

Minister promises quick decision on fate of unfinished hydro corridor

Ontario Energy Minister Reuben Baetz placed the fate of the unfinished parts of the controversial Bruce-Georgetown Ontario Hydro corridor at the top of his priority list after a meeting in Toronto Monday.

"This is my number one priority," the energy minister told members of the Interested Citizens' Group (ICG), which opposes the line, and Ontario Hydro representatives at the Constellation Hotel.

Baetz fell short of committing himself to taking the issue to the provincial cabinet. He indicated he would consider taking the matter to cabinet, after he has given some study to the views he heard Monday, and other information in his

ministry.

Former energy minister James Taylor took the matter to cabinet in December with a negative result.

"I will get back to you with an answer for what we think are the reasons for the answer," Baetz said. He strongly indicated the answer would be "very, very soon", perhaps as soon as next Monday.

The parts of the line which are fully constructed are in, the energy minister said after the meeting. "I think it gets too far down the road to stop once deals have been made with individual owners and the towers are built," Baetz said.

About 50 people—farmers, Ontario Hydro reps, ICG ex-

pers—attended the four-hour meeting.

ICG executive member John Schneider, RR 2 Acton, adopted a wait and see attitude after the meeting. "If it's possible for him (Baetz) to be fair, what he heard will dictate a decision in favor of the people. But if cabinet acts in its usual fashion, we'll have a new minister of energy," Schneider said.

What energy minister Baetz heard were many of the concerns of the ICG about the need for a study of an alternate to the Bruce-Georgetown corridor and the response of Ontario Hydro.

Of special interest was the first appearance in public of an Ontario Hydro systems planner to answer technical

questions about how the Bruce-Georgetown corridor was chosen.

The ICG, however, found difficulties in extracting information from acting director of systems planning Ken McClymont.

"Obviously you're not going to answer," Schneider said to McClymont after the ICG executive spent several words in a bid to pry the systems planner from position concerning the practicality of an alternate route.

Ontario Hydro's 500kV power corridor will, if completed, stretch from the Bruce nuclear generating station, on Lake Huron, across southern Ontario to Milton Station, between Georgetown and Milton.

A section of the line of dot circuit wire is planned to run between Acton and Georgetown. Plans call for the line to travel north-south between the 4th and 6th Lines.

The ICG and many other groups and farmers have opposed the plans for about five years.

An alternate line, which was suggested by the ICG at previous meetings, would take the power from the Bruce, east to Essa, near Lake Simcoe, where it would link with an existing 500 kV corridor. It is shorter than Ontario Hydro's line.

Systems planner McClymont termed such a suggestion as "not practical." The general area from the Bruce to Essa was studied, according to McClymont. "It was a study of many pages. Basically an assessment on maps by people knowledgeable of the area," he said.

The assessment summary was read out by McClymont as to the factors for turning down a line parallel to an existing 115 kV line which passes through the area.

"The most prominent bluffs of the Niagara Escarpment" would have to be crossed, the systems planner read. Continuing, he said the Bruce Trail would have to be crossed, as would 31 miles of class one and two farm land, the headwaters of trout streams would be run into, two private air strips plus the

Collingwood airport would be affected and several houses, barns and sheds would have to be removed.

All those drawbacks are on the existing line, Schneider told McClymont.

Much of the discussion delved into technical data concerning post fault transfers, contingency and security problems of hydro lines.

Most of the discussion was carried on by three or four men, while the rest of the audience sat attentively. Gentle applause greeted the pitch by Bill Mann, R.R. 3, Acton: "I think Ontario Hydro and the government owe something to the people in this area."

Looking at the energy minister, Mann said: "We think this has been bullsozed through." He said everyone knew this, from the premier on down. "Look at this and see where the injustice has been done," continued Mann.

Mann also asked the minister to halt construction of the line.

Milton-Georgetown area farmer David Moffat termed "utterly inadequate" whatever thought went into the joining of the Bruce-Georgetown line near Milton with a second 500kV line from Nanticoke to Pickering.

With an easel, felt pen marker and paper, Moffat demonstrated for the minister the overlapping of the hydro route with proposed and existing roads, including Highway 401, flight paths of 747 Jumbo jets, all within a 70 mile per hour "wind tunnel" and all that on top of Class A land. A total outage of all lines at the junction has not been studied, Moffat contended.

Energy minister Baetz said after the meeting that one cannot help but feel Ontario Hydro tried to put the lines over the least environmental-

ly sensitive area. He said he flew over parts of the area in Halton Hills in a helicopter Monday.

ICG consultant Ken Slater, of Toronto, told systems planner McClymont the best way to avoid all the contingency problems Ontario Hydro forsook, would be not to have the lines go through Milton. A system having a line going elsewhere would be superior, Slater told the systems planner.

McClymont responded by saying the Bruce-Essa alternative was not without merit, and that Ontario Hydro looked at that line, but found it to be inferior to the one eventually chosen by the provincial utility—the one under construction.

Slater contended, based on a study of Ontario Hydro printouts, that a superior way of getting power to Metro would be through three separate corridors rather than two. Three corridors could stand up to more contingencies, Slater said.

Slater continued his attack by claiming the emphasis on stability by Ontario Hydro is not as high as the provincial utility figures it is, because

certain contingencies were not taken into consideration.

In previous meetings the ICG has contended it wants no more than what the people living along the Nanticoke-Pickering Line got—an independent study of the proposed line. If such a study proved the need of the line, and showed it had to go where Ontario Hydro said it must, the ICG has said it would end all objections.

ICG spokesman John Minns, of Glen Williams, asked if the practice of Ontario Hydro buying farms for the line would continue.

Having started buying farms which are adversely affected, the practice will continue, Baetz said.

When Minns pointed out that agreement has to be given from Ontario Hydro's agriculture representatives, Baetz said there are other boards for appeal.

The energy minister even suggested Ontario Ombudsman Arthur Maloney may play a role in such matters, even though the ombudsman feels it is not in his field, Baetz said.



VISITORS TO MOUNTSBERG are able to sample all sorts of maple treats with the start of the maple syrup festival. Cold days still prevent the sap from running, but according to Mountsberg authorities there is still quite a supply of sap to provide all the sweet tooth treats.

Search for fire hall location continues

Finding an ideal location for the planned \$310,000 fire hall in Kilbride is not proving an easy task.

After two months of hard looking, there is still no definite site, according to Warren Corp. Burlington fire chief.

"We are presently looking at several sites in the Kilbride locale," he stated, adding that one of the properties, "still on the list" is a site owned by the Halton Board of Education, housing the former Kilbride school house.

Burlington city staff is also looking at two one-acre sites on opposite sides of Kilbride St. between Pantou St. and Swiss Rd.

The original site on a city-owned property at Kilbride and Frederick Sts. proved to be too small, stated the fire chief.

"There were just too many restrictions on the property to make it a viable location."

There was both a lack of septic tank space and parking facilities, he explained.

Chief Corp said the site needs at least an acre of land in order to provide all necessary facilities for the fire hall.

Once a location is acquired however, the building would get underway "as soon as possible."

Burlington must first get approval from the Niagara Escarpment Commission for a development permit, "which can usually take eight weeks," he noted.

"Once the legal barriers are cleared away, then we may proceed with the tenders for the building."

A pre-engineered metal building will be used for the hall, said Mr. Corp, adding he felt it was the most viable type of building for both the fire department and the community.

"The metal building comes in a variety of colors and I hope to choose some colors that will blend the structure into the community."

"I think it can be accomplished by using browns, and

greens, and not having the building stand out like a sore thumb," he added.

Mr. Corp has made several visits to Milton's new station and stated he was impressed with the fire hall. It is a brown and white metal building.

Should property be found within the next couple of months, construction could get underway by summer, he continued. The building is expected to take four months to assemble.

Lack of a definite site has not prevented enthusiastic community citizens from volunteering to staff the new fire hall.

"We have received already approximately 30 applications and will be staffing the hall with 30 volunteer men," he said.

Kilbride is presently served by both the Milton Fire Department and Burlington. The new fire hall will "make a lot of people breath a sigh of relief," stated the chief.

Travelling distance for both Burlington and Milton is too far to provide totally efficient service, and with the new station in Milton, it is even more travelling, said the chief.

Milton acquires Victoria Park

Victoria Park, now leased to the Town of Milton for the sum of \$1 a year, is likely to become town property in the near future.

"Town lawyers are presently preparing deeds to be presented to Halton Region for the sale of Victoria Park to the Town," stated Campbell Thompson, Milton clerk.

The plot of land previously leased by Halton Region would also include the cenotaph, said Mr. Thompson.

Although a price has not been set, he stated he expected the land to be sold for the sum of \$1 or "a nominal amount."

The deeds are likely to be presented at the end of

March, following a survey of the land expected to take three weeks, he continued.

The sale of Victoria Park follows a regional report made July 8 last year, to Halton Administration Committee from Ernie Reid, chief administrative officer. At that time, it was suggested by Milton that the town acquire both Victoria Park and the parking lot on Hugh St. for a nominal sum.

According to Mr. Thompson, the Town will continue to lease the parking lot, located in the block of regional property. The parking lot is used as a farmers' market on Saturday mornings during the summer.

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