



NIAGARA ESCARPMENT landowners carried signs calling for an end to the NEC.

NEC not expropriating in final plan: McMullin

The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) is hinting about the direction of retreats to be taken from its Preliminary Plan.

A major disclosure came from NEC chairman Ivor McMullin who told 300 people in Terra Cotta's Creditview School last Tuesday (May 2) that the majority of commissioners favor dropping the word "expropriation" from final plans for the Bruce Trail.

When pressed by MPP Julian Reed (L-Halton-Burlington) McMullin went further. The revelation went like this: "Your comments tonight lead me to believe the NEC will no longer consider expropriation as a way out," Reed said.

"Thirteen members of the Commission (which has 16 members) have said they are willing to remove expropriation," said McMullin.

McMullin also indicated the commission will consider permitting some growth around Cheltenham, just as it is allowing around such centres as Alton and Inglewood.

MPP Reed drew loud applause from the gathering—many people also stood in the auditorium and foyer—by taking on what he sees as a threat to the traditional idea of ownership.

"I submit we've got to be very careful. It certainly appears to impose a new perception of landowners which I believe is untenable to most here."

The Liberal MPP also took a swipe at McMullin's contention that if land is to be bought

it will be priced at what the chairman termed fair market value.

Reed said the people at the Terra Cotta meeting have a right to be concerned about what is meant by "fair market value."

"I have the ombudsman investigating acquisitions in the Parkway Belt at much below market values," said the MPP. The government's reason for the low prices is the imposition of a draft plan, he said.

McMullin replied that he did not think he knew of the province in this area buying land at more than what the market value would be. "I don't think Ontario could prove a need to buy land for the Bruce Trail on the Escarpment," the chairman said. Acquisition, McMullin said, will be a long time program.

For most of the meeting McMullin and staff explained step-by-step details of the NEC's proposed plan. A brief question period was followed by an invitation from the NEC to residents to inspect the NEC's maps and talk about their particular concerns.

Ratepayers groups are forming to oppose the NEC, McMullin remarked. He said such groups are encouraged to give opinions to local councils and to the commission.

McMullin took a defensive tack regarding that opposition. "The commission is concerned about opposition," said McMullin. The commission has not exceeded its authority, he said. The preliminary proposals are not

even required by legislation to get public and municipal reaction, he pointed out.

The chairman earmarked some of his comments for the Bruce Trail. He indicated people's concerns that expropriation will be used to assemble land for the trail are perhaps unfounded. It was then he predicted the word "expropriation" would be removed from final plans for the trail.

Thirty-three per cent of the Bruce Trail is already in public hands, disclosed the chairman.

McMullin also defended the commission from questions raised from a flyer which advertised the meeting. McMullin assured listeners their land is not restricted and not frozen. The NEC's rural policy calls for four severances per 100 acres, that is one more than Caledon. I don't think the land is frozen, the chairman said.

Do you want your land controlled by elected representatives or by the appointed NEC?

Eight of the NEC members sit on councils, others have been council members and the balance represents people at large, replied McMullin.

Ron Reed, of Bruce County, and John Mitchell of 10th Line, Esquesing, both said they, in general, support the NEC's efforts to preserve the escarpment.

The meeting learned that the NEC's proposed plan is far from the final word on the escarpment. McMullin said there is a minimum period of three months for municipalities to talk to counties about the escarpment, then another month for counties to approach the commission. Public hearings are to follow, he said.

Even after final plans are adopted by cabinet, amendment to the plan may be made, said the chairman. Also the plans will be reviewed every five years after adoption, he said.

Farm gates closed but Trail still supported

Release of the Niagara Escarpment Commission policy proposals on February 14, and the subsequent formation of opposition landowner groups like NECRA/NENRA has placed the Bruce Trail in an extremely vulnerable position, according to Al Stacey of the Bruce Trail Association.

"We have lost the co-operation of many landowners, particularly in the Grey-Bruce and Grimsby areas who have closed their trail sections. However, he says "notwithstanding the emotionalism and genuine concerns of the appeals of NECRA/NENRA, the majority of our landowners have continued to support our objectives of a continuous footpath along the escarpment."

"There is no question that there are problems implicit in the future planning of this unique resource, the Niagara Escarpment. The Bruce Trail Association fully appreciates the need to incorporate the oft-conflicting land uses—extractive, agriculture, forestry, reescarpment area and the province—but, planning must be done.

In response to NEC proposals and to make clear the position of the Bruce Trail Association on issues that have been paramount in criticisms levelled against it, Stacey says the Association will make the following recommendations to the NEC:

1. That the extent of the Planning area can be reduced in many areas presently included.

2. That the narrow Scarp protection area is critical to the "provision and maintenance of the escarpment as a continuous natural environment;" that no development be permitted on existing lots of record within this limited scarp area and that these be acquired when they come on the market or when the owner requests.

3. The concept of a "66 foot

wide Trailway" is misleading. It should be replaced by a variable and flexible approach only after the negotiated consent of the landowners when securing the route of the footpath. As in the past, the footpath cannot upset the normal land uses of continuous access by the landowner. Any arrangements should ensure the continuance of current land

use easement patterns, keep title in the landowner's hand and assure continued Trail values.

4. That the securing of a continuous footpath be first satisfactory to the landowner and that expropriation be deleted as inappropriate with this policy. The continuation of voluntary co-operation should wherever desired by the landowner, be the means

of securing the trail. Where this is not possible, immediate negotiations by an appropriate government agency to secure the optimum route should be entered into with landowners to end their uncertainty, through mutually negotiated agreements.

5. That landowners along the trail be protected by suitable liability legislation.

'Scarp landowners warm . . .

(Continued from page 1)

being in the 'scarp area, they get you for being in an area where there's wildlife or one which has scenic potential," he said. When a citizen takes something from the state, it's called theft. If the state takes something from a landowner, it's called planning."

White complained that the NEC still doesn't have anybody on its staff with training in agriculture. He said there's no need for the NEC to have a continuous trail from Niagara to Tobermory.

White suggested the NEC tell its planners to go back to the drawing board and that the Wintario piggybank be tapped for the government to buy up land along the trail.

Orangeville area farmer Harry Baker told the meeting that there are now seven different designations on the 120 acres of land he owns. "Some of the best farmland I have is designated forestry," said Baker.

"I paid 55 cents to use the new Spadina subway extension in Toronto the other day," said Baker. "We contribute close to \$200 million in taxes. Why is it these people should be able to come up here and have free use of this trail."

Baker said he honestly thinks the NEC is brainwashed by the number of planners it has.

Angus Ralph, a Tobermory area farmer, had the audience in stitches when he said the government had shown his land as a provincial park on the road maps last year. "Now I'm a provincial park with camping allowed," Ralph reported.

Another Orangeville area farmer, J. McKee, charged that the Bruce Trail Associ-

ation has developed a cancer. "The Bruce Trail Association has cut their own throats, it's not the landowners' said McKee.

McKee said that narrowing of the planning area is not the solution to the problem, complete rejection of the NEC planning and control Act is.

Orangeville Deputy-reeve Lloyd Thompson said he sees some good in the NEC plan and proposals, but emphasized that landowners must be notified by registered mail how their land is to be designated and have the right to a hearing.

Ontario Federation of Agriculture President Peter Hannam reminded the meeting of the need for all landowners along the escarpment to have a common voice and be unanimous in their feelings. "If there's not unanimity, the government will take full advantage of that," Hannam warned.

Hannam said the OFA has established an escarpment action committee with reps from all areas of the province which the escarpment passes through.

"I can't be opposed to good planning, but planning is for people and the people who should get priority are those whose livelihood, investments and life savings are affected by the regulations."

Len Watt of Nottawasaga township, who identified himself as a longtime supporter of the Conservative Party, said he believes that, unless the Davis government listens to landowners' concerns and does something about them, it will no longer be worthy of their support.

Wellington-Dufferin-Peel MPP Jack Johnson, the only Government Member at the meeting, promised to convey

the messages from the meeting back to his caucus and the Cabinet. Johnson said he believes the area covered by the plan could be drastically reduced in size. He also said he believes strongly in local autonomy and that more decisions should be left with local governments.

Longtime Liberal MPP for Bruce, Eddie Sargent, told the meeting the NEC has so much power that even Premier Davis can't do anything about it. "I've never seen so much injustice and dictatorship in my career than from the NEC," he said.

"75 per cent of the escarpment is in Grey and Bruce, yet there are only four reps from that area on the NEC and they're all appointed Tory hacks," Sargent charged.

Sargent said that most Government members themselves can't believe what's going on. "Do we have to take 5,000 tractors down and paralyze Toronto for a day to show Davis that we mean business?" he asked.

Sargent was ready to offer the meeting two suggestions, first, that Davis be asked to abolish Bill 129 and, second, that the premier set up a Royal Commission, when he was roundly booed halfway

through the second. Sargent said he'd better go back to the first one and was cheered again.

Mel Swart, an NDP member from the Niagara peninsula, said his party believes there should be a continuous Bruce Trail. "We have some obligation to our neighbors and future societies," he said.

However, he criticized the NEC for holding closed meetings and said it should be phased out.

McKessock, the final speaker on the platform, said the proposal to have a continuous Bruce Trail caused all the problem in the first place. He said all reference to expropriation should be removed from the Bill.

The Grey MPP said there are only 10 MPPs in the house affected, but added he feels his Private Member's Bill will pass without any trouble.

Shepherd read a letter from Premier Davis which he said was delivered to him by courier that day. Davis assured NECA the government wants to know its concerns, but added the final decision will rest with the elected members of the Legislature.

Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed was among elected representatives at the meeting.

NEC land control may be cut in half

The Province intends to cut the amount of land controlled by the Niagara Escarpment Commission by more than 50 per cent, a source at Queen's Park announced last week.

The reduction comes at a time when NEC proposals have aroused bitter opposition from landowners and farmers (See articles elsewhere in this issue.)

A source at Queen's Park has said the land to be taken from the commission's wing will be transferred to the 55 municipalities in the escarpment planning area. However, the municipalities will be expected to follow the objectives of the Niagara Escarpment Act.

The commission, with headquarters at Georgetown, now controls about 1.3 million acres along the 450 mile stretch of escarpment from Queenston to Tobermory. Property owners have complained the commission has exceeded its authority with plans for control over land as much as 15 miles from the lip of the escarpment.

Although there have been cries to abolish the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Premier Davis has said it

would be irresponsible to do away with it. The Government has long sought to protect the escarpment from developments and gravel pits and quarries.

The push to abolish escarpment controls and the commission is an entirely different tune than was sung before the Commission was formed. Then environmentalists and others were clamoring for protection for the escarpment.

When the Government decided to form the commission there was almost total approval from newspapers and environmentalists along the route. However, over the years support for the commission's mandate has deteriorated when controls have been implemented. Both land owners and developers have opposed having the commission scrutinize their plans for developments.

Milton Lions Club has donated \$150 to the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded, to help finance transportation to a day camp for handicapped children.

No payment

Ontario Hydro is arousing the ire of district landowners along the route of the proposed Bruce to Milton hydro transmission corridor by demanding withdrawal from the Interested Citizens Group (ICG) before paying for land.

The ICG is fighting the proposed 500 kV corridor, asking for an independent study.

Marie Anderson, who owns part of the northeast half of Lot 6, Erin Township, has sent Ontario Hydro a lawyer's letter demanding 100 per cent payment for land as per an agreement settled in November of last year.

She says representatives of Hydro told her she would receive no payment until she withdrew from the Interested Citizens Group.

Gordon Chapman, an Acton lawyer, has been retained and in a letter to Ontario Hydro's Acton office, noted that offers made under the Expropriations Act must be unconditional and demanding payment.

John Schneider, a co-chairman of the ICG, says this is not the first time Hydro has tried to damage their group with such tactics. He advises land owners along the route of the proposed corridor to divulge the "dirty tricks" played on them by the utility.

Schneider says the ICG will continue to fight the proposed corridor until landowners receive the same consideration other citizens along hydro routes have received—i.e. an independent study. The ICG maintains Ontario Hydro is spending tens of millions of dollars taking a route from Bruce to Milton through Halton Hills, millions of which could be saved by taking a shorter, less environmentally sensitive route to Essa, near Camp Borden, from the Bruce nuclear station.

—The Halton Museum at Kelso is open weekends, 1 to 5.30 as well as weekdays 9 to 5 for the summer months.

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