

Privatization could be tricky, local hydro head warns

By BRAD REAUME

The Champion

Privatization of electrical utilities is not necessarily good for consumers, according to Don Thorne, manager of the Milton Hydro-Electric Commission.

The bulk buying of electricity by municipalities keeps the cost of power low for all customers, and that system should be maintained in any move to restructure electrical utilities in Ontario, said Mr. Thorne.

The Municipal Electric Association (MEA) has recently released what it characterizes as a customer-driven blueprint for reform, which calls for the break-up of the Ontario Hydro monopoly.

Mr. Thorne supports competition through customer choice, but warns the process should be carefully considered after a restructuring of the industry, because a wrong step could have a major impact.

"People confuse privatization with increased competition," Mr. Thorne said. "If we sold Milton Hydro into private hands tomorrow would there be added competition? No, Milton Hydro would still have a monopoly on the distribution of power in the municipality."

The MEA reform recommend separating Ontario Hydro's generating, transmitting and distribution arms, as well as introducing competition in the generating sector. Publicly owned companies would do the transmission and distribution of power.

Mr. Thorne said that the natural monopoly of power generation has been broken by new technology, which allows much smaller generators to operate on a competitive basis with giant stations.

"Each station at Darlington can generate about 1,000 megawatts, however technology now exists for plants generating as little as 50 megawatts of power to do so competitively with the large plants."

A town like Milton could be run by a 100 megawatt plant.

Generating electricity represents about 70 per cent of its cost, with transmission and distribution each accounting for about 15 per cent. The

monopoly on transmission and distribution exists because of the cost of duplicating transformers and wires.

The issue of privatization generating becomes clouded because of an oversupply of electricity, due to lower than expected growth of demand in the past few years, according to Mr. Thorne.

The over-abundant generating capacity is owned by the public. Allowing private generators to produce before that capacity is filled might mean they can undercut the monopoly, thus risking public money, Mr. Thorne warned. He said demand must be allowed to catch-up with supply before the generating monopoly is

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Dickie gets nod for charity work...

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She takes the time to visit lonely, shut-in people in the Victorian Order of Nurses' Friendly Visitor Program and has often been seen walking down the stage of charity fashion shows.

"I love doing things for other people," she said.

Mrs. Deumer and her husband Boyke moved to Campbellville in 1960 and have lived there ever since.

"We fell in love with it right away," Mrs. Deumer recalled. She is also kept busy as vice-president of the Nipissing Road

steel fabricating business Solex Ltd., which she operates with her husband.

The ambitious couple came to Canada with only their education and \$50 in their pockets, she said.

"We were dead set to make a contribution to this country."

Local real estate agent Betty Ingle and Scott Early, operator of J. Scott Early Funeral Home, have also been nominated for 1995 Citizen of the Year.

The award will be presented at a gala evening at Halton Hills Place Saturday, Apr. 13.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

FEDERAL PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION OF OAKVILLE - MILTON

Wednesday, April 3, 1996

Registration: 7:15 p.m.

Meeting: 8:00 p.m.

Country Squire Inn, 165 Country Squire Lane, (QEW at Dorval Drive) Oakville, Ontario

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