

Despite opposition, uranium deal approved

By ALF STONG
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The Cabinet has approved a \$7.3 billion Ontario Hydro uranium deal, despite strong opposition from the Liberal and New Democratic Parties.

Approval of the deal means Hydro has contracted for almost 200 million pounds of uranium to fuel five nuclear power stations, beginning in 1980 and ending in 2020.

The Liberals wanted the contracts with the two mining companies — Denison and Preston — to be renegotiated, and the NDP were in favour of the Government buying out Denison Mines, one of the Elliot Lake companies.

The Liberals have urged the Energy Minister to stop construction of sections of a major Hydro transmission line, and to create a procedure for acquiring such corridors "which is fair and understandable and which will prevent this tragedy from ever happening again".

(A recent "Toronto Star" article indicated

Land can't be farmed

The ministry of agriculture and food would not support developing a 7.7 acre parcel on Keele Street north of Maple for industry because it was prime agricultural land.

But the regional planning committee last week voted for the industrial building after hearing that the land could not be farmed.

The pie-shaped parcel lies between Keele Street and the CN track north of the Teston Road. The owner, Tony Batistella, who farms the adjoining lot on the other side of the track, had tried farming the parcel and found it impossible, said planning consultant Terry Kelly.

He could not get water on it for his cattle, and the ground was too uneven for farm machinery.

So he wanted to use it for his other business, construction, to build an office, shop and yard.

The planning committee overruled the staff and recommended the industrial use.

A cemetery lies immediately north of the property.

Fire damages truck centre

Fire raged through the Richvale Truck Centre at 9076 Yonge Street in the early hours of Friday morning causing \$70,000 damage to the building and contents.

Richmond Hill Fire Department brought the blaze under control before flames reached the gas pumps at the front of the building.

The cause of the fire is not known at this time, and is still being investigated by the Fire Marshal's Office.

that the province moved the corridor 15 miles at an extra cost of \$100 million to Ontario taxpayers, because the original line would have sliced through lands held by many prominent people, some of them Conservative supporters.

Another group, the Interested Citizens Group, has spent \$400,000 in an unsuccessful attempt to get an independent hearing on another Hydro line now under construction between the Bruce Generating Station on Lake Huron and a switching station at Milton.)

All of this is enough to make one wonder about the circumstances which contributed to the moving of that same hydro corridor from King Township, where there is already an existing right-of-way, to the Langstaff area where hundreds of homes and jobs were threatened with extinction.

James Taylor, who resigned as Energy Minister January 20, has compared Hydro with the Bermuda Triangle, saying "If you present a reasonable thought or

directive, it gets sucked into the system and never comes out".

He maintains that although Hydro is supposed to be answerable to the Legislature, the Energy Minister "has all the responsibility, but no authority".

Hydro has become the country's largest non-financial public or private corporation in terms of total assets, which now stand at \$11.3 billion.

During the coming fiscal year, Ontario's hospitals will receive only \$87 million in new

financing from the Province, according to the Minister of Health. This increase, from \$1.852 billion to \$1.939 billion — will be the smallest in dollars since 1973.

The rise of 4.5 per cent compares with 7.09 per cent last year and an annual average of 14.3 per cent from 1970 to 1977. A spokesman for one hospital compared the increase with the current inflation rate of 9.1 per cent and warned that cuts in services will be inevitable.

Replying to Questions,

the Government has confirmed that more than six million gallons of waste oil containing varying concentrations of a toxic chemical are being spread on dirt roads throughout Ontario each year to control dust.

The road oil has been found to contain polychlorinated biphenyls — blamed for birth defects, nerve and liver disorders or cancer when eaten or absorbed.

There is concern that the PCBs in the oil will eventually be leached out by the weather, find their way into the drainage

system and eventually into rivers, lakes and streams. In Ontario, the PCBs have been found in various Great Lake fish above the Province's acceptable level for consumption of two parts per million.

Last year, the Ministry of the Environment issued a number of health bulletins warning "women who are pregnant, nursing mothers and young children . . . not to consume any of the fish" caught in certain lakes and rivers because of high levels of PCBs.

The Ontario Government plans to lift a seven-year-old ban on the sale of Crown land for cottages, but there's disagreement in the Cabinet about whether foreigners should be allowed to buy. The Minister for Northern Affairs has said that he agrees with what the Cabinet has so far decided in principle — that sales should be restricted to Canadians. However, the Minister of Natural Resources, whose Ministry will make the changes in regulations later this year, has said that non-

Canadians should be allowed to buy cottage land in the North. He points out that restricting the sale of Crown land in Northern Ontario to Canadians would not stop them from selling in turn to foreigners.

Indications are that the long disputed Family Law Reform Act will lead to considerable further debate before final approval. Both Opposition Parties have approved a number of amendments, which they intend to have debated in the legislature.

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