

Once bitten, twice shy?

Tiny Township council is reluctant to follow the recommendation of the Ministry of Environment to initiate a clean-up program of the stream outletting at Nottawaga Beach. Councillor Ron

Hamelin says, the township had "their knuckles rapped" by the Ministry about a year ago for doing reclamation work on a creek at Kettle's Beach. "They told us to keep our hands off the creeks,

because it is the Ministry's jurisdiction," said Hamelin.

Ministry staff conducted a field investigation and Water Quality Survey of the stream this summer, and recommended that

the staff of Tiny Township or the residents in the area conduct the clean-up.

Debris should be removed from the banks and stream bed through the build-up area in the lower reach of the

stream, the report recommended. Deputy-reeve John Lackie said, the

township usually becomes involved in stream maintenance if the Roads Department feels there is a problem with roads washing out.

Any clean-up would be done on private property and should have the consent of the ratepayers. Lackie added.

Queen's Park report

BY AL McLEAN,
MPP SIMCOE EAST

The recently announced Hydro rate increases demonstrate the Ontario Government's commitment to hold the line on cost increases.

At the beginning of the year, Ontario Hydro proposed a rate increase of 13.9 percent. The Ontario Minister of Energy, the Hon. Robert Welch, submitted this proposal to the Province's Energy Board, the committee that oversees the cost of energy to consumers.

In August, the Ontario Energy Board rejected Hydro's demand for 13.9 percent and recommended that increases be held to 8.8 percent.

The following month, when the Provincial restraint program was introduced, the Minister of Energy told Hydro to take another look at their budget and their proposed rate increase.

As a result of the restraint program, and the recommendations of the Ontario Energy Board, Hydro re-evaluated its rate changes downwards. For the average consumer, Hydro rates will increase 8.4 percent rather than the originally proposed 13.9.

It's worth comparing Ontario's record in holding down energy costs with the experience of other governments. For example, the Federal Government's restraint program exempts all energy costs. This means the cost of oil and gas will continue to climb well beyond 6 and 5.

Despite the 8.4 percent rate increase, Ontario Hydro's rate structure is competitive, especially when compared to the price of electricity in many of the American States.

The reduction of Hydro rate increases from 13.9 to 8.4 percent represents a real saving of approximately \$165 million to electricity users.

Hydro rates are only one example of how the Ontario Progressive Conservative Government is getting tough with government spending. Over the past five years we have kept the size of the public service under control.

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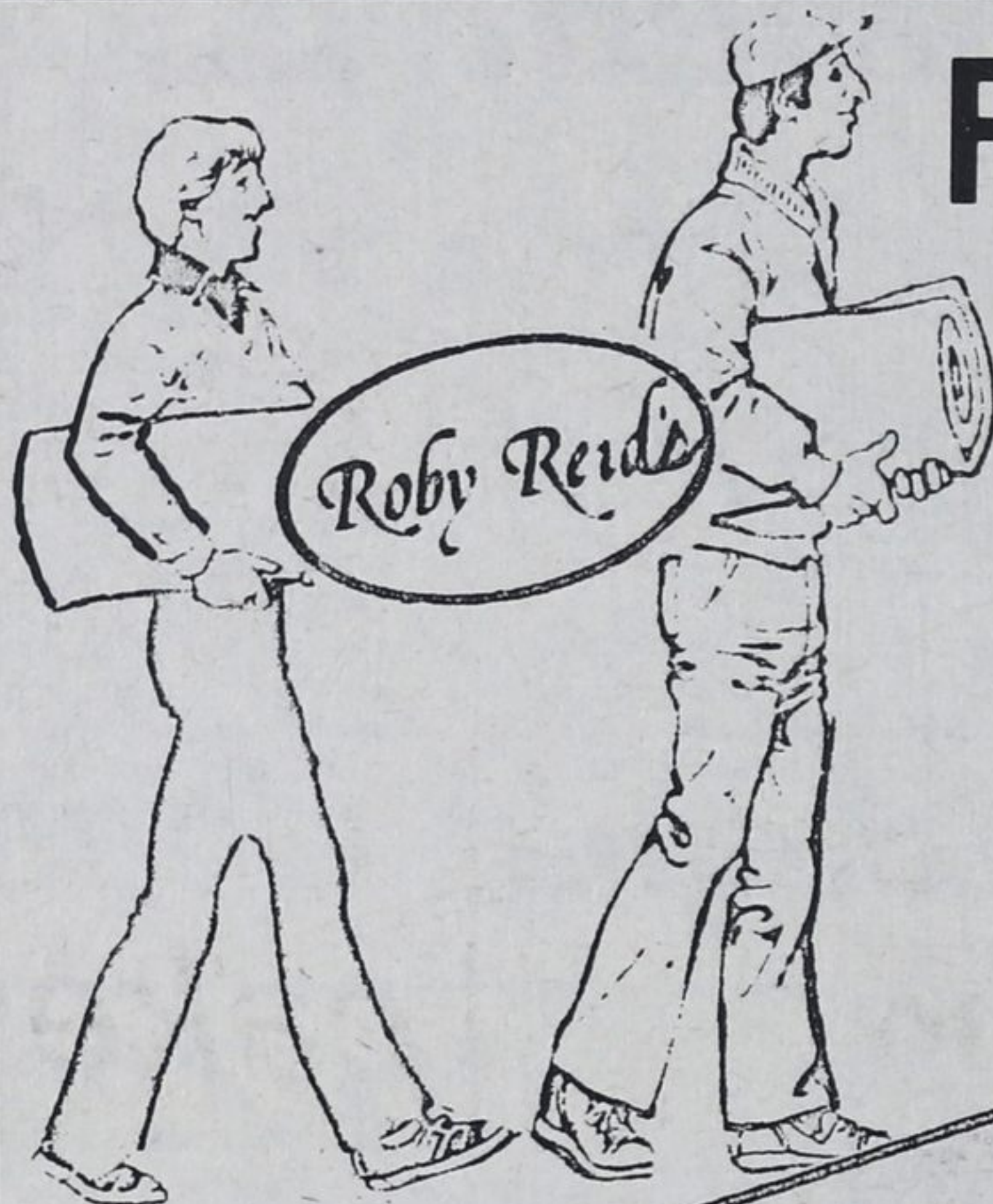
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