

'Bright water and happy lands'

Kawartha a paddlers paradise

By KEVIN CALLAN

The Kawartha region, once home to a mountain barrier lapped by mud-bottomed inland seas, transformed itself through time into a scoured landscape, bulldozed by four glaciers, each being a mile thick, more than 10,000 years ago. Once the elevated peaks were striped from the land the area boasted an undulated pattern of lakes and rivers amongst ridges and hill.

Geologists believe this transformation to be one of the most important geological boundaries in Canada - the southern edge of the Canadian Shield. Avid canoeists, however, believe that this natural wonder has become, through the actions of time and ice, a true paddler's paradise.

The first paddlers known to venture through the Kawartha chain of lakes and rivers were nomadic Indians, seasonal wanderers hunting caribou and giant elk. The only evidence of their existence are graven images carved into limestone approximately 1,500 years ago. The most intriguing of these pictrolyphs are a series of 14 canoes representing a vehicle of the spirits in their journeys to a perfect world.

In 1615 Samuel de Champlain, guided by the Hurons of Georgian Bay, was honored by being the first white man to paddle through the Kawarthas on route to battle the Iroquois in

Nature's Way

By KEVIN CALLAN



New York State. He too was impressed with this historic aquatic highway, writing in his journal that this area was "fine and of pleasing character."

For 200 years the land which the Mississauga Indians called Ka-wa-tha, meaning "bright water and happy lands," became the preferred route of the missionaries and fur traders.

The area was first settled by foreign immigrants in the early 1800s, and they too developed a love for paddling the lakes and rivers. Catharine Parr Traill, one of the earlier settlers who became a famous writer of the Kawarthas, preferred travelling by canoe. "I had the honor of being paddled home by Mrs. Peter in a new canoe, just launched, and really the motion was delightful, seated on the bottom of the little bark on a few light hemlock bows. I enjoyed my voyage home exceedingly."

By the 19th century settlers were obtaining birchbark or dugout canoes from the local

Indians to participate in a number of annual regattas. With such a demand for water crafts in the area it is no surprise that the first modern canoe had its birthplace in the Kawarthas.

John Stephenson, fed up with portaging a heavy dugout, was inspired to build a lighter more streamlined canoe. And, in 1858 Mr. Stephenson, along with Tom Gordon, manufactured the first plank and rib canoe.

The demand for the "Peterborough Canoe" became world wide. Surveyors travelled the West and North with the aid of a "Peterborough." A Lakefield canoe was allegedly the first to be paddled across the English Channel. Even Roosevelt and Queen Elizabeth paddled a cedar-rib canoe built in the Kawarthas. But it was the given area, where these famous canoe craftsmen obtained their building material that attracted the avid canoeists by the hundreds. In 1907 a tourism brochure advertised this land of "bright water and happy lands" as being "the playground of the Continent."

Now, with Crownland and Provincial Parks preserving some of the best remaining routes in the Kawarthas there still exists secluded pockets of semi-wild lakes and rivers lying in sweet abandonment, where a canoeist can become lost for the weekend in an ancient paddler's paradise.

Outdoor Adventures

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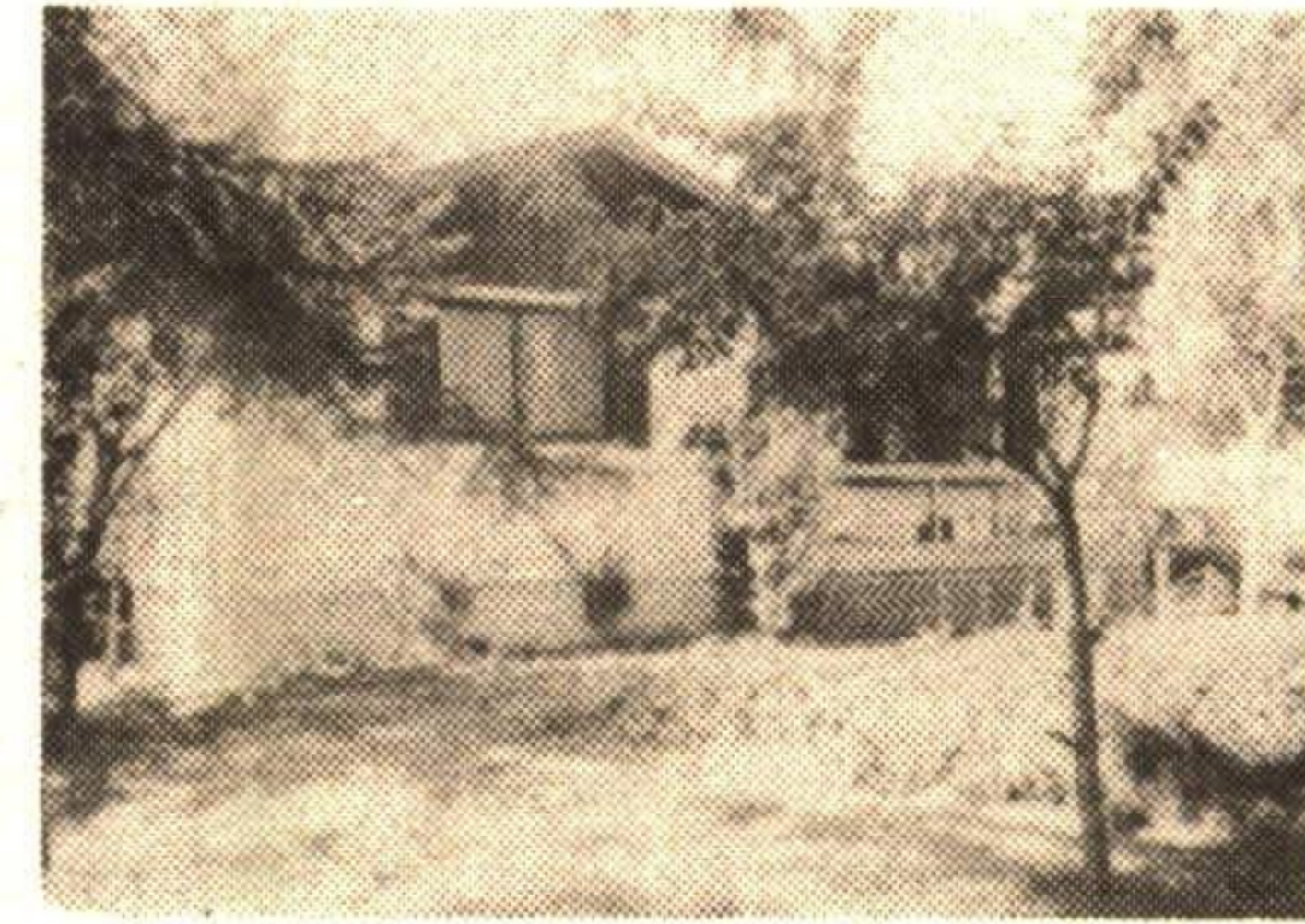
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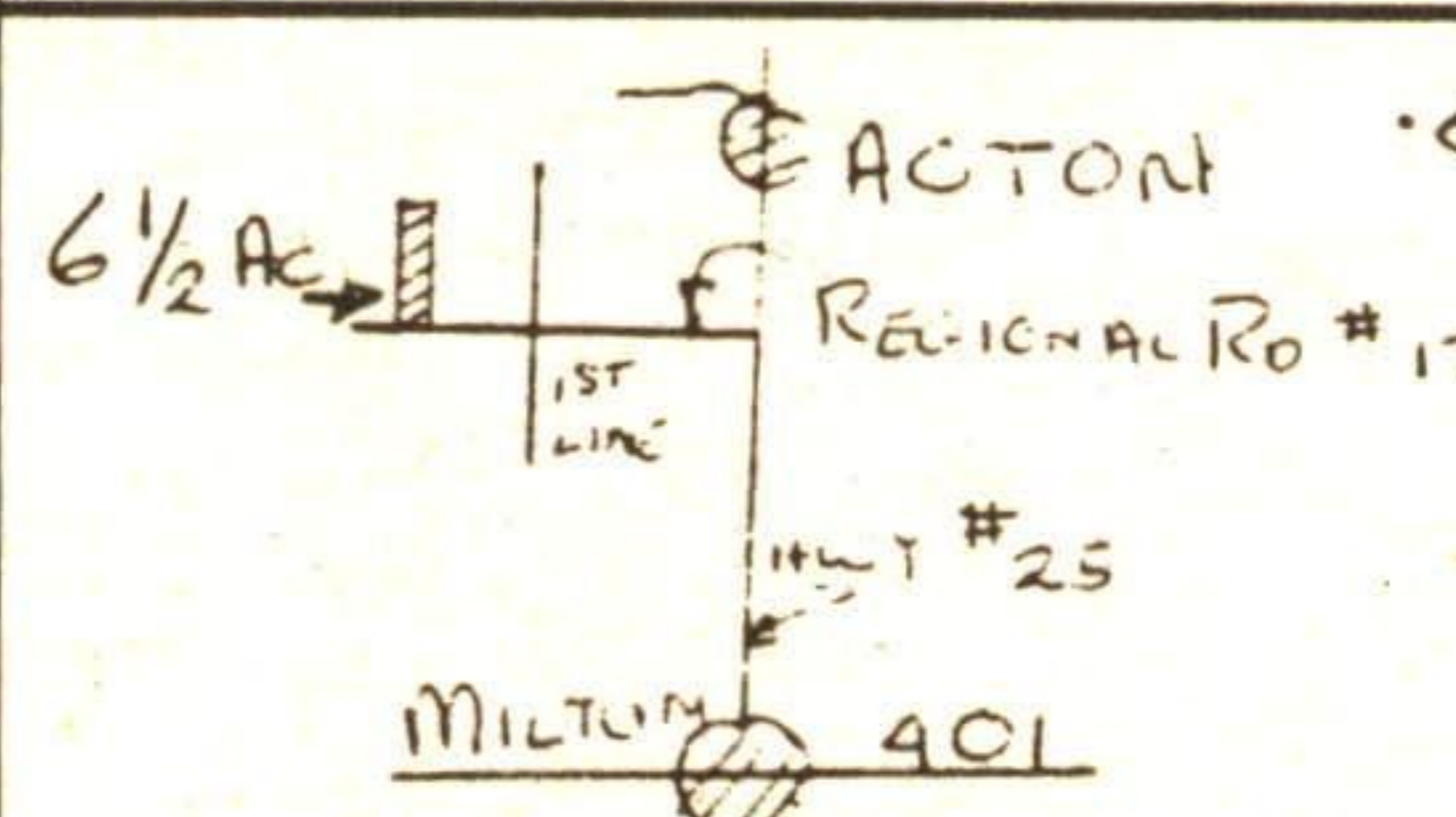
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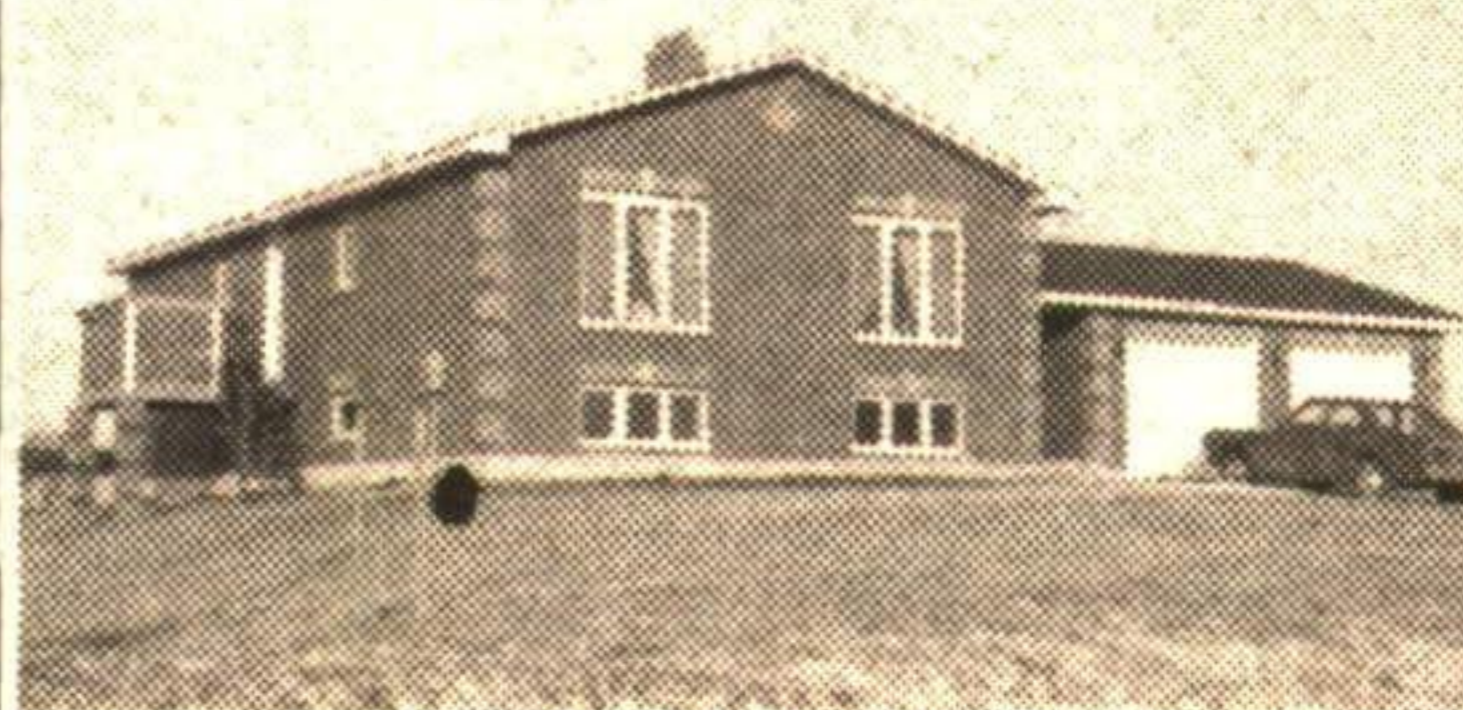
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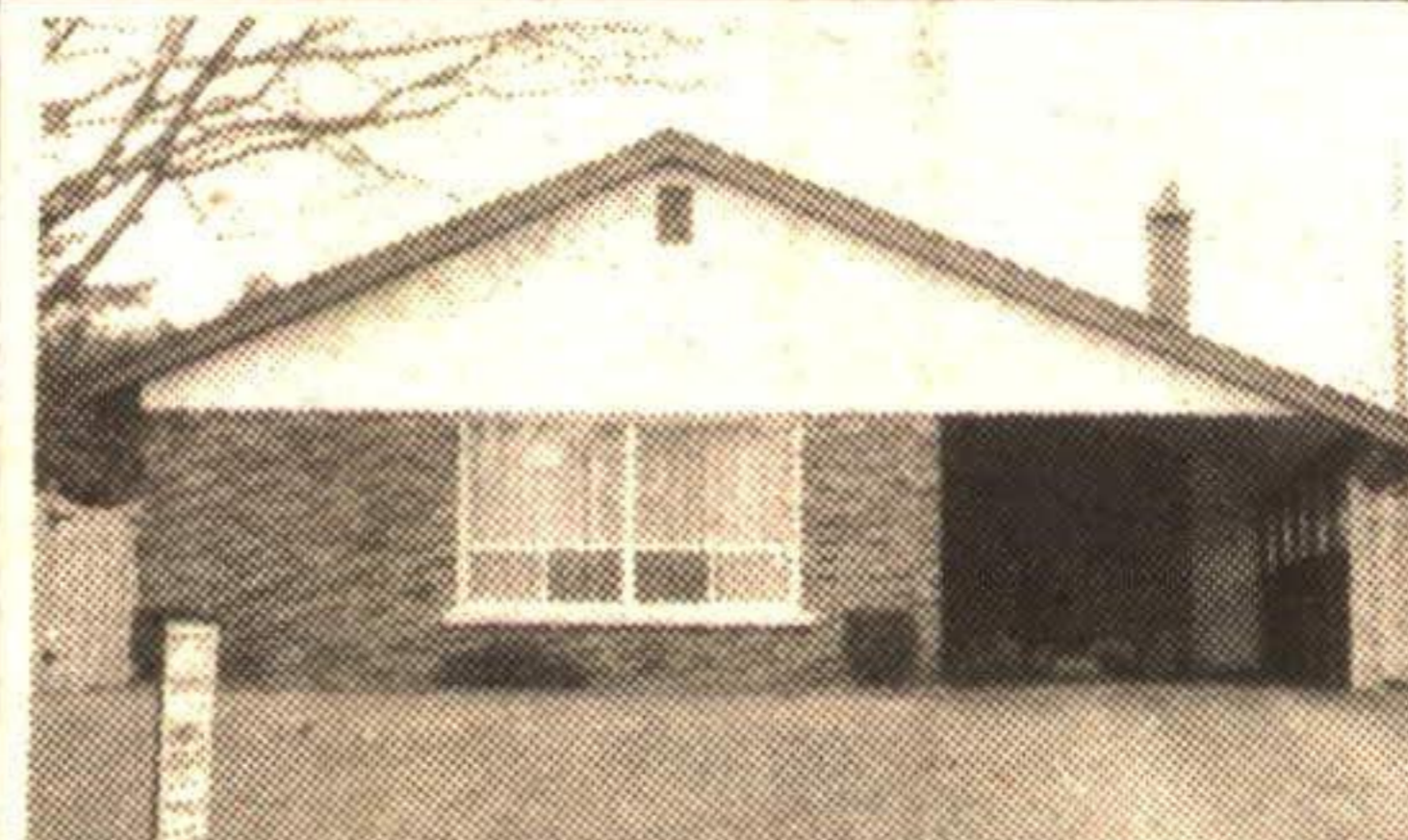
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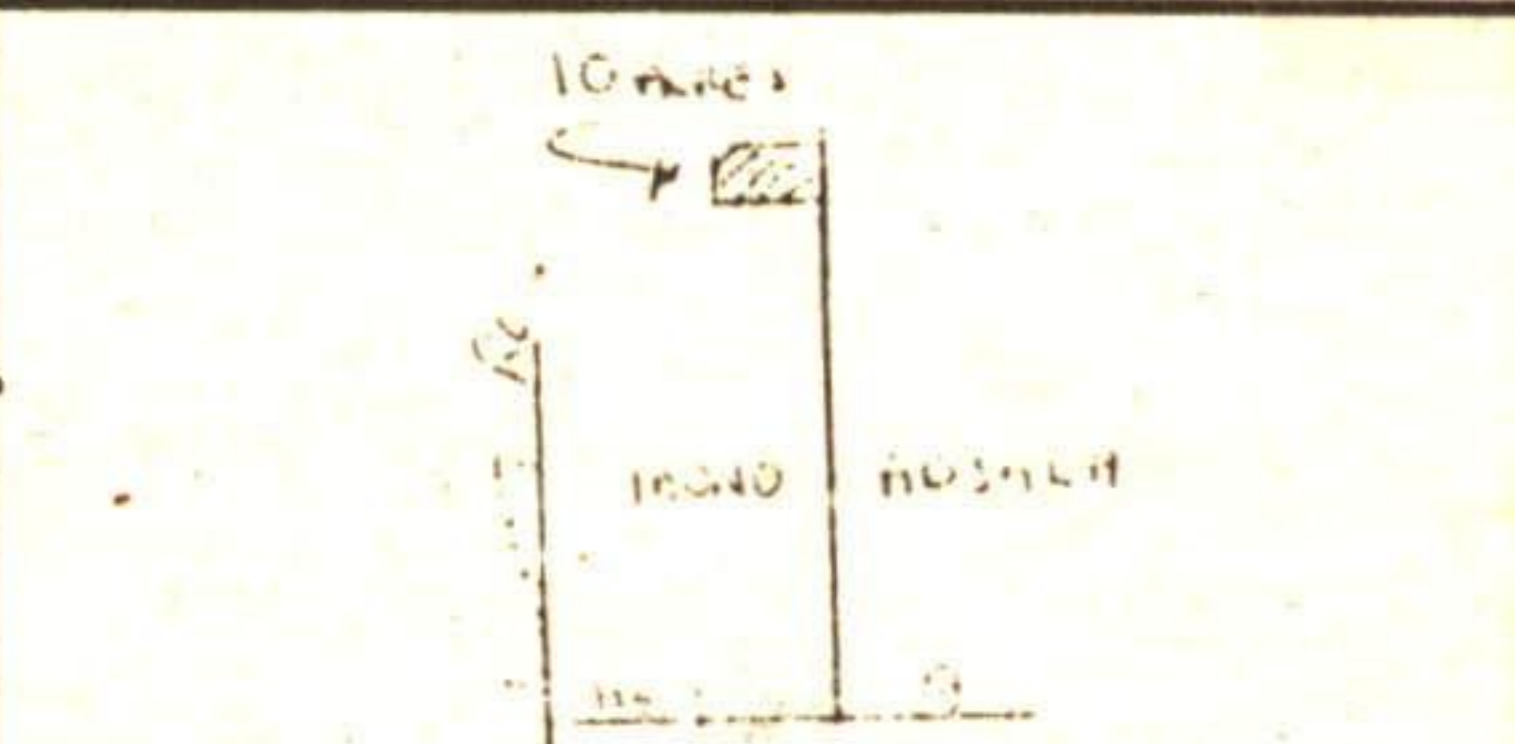
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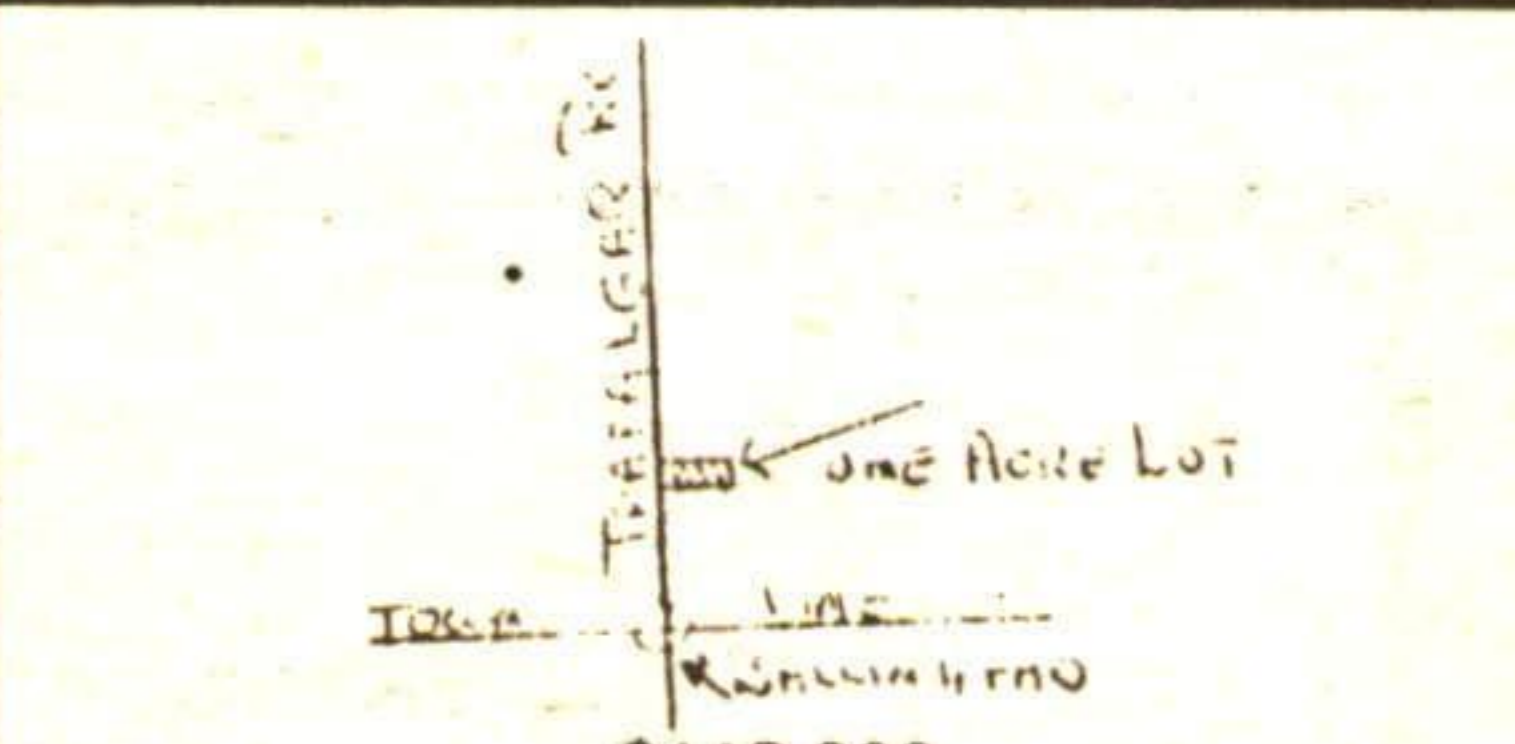
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Hydro workers settle contract

There will be no strike at Halton Hills Hydro as members of the CUPE Local 3387 recently agreed to a two year contract.

According to local president Steve Townsley the 35 unionized employees agreed to a package that included a 5.25 per cent increase this year and 4.75 in the second year of the contract.

"It's a sign of the times," Townsley said. "With the way things are, we're happy. It may be a little more percentage-wise with some of the others in the area."

According to General Manager Gerry Trudell non-unionized employees will receive the same increase.

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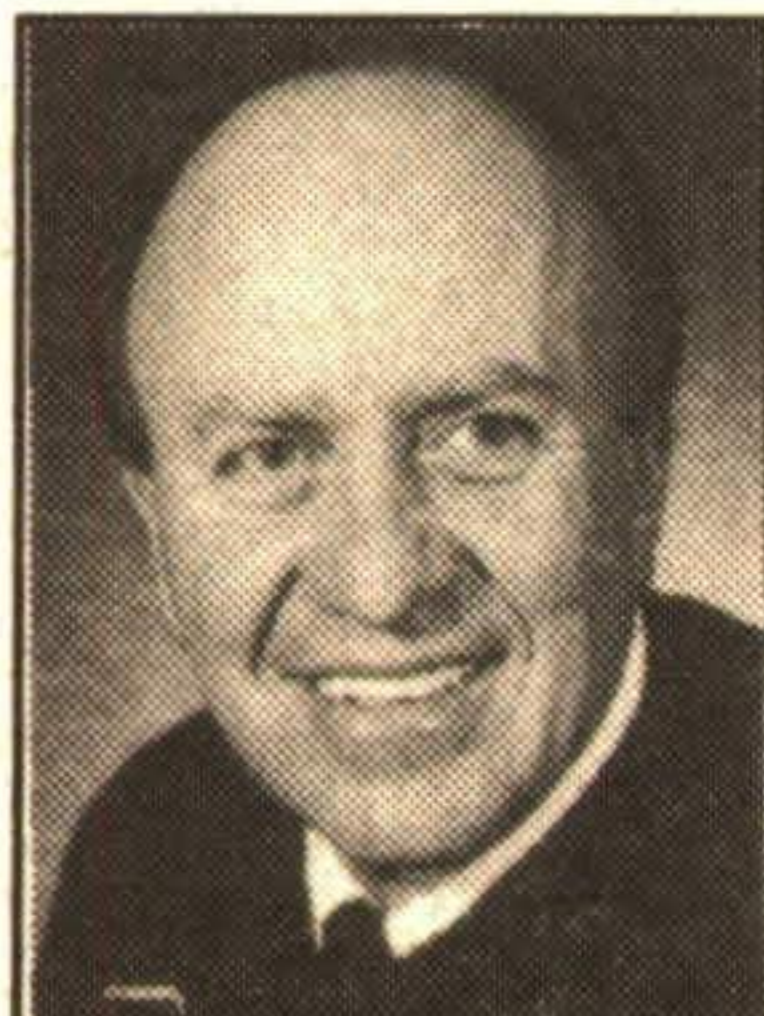
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