



Letter from the Editor **Paul Dorsey**

How to dismantle a hydro tower

Local television watchers who were not distracted by last Wednesday night's Leafs-Islanders game and the tandem comedy repeats of Second City Saturday Night Live probably opted for the made-for-TV movie entitled "OHMS", which paralleled the plight of some Halton Hills landowners in trying to block Ontario Hydro's super-corridor.

I've been calling the 500,000-volt line through Esqueping a super-corridor, but the transmission line planned in the TV movie would carry twice the voltage. Had it not been successfully blocked by affected landowners, most of whom were farmers.

While "OHMS" - which was the name of the movie's "stop-the-line" organization - turned out in the final analysis to be just another sensationalized, rapidly-produced pseudo-flick for devotees of the boob tube and Ralph Waite of the Waltons, it DID accurately depict the kind of sentiments which led affected farmers to decide they would oppose the corridor, as well as covering the clandestine planning procedure through which Hydro - or in this case The Power Company of some mid-West American state - selected a route largely beyond the knowledge or co-operation of the residents involved.

Also ringing bells were courtroom scenes in which OHMS attorney complained that the line opponents "keep hitting the same wall".

NO REALITY

Beyond these few facts, the movie was a total departure from any sense of reality.

While I harbor no particular fondness for Ontario Hydro's chiefs of staff and the many underlings they hire to parrot their bureaucratic jargon, the employees of "OHMS" - Power Company were seen through very biased eyes as individually obnoxious, unemotional gangsters with whom the viewers could not possibly sympathize, even when they trotted out the fine old crown corporation lines like "It's for the good of the nation".

The movie's producers applied much of the same artistic licence, i.e., prejudice, to portrayals of judges and

politicians. Then, to further sensationalize a script that would have otherwise been bogged down with legal wrangles and research sequences, the producers staged a full-scale brawl between OHMS demonstrators and truckers hired to haul gravel to the tower sites.

The capper, of course, was a successfully-executed scheme by OHMS to actually dismantle one of the four-storey hydro towers standing, not yet strung, in someone's back forty. Despite the close scrutiny of some state police, these farmers and country boys took the whole "director set" apart, hauled it 30 miles along back roads and reassembled it on the front lawn of the governor's mansion ready for his arrival from the state legislature the next morning.

The governor was furious, summoning one of the OHMS leaders (Waite) to the mansion to dress him down verbally, then ask with a grin, "How'd you do it?"

SO EASY

That's it - it was so easy: the governor bowed to the OHMS, the landowners got their way and the Power Company announced that, after further consideration, the route originally chosen had been deemed inadequate.

Thus, what started out as a promising fictionalization of a situation so close to home ended as a trite, empty attempt at entertainment which provided none of the social or political commentary which may have redeemed it.

The only value to Halton Hills landowners concerned about the corridor, then, was the apparent fact that problems created by the expropriation of private land for "public" needs are now so extensive that they make reasonably interesting script fodder for television's movie-makers.

Beyond this, I don't think anyone would seriously advise local corridor-opponents to take their wrenches and spanners to one of the towers and haul it down to Queen's Park. Make a hell of a story for The Herald, though, so if life is to imitate art in this case, let us know in time to load up the cameras.

VIEWPOINT

Forgotten rights of the child: abuses and travesties continue

By **GERRY LANDSBOROUGH**

Blind, deaf and retarded: the legacy of a father who couldn't cope. The little girl in question was almost choked to death because she was crying and interfering with her father's concentration as he was arranging his bubble-gum card collection.

Each day with greater frequency, we are given accounts of the unbelievably cruel treatment inflicted upon children and babies.

One of the most recent was an American case that happened this Christmas Eve. Thomas Saad, 25, beat his three-month old stepson so viciously that both arms were broken along with several ribs, and massive head injuries were sustained. The plug was pulled on the boy's life-support machine this past week after doctors agreed that "the brain" of the child was clinically dead. The stepfather has been charged with second-degree murder.

As the pressures of our society become greater, more and more people lose control and run amuck. And always it is those who can least defend themselves, the true innocents of the world - "the children" - who pay such a horrendous price.

JUST CHATTEL

Because society has changed so dramatically during the last decade, we can no longer afford to place children in the hands of their parents as so much chattel. Children are looked upon as individuals who, because they are small, have no rights whatsoever. It is time for society to recognize that the years of early childhood should be given status, with certain inalienable rights which are theirs from the moment of birth.

Here in Canada, children are the property of their parents; an adult male can suffer stronger legal reprisals for kicking his dog than for kicking his child. The general consensus is, "It's my kid, I'll bring it up my way, so butt out."

Another point worth mentioning is that the "me" generation looked on children as something to be tolerated, a bared, or abused. The family state was certainly not looked upon with pride or desirability. Apartments shouted "no pets or children". Stores posted signs: "No children unaccompanied by parents".

Moneyed people can throw their weight around and order that people with noisy children

be removed from their favorite dining lounge. Newspaper play up the juvenile delinquent scene and communities go on nothing short of a witch hunt with cries of outrage that amount to nothing short of "get the children". After all, we all know that kids are disrespectful, slovenly, drug-using, no-accounts, don't we?

Children have been pushed around by society 'til they look at us with hostility and we look back in turn with nothing short of the same.

LOSE CONTROL

Is it no wonder, then, that when people lose control, it is the children against whom they lash out?

Each day, hospitals receive the broken bones, the inflicted burns, the bruised and battered remnants of someone's child; there are so many that, after awhile, eyes and hearts harden to what becomes just another everyday happening.

We must put an end to child abuse, both physical and mental. Children are the future of our country, of our race, of our hopes and our dreams. Children "are" the future, for without them, life stops here, ending with the present generation.

Twenty years ago, the "baby licence" was a joke. Today, it becomes a must for the future. Do a bubble gum card collection and the responsibility of parenthood go hand in hand? In today's world, desire alone is not enough criteria for parenthood. What of financial responsibility, and emotional maturity? What about some kind of indication of awareness of what parenthood is all

about?

Because of the kind of society we have created, desire for a child is just not enough. A case in point is the story of Deborah Ellis: three of her children died under unusual circumstances. At the inquest into the death of one-month old Vicky Ellis, who died of dehydration, it was recommended that Mrs. Ellis and her husband should undergo long-term psychiatric treatment.

Last week, a month-old baby girl was seized by Children's Aid from Mrs. Ellis, who thus far, denies the baby is hers.

Following the inquest in July, 1977, Mrs. Ellis told a reporter, "No one can stop me from having children - not the judge, or the coroner or the Children's Aid Society. I'm going to have another child, and just let anyone try to stop me."

It is obvious that the desire to have children is there, but unfortunately the responsibility that comes with parenthood is not. Mrs. Ellis' other babies died from a type of neglect Mrs. Ellis does not understand. It is unfair and morally wrong to burden such a mother with the possibility of future pregnancies and it is wrong to allow a child to be born into such a lacking home.

DIED OF NEGLECT

Society (that's you and me) has to re-examine how we look at children. We must begin to look upon them as people - small people but nevertheless people, with certain inalienable rights.

We cannot allow such cruel slaughter to continue. The times have changed. We must change. Our laws must change.

We must put an end to this heart-breaking slaughter of the innocents.

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Local campaign raised \$1,938 for UNICEF

By **BUJ and PHYLLIS LIVINGSTONE**

Last year being the "Year of the Child", we, as co-chairmen of UNICEF in Georgetown, are proud to tell you that the schools, churches and organizations involved in this program collected \$1,937.97. This money raised by the citizens of Georgetown will help UNICEF to carry out future plans.

As you can well imagine, a great many pennies were counted and wrapped, but thanks to Curwood Packaging of Armstrong Avenue we were able to minimize the job through the loan of a sorting and counting machine, with a verifier. We are very grateful to them as it saved us many hours of work.

We are also grateful to ALL the organizations for their co-operation: we found it a very rewarding experience. We must, as well, offer our sincere thanks and appreciation to the staff of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, in the Georgetown Market, for their prompt assistance and understanding - all concerned were so helpful.

Last, but by no means least, we wish to say a big "thank you" to the boys and girls who went out with their UNICEF

boxes collecting for other children who are less fortunate than themselves, for without the help of these children the campaign would not have been a success.

Here are a few of the many projects carried out by UNICEF last year:

GUATEMALA - providing

safe water supplies and sanitation for 160 rural communities; PERU - expanded existing programmes to benefit 80,000 families in health, nutrition, sanitation and education;

LIBERIA - provide paper stocks for 70,000 primary school books; BOTSWANA - building two

model day-care centres, furnishing equipment for both new and existing centres, and providing a child-care specialist to supervise the new programme.

May we take this opportunity of wishing each and every one of you a joyous and healthy new year.

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