

# Porter report on hydro criticizes the ICG

The Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning, headed by Arthur Porter, has released its long-awaited report, five years and \$5 million after the commission was established.

The first volume, which summarizes the concepts, conclusions and recommendations of the commission, was released March 26. The following eight volumes are expected to be released later this spring.

The commission studied system planning, the major issues involved in power planning and conducted an assessment of power technology. The study, which encompassed more than 2,000 hours of hearings, dealt with topics such as nuclear power, bulk power transmission land use, environmental concerns, energy conservation and decision-making.

In the course of the inquiry, the commission visited Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the States of California, Arizona, Minnesota, Wisconsin and New York.

There are only brief references to the transmission corridor debate in Halton Hills. One of the recommendations in the bulk power transmission section recommends that the farming community work with Ontario Hydro to devise a route for a second 500-kV line from the Bruce generating station.

The report also recommends that Ontario Hydro use even more imaginative approaches to promote public involvement

in selecting routes for transmission corridors.

One of the most specific remarks in the report which deals with the Halton Hills corridor battle is in reference to the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG).

In a chapter on Ontario Hydro's decision-making process which describes a condition known as "the backyard

syndrome", the commission made reference to the ICG in a footnote.

"Although the Commission's mandate (time period 1983-83 and beyond) obviously did not require consideration of the issues surrounding the Halton Hills controversy (concerning the completion of the 500-kV line transmission from the Bruce Generating Station to

the Milton Transformer Station), we were surprised that the public interest group responsible for the main opposition to the line did not appear before the RCEPP, or submit a brief," the commission noted. "Indeed, this is an excellent example of the 'own backyard syndrome'."

The footnote goes on to note

that at the time when the ICG's opposition to the line was originally voiced, the Ontario Hydro public participation procedures now being used were not in place.

The commission recommends that public participation in selecting hydro routes begin at the earliest possible stage, with complete information being provided to the public.

Liberal energy critic Julian Reed says he is disappointed with the report so far because of its vague wording.

"I wish he had been more forceful. The conclusions can be reached by almost anybody."

Mr. Reed said he is disappointed about the commission's seeming attitude to the ICG, as indicated by the footnote.

"The one positive note is that in the section about corridors he talks about the need for hydro to work with the farmers and landowners instead of bulldozing them," he said.

"The report is worded very mildly," Mr. Reed said. "It's very, very hard to point to anything in it and say 'So there, guys!'"

## NEB's corridor ruling expected soon

By STEPHEN FROST  
Herald Staff Writer

The long-awaited National Energy Board (NEB) decision on the Bruce to Milton hydro transmission corridor, considered the final ray of hope lighting the battle plans of the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG), is expected any day.

Residents in Halton Hills want the 14 mile section being constructed in their region to be stopped, even though Ontario Hydro has said it must build the line to prevent power blackouts. Hydro has said that delays have cost more than \$36 million in taxpayers' money and that figure is rising.

Chief of the secretariat of the National Energy Board (NEB), Gerry Michaud, said from Ottawa that the board is not yet certain it has jurisdiction over the issue, but will also make that decision shortly.

Both sides in the dispute have presented written briefs

to the NEB and each side will be asked to comment upon the other's submission.

The board itself first has to decide if it has the authority to handle the citizen's request for a board order to halt the Hydro project.

If the board rules that the dispute is within its jurisdiction it can then rule on the ICG claim that the corridor is really an international power line, and therefore requiring an NEB authorizing certificate.

The NEB may also decide on a public hearing to determine the necessity of the corridor and ask for a suspension of the Hydro licence until the case is heard.

Reford Gardhouse and Walter Scott are seeking action against the utility on behalf of themselves and the ICG which they represent.

At present, there is little activity going on in the area, according to Walter Scott.

"The towers are in place now and they're just waiting to string the lines," Mr. Scott said. "Perhaps the thing that bothered me most was the dobermans and shepherds that were kept around the site. They weren't there for protection of the sites or the people on

them, because they were never threatened by the farmers of this area. They were there as a form of intimidation and I'm sorry that this sort of thing is allowed to go on in this country."

Hydro had forcibly entered on to many landowners

properly and pushed ahead with construction hoping to complete the line sometime this summer.

The ICG appealed to the federal agency to stop the project, arguing that it wasn't justified and that their civil rights had been abused.

## Tower repairs underway

Ontario Hydro is having repairs made to several of its newly constructed transmission towers north of Hwy 7.

Community relations officer Chris Taylor reported this week that a workman tightening bolts in the towers discovered a defect in the open end of a cord on the skywire arm in several of the towers between the Erin-Halton Hills town line and Highway 7.

When the bolts are tightened to the required pressure, a "wrinkle" occurs in the steel, he explained. This will be repaired by splicing another

piece of steel six to eight inches long along the arm so that it is rigidly bound in place.

The work can be done by workmen climbing the towers and working in the air. No dismantling of the towers will

be necessary.

The last of the towers in the Halton Hills area were completed about a month ago, Mr. Taylor said, and stringing of the conductor will begin after spring break-up.

## CWL Week

Town council passed a recommendation Monday proclaiming the week of April 20 to April 27 as "Catholic Women's League Week" in Halton Hills. Council passed the recommendation in response to a request from Margaret Wilcox, secretary of the Holy Cross Council.



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