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# Hydro bills could increase by 20 per cent

By BEN DUMMETT

The Herald

Halton Hills residents could see their monthly hydro bill increase by almost 20 per cent in 1991.

That's the figure Jerry Trudell, general manager of Halton Hills Hydro, will use to determine people's individual rates for 1991. A preliminary report on the expected increase will be made public in late August, said Mr. Trudell at the monthly utility meeting of commissioners Friday.

The increase will reflect a 12.8 per cent increase in the amount Ontario Hydro charges local utilities such as Halton Hills Hydro, as well as the Federal Goods and Services Sales Tax (GST), said Tony Jennings, the

chief executive officer for the Municipal Electric Association. The M.E.A. is a lobby group for Ontario's 70 electricity utilities.

Commissioner Bill Smith urged the commission to take action and inform the public how the federal government's policies are to blame for the expected increase to local utility rates.

"Nobody is saying anything new and its going to be here, (the GST). And people are going to say do something but it will be too late," said Mr. Smith.

The commission decided to consider different campaigns already adopted by other utilities to fight the application of the GST to local utility rates.

Some of the options to be con-

sidered include the commission sending a flyer protesting the GST accompanying people's monthly utility bill and asking the people to send the mail stuffer to local MP Garth Turner; or the utility could ask its customers to phone Mr. Turner's office directly asking why the GST will apply to a public service.

The staffers are effective, said Mr. Jenkins, because an MP has tangible proof how many people in the riding protest the idea. But the negative side is the MP doesn't have to do anything about the staffers received, he said. A telephone campaign is advantageous because it forces the MP to take a stand, he told commissioners.

Only six per cent of the seven per

cent GST will affect 1991 utility rates, said Mr. Jennings. Once the GST comes into effect, the equipment suppliers for the utilities will no longer charge the 13 per cent Manufacturing Sales Tax as is done now. Utilities will save one per cent once they only have to pay the GST. That means the GST caused increase represents a six per cent hike on top of the MEA recommended 12.8 per cent increase.

The MEA is recommending the increase because the group thinks Ontario Hydro should reduce its \$350 billion debt faster than it is doing, said Mr. Jennings.

He acknowledged that some people say the debt is not much of a concern but other people, said Mr.

Jennings, say the corporation has over-extended itself if measured against the standards of private enterprise.

Mr. Jennings also predicted rates will increase by about 50 per cent in 1992, if the 1991 increase is adopted.

Ontario Hydro is proposing it increase the rates by only 7.8 per cent. The Ontario Energy Board is currently holding a public hearing to get input on what the increase should be. The board along with hydro's board of directors decide the final rates. Mr. Jennings predicts the rates will be between Hydro's recommended increase and that of the MEA.

"It will probably be about 10.5 per cent."

## Bruno wins gold



Frank Bruno

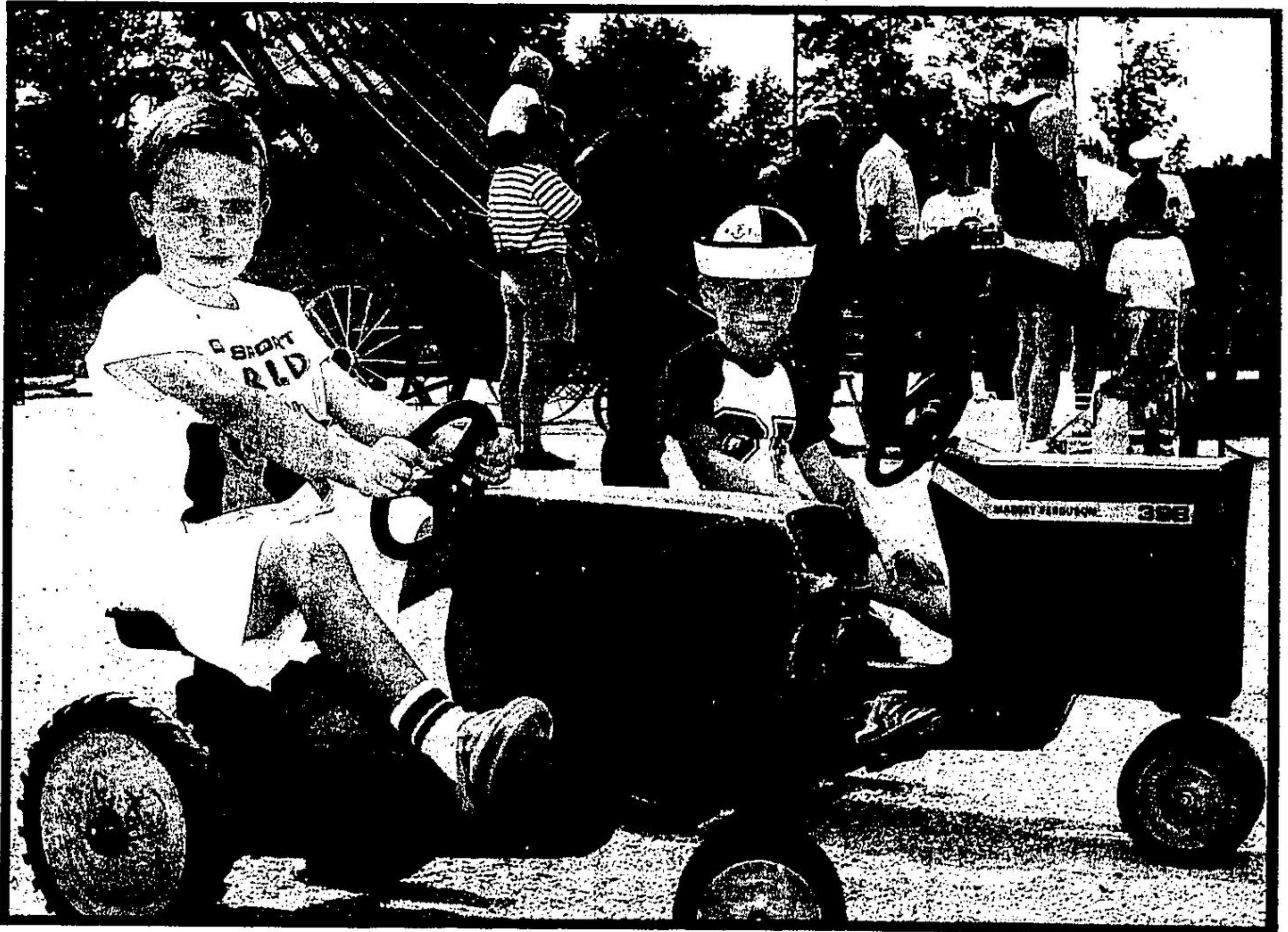
Frank Bruno set two world records, winning three gold medals and two silvers at the Sport for the Disabled World Track and Field Championships in Assen, Holland, this week.

Bruno, a member of the "Dawgs" team in the Georgetown Men's Flag Football League, broke the world records in the 200 and 400 metre dashes in the cerebral palsy class eight division.

He also placed first in the 100 metre dash and finished second in the shot put and long jump events. Official times and distances from the competition will not be available until the team returns from Holland on Monday.

Earlier this month, Bruno set four national records at the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled in Etobicoke in the 100 and 200 metre dashes, the long jump and the shot put.

At the Ontario Games, Bruno ran the 100 metre race in 12.46 seconds, the 200 metre in 25.55, travelled 4.57 metres in the long jump and hurled the shot put 10.11 metres.



## Tractors attract youngsters

Christopher White, left, and Nathan Van Pagee took some rides on miniature versions of the farm vehicles that were on display at the Great Canadian Antique Tractor Field Days in Milton on Saturday.

The event, held at the Ontario Agriculture Museum in Milton, featured many farming machines dating back to the 1800's, all of which are kept in working order by their owners. (Herald photo by Robert Risk)