagara Escarpment development control area, Mr. Taylor said. Permission was given to proceed with the construction of these towers following an Ontario Municipal Board hearing more than a year ago.

Ontario Hydro already has the required 250-foot-wide easements on some sections of the route and could conceivably begin final construction almost immediately in these areas, Mr. Taylor said. In other areas, settlements must be made with landowners, and the appropriate government ministries contacted regarding construction designs in environmentally sensitive

areas. Once design approvals are made, final construction can begin.

Mr. Taylor estimated it will take six months from the laying of the tower foundations to the stringing of the line. Before the tower foundations can be laid, the route must be surveyed, the forests on the property examined and the soil tested.

Opponents of the proposed corridor have said that there is no other 500-kilovolt line in Ontario which travels through such a comparatively populated area, and Hydro has not been able to conduct comprehensive studies of such high voltage on people and animals in the vicinity of the line.

Mr. Taylor said, however, that by the time construction of the Halton Hills line is completed, another 500-kv line from Oshawa to Lennox, a community near Kingston, will be completed. The line is being strung now, and Hydro anticipates having power running through the line by May.

Mr. Taylor is a member of the Community Relations Department of Ontario Hydro, and was assigned to this area about three weeks ago to keep

the public informed about the line and answer questions about its construction. He can be contacted at Hydro's Acton office at 853-0570.

Mr. Taylor said he feels Ontario Hydro has given landowners fair and just hearings about the corridor, "if you look at the number of hearings, the way the public was kept informed about the plans and the showing of alternatives." Mr. Taylor said Hydro held numerous public meetings about the line when it was in the planning stages and circulated a number of questionnaires to ask landowners about their concerns.

Mr. Taylor said members of the public were invited to express their concerns at several stages during the planning process in a series of public meetings and through questionnaires. He said the property owners have been dealt with fairly and honestly when it came to securing right-of-way for the line, and will be dealt with fairly during construction to minimize damage to the land.

"It comes down to treating people fairly and responsibly," Mr. Taylor said. "Hydro is committed to public participation."

"Since the third unit of the Bruce generating station went into operation in December, 1977, sufficient transmission has not been available, under certain operating conditions such as emergencies and routine maintenance, to carry all the power being generated," Mr. Taylor said. He estimated the cost of the locked-up power between December, 1977 and October, 1979, at \$36.4 million.

Mr. Taylor attributed these costs to four factors: the power locked in at the Bruce generat-

ing plant because there is no line to carry it; higher transmission losses through operating a 500-kilovolt line at 230 volts through the Belwood connection, which is being used to siphon off some of the power from Bruce; reduced bulk electrical system capability; and Bruce unit rejection, when the Bruce unit shuts down because the power is not being taken out.

AVERAGE COST

In 1979, the average cost per month of the locked-up power was about \$1.5 million, although this could fluctuate if there are any changes in the situation before the end of the year, Mr. Taylor said.

He said the suggestion that locked-in power could be transmitted to Owen Sound via an existing line would not work because, once the power is sent to Owen Sound, there is no way it can be dispersed further.

Ontario Hydro has been accused of over-building and of creating a surplus of 40 to 45 per cent over the specified power reserve, but this is not wholly true, Mr. Taylor said. Of this so-called surplus, 25 per cent is a planned reserve, to ensure a constant dependable supply of electricity, he said.

This means the actual surplus is about 20 per cent, which, because it costs less to generate, can be used to reduce the utility's dependence on more expensively-produced fuel, Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor explained that he is here to make sure "the citizens of the community hear of the goals for this project". Ontario Hydro will be remaining in constant contact with landowners through the construction and afterwards to ensure there are no problems, he said.

ICG member predicts drastic effect on farm

Reford Gardhouse joined the ICG battle for an independent study of the corridor route when it first began in 1974.

The group has no actual paid membership but it still drew approximately 4,000 signatures on an initial petition asking for a study of the line, and contributions have come in from a wide area to help support the ICG fight.

"It is most frustrating," Mr. Gardhouse told The Herald, "because we're spending our own money for the ICG and also contributing to a crown corporation (Ontario Hydro) at the same time. We're funding both sides of the fight with our own money."

The north-south line will cut the Gardhouse farm into two halves extending east and west from the Fourth to the Fifth Line along 10 Sideroad.

This is not the first hydro line Mr. Gardhouse has had to contend with in his years of raising beef cattle and sheep. A 230-kilovolt line from Islington to Woodbridge went through his family's property in the days before he began farming. He remembers how much of a nuisance the towers were and said they certainly weren't compatible with a farming operation.

Although he has no way of estimating how much the corridor will affect the value of his property, Mr. Gardhouse is sure it will lower it to some degree.

"I certainly feel it will devalue our property considerably because it cuts it right in two," he said. "It makes a farce out of the township plan. We got an agricultural zoning and that was fine as long as they kept industry out. We're grateful to the town for supporting us as long as they did. They couldn't do anything except give in to help. They did their best to help us."

DRASTIC EFFECT The corridor will have a "drastic" effect on Halton Hills farming operations, he predicted, according to the effect corridors have produced in other places. Growth stops, he explained, because the farmers no longer feel their

MPP blames premier for Hydro's rigidity

Liberal energy critic Julian Reed thinks Ontario Hydro's inflexibility over the hydro corridor stems from Premier Bill Davis's belief that electric power will be Ontario's "savior" in a future energy crunch.

"The Premier's belief that electric power will be the salvation of Ontario has let Hydro go its merry way with its expansion program and the building of the Bruce to Milton corridor," Mr. Reed, MPP for Halton-Burlington, told The Herald this week.

"As a person, not a politi-

cian, I have never felt such a sense of frustration in dealing with the last five ministers of energy," Mr. Reed said. "It goes beyond the corridor issue to everything that the minister is responsible for."

Mr. Reed said that even if the citizens opposed to the

part, because Hydro only approaches the province to get approval for its borrowings to finance its major projects, Mr. Reed said.

"There is no accountability at all of Hydro to the province," he said. "The proper way, in my view, is that the government should have an energy policy which would give Ontario Hydro a framework within which to work. This would also make the energy minister responsible for Ontario Hydro in the House."

MORE CONTROL

The government did have more control over the doings of Ontario Hydro prior to 1973, but the new Power Corporation Act "exempted them from their responsibilities in that regard," Mr. Reed said.

While Mr. Reed expressed his frustration at dealing with most of the energy ministers through the years since the corridor route was announced, he did have some kind words to say about James Taylor, who resigned the position.

"I believe implicitly that when history is written, James Taylor will be the man who saw injustice, tried to right it, and was stifled behind the scenes," Mr. Reed said. "He was thwarted in all his attempts to get control of Hydro."

really run by the deputy-minister, Mr. Reed said. The deputy, Ontario Hydro chairman Hugh McAuley and Premier Davis are part of a decision-making group which would take the point of view that it would be embarrassing to admit any kind of mistakes or failure, Mr. Reed said.

"My own belief is that he (Mr. Taylor) resigned in the end, because he was not being allowed to say what he wanted to say, he was being told what he should say," Mr. Reed said. "Jim was the one who resigned with his integrity intact."

"Hydro has done everything within their mandate, which is zip," he continued. "They don't assist their minister."

NO ATTENTION

"Hydro paid absolutely no attention to the citizens and landowners along the corridor, except what they had to through the various hearings," Mr. Reed said. "They were just going through the motions in there. The funny thing is, there are a lot of fine people who work there. Hydro has been set up as an ogre in this, but it's a few senior people who made the wrong decisions and are afraid to stand up to them."

Mr. Reed said that the hydro corridor issue was one of the reasons he supported the Environmental Assessment

operation is secure. In their own case it will mean a period of "wait and see". They will just wait to find out how badly the line will disrupt their farming operation, but they definitely won't be making any additions or new investments until they know where they stand. If the disruption is too great they may well sell and move elsewhere.

Mr. Gardhouse is puzzled that the ICG has consistently been refused the independent study it requested.

"Even supposing it took six months for a study, if we got it it would probably get the line through faster than it will go by confrontation," he said. "We felt we were living in a

Continued on page 29

corridor lose their battle, they will have "the altruistic satisfaction of knowing that Hydro will never behave that way again."

The provincial government's control over Ontario Hydro is after the fact, for the most

The ministry of energy is

ICG member predicts drastic effect on farm

Reford Gardhouse joined the ICG battle for an independent study of the corridor route when it first began in 1974.

The group has no actual paid membership but it still drew approximately 4,000 signatures on an initial petition asking for a study of the line, and contributions have come in from a wide area to help support the ICG fight.

"It is most frustrating," Mr. Gardhouse told The Herald, "because we're spending our own money for the ICG and also contributing to a crown corporation (Ontario Hydro) at the same time. We're funding both sides of the fight with our own money."

The north-south line will cut the Gardhouse farm into two halves extending east and west from the Fourth to the Fifth Line along 10 Sideroad.

This is not the first hydro line Mr. Gardhouse has had to contend with in his years of raising beef cattle and sheep. A 230-kilovolt line from Islington to Woodbridge went through his family's property in the days before he began farming. He remembers how much of a nuisance the towers were and said they certainly weren't compatible with a farming operation.

Although he has no way of estimating how much the corridor will affect the value of his property, Mr. Gardhouse is sure it will lower it to some degree.

"I certainly feel it will devalue our property considerably because it cuts it right in two," he said. "It makes a farce out of the township plan. We got an agricultural zoning and that was fine as long as they kept industry out. We're grateful to the town for supporting us as long as they did. They couldn't do anything except give in to help. They did their best to help us."

DRASTIC EFFECT The corridor will have a "drastic" effect on Halton Hills farming operations, he predicted, according to the effect corridors have produced in other places. Growth stops, he explained, because the farmers no longer feel their

Pomeroy discusses battle

Continued from page 1

Compensation Act (which governs expropriations)", he explained.

"Under its guidelines, they start with a low offer and very slowly go on and on with negotiations, which tends to get people upset", he added.

Although the town was limited in what it could do, Mayor Pomeroy said that he believed the town had really done everything that it possibly could for the people affected by the corridor.



JULIAN REED



Julian Reed meets Dave Moffatt

Continued on page 29