

Man driven crazy by trains refuses to pay taxes

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

Chris Steenhof knows he's on track for a collision with Town Hall.

The Campbellville man has refused to pay his property taxes because of the unbearable noise of as many as a dozen fully-loaded freight trains passing by night and day.

He blames the Town for not being firm with the rail companies and obtaining cease and desist orders for the whistle blowing. Trains blow their whistles as they approach crossings that don't have lights and gate mechanisms.

He fully expects the Town to try to evict him for non-payment of taxes at some future date and he says he will buy guard dogs and put up

barbed wire if necessary.

Mr. Steenhof lives in the country, three houses from what was for many years a disused section of railway. For most of his 21 years in Campbellville he said he and his family enjoyed the tranquillity of the rural area. In 1995 that all changed when the railway was improved and more than a dozen trains a day began to traverse the area.

According to Mr. Steenhof, the noise is unbearable, especially at night when an average of five trains pass nearby. Not only do the large freights of 80 to 100 cars rumble the earth as they pass, they blast their horns as they approach level crossings.

Mr. Steenhof appealed his 1996 property tax assessment and won a 30 per cent reduction due

to the noise of the trains. Despite it being the first time in Ontario that property taxes were reduced because of railway noise, Mr. Steenhof said he's not satisfied and will appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. He is hoping to have his property taxes reduced to zero.

"Everybody in the area is appealing their taxes," said Mr. Steenhof, who doesn't know the physical distance in which the noise affects people.

"Other people living near the tracks who will have their appeals heard next year have been told they will get a 30 per cent reduction automatically."

In addition to his non-payment of taxes, Mr. Steenhof said he has invoiced the Town for \$40,000 he paid to have sound-proofing work

done to several rooms in his home. He has reduced the amount of the debt by the amount of his property taxes. While the Town is adding interest and penalty payments to his 1996 taxes, he is doing the same to his \$40,000 bill.

"I will not pay my taxes until this condition is resolved," he said. "The appeal deadline for 1997 is January 10, but most people in the area haven't received their tax assessment yet."

Mr. Steenhof said the sound-proofing work didn't have much affect on the problem largely because the aluminum siding on his house acts as a conductor for the sound.

"The number of trains gradually grew. It's a horrible situation. The new horns are so loud you would not believe it," he said. "I have to take sleeping pills at night in order to get any sleep."

Youth charged in library vandalism

A 14-year-old Milton youth didn't have the happiest of holidays after being charged with mischief under \$5,000 on Christmas Eve.

The local boy was charged in connection with vandalism last month at the Milton Public Library, where a stained-glass window erected in memory of a beloved former colleague was destroyed by a 50-pound rock.

As a result of witness interviews and ongoing investigations, Milton's Street Crime Unit arrested a youth at approximately 3 p.m. Tuesday. In addition to mischief, the boy faces a charge of breach of probation.

He will appear in Milton youth court January 17 at 10 a.m.

Meanwhile, library patrons have made generous donations to help cover the cost of the window. It is expected to be replaced early in the new year.



PUBLIC NOTICE

MILTON HYDRO-ELECTRIC COMMISSION 1997 MONTHLY RATES

Milton Hydro has reduced its annual budgets by almost \$1 million. This reduction is reflected in lower customer rates for 1997.

RESIDENTIAL

Basic Service Charge \$6.95/month

Energy Charge

All kWh at 7.44¢/kWh

RESIDENTIAL TIME-OF-USE (Optional)

Basic Service Charge with AMR \$12.45/month

Energy Charge

WINTER PERIOD (OCT. 1-MAR. 31)

Peak 12.20¢/kWh
Off Peak 3.45¢/kWh

SUMMER PERIOD (APR. 1-SEPT. 30)

Peak 9.94¢/kWh
Off-Peak 2.37¢/kWh

GENERAL SERVICE (0-1000 kW)

Basic Service Charge \$6.95/month

Energy Charges

First 12,500 kWh 7.50¢/kWh
Next 2,100,000 kWh 5.54¢/kWh
Balance 3.58¢/kWh

Demand Charges*

First 50 kW No Charge
Balance \$4.90/kW

GENERAL SERVICE TIME-OF-USE (0-1000kW) (Optional)

Basic Service Charge with AMR \$12.45/month

WINTER PERIOD (OCT. 1-MAR. 31)

Peak Period Demand Charges*

0-50kW No Charge
Balance \$5.80/kW

Peak Period Energy Charges

First 6,875 kWh 13.13¢/kWh
Next 1,040,000 kWh 8.88¢/kWh
Balance 4.69¢/kWh

Off-Peak Period Energy Charges**

All kWh 3.45¢/kWh

SUMMER PERIOD (APR. 1-SEPT. 30)

Peak Period Demand Charges*

0-50kW No Charge
Balance \$4.55/kW

Peak Period Energy Charges

First 6,875 kWh 10.71¢/kWh
Next 1,040,000 kWh 7.37¢/kWh
Balance 4.06¢/kWh

Off-Peak Period Charges**

All kWh 2.37¢/kWh

*Minimum Demand Charge 60¢/kW (applied to maximum demand in excess of 50kW in the previous eleven months).

**Facility Charge 60¢/kW (applied to off-peak demand in excess of peak period demand)

All bills are subject to a 5% charge after the due date.⁹
Other specific information is available on request.

MILTON HYDRO-ELECTRIC COMMISSION

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