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1. The Reith lectures (news275.8) are continuing to enthral. Lecture 2 (16 June) argues from an Aristotelian perspective for including moral values in politics. When questioned, Prof Sandel said you had to buy the Aristotelian approach; you couldn't have his conclusions without it. I disagree. I see nothing absolute, or rationally inevitable, about the Aristotelian approach to moral philosophy, though it raises nice questions and deserves thinking through. I prefer a more utilitarian approach, which might arrive at very similar outcomes. The lecturer discusses things as important as the purpose of marriage, yet the ideas may also be applicable to the purpose of powerlines and other public goods, and to the ethics of involuntary imposition of EMFs. So please forgive my indulgence here in Revolt's columns!
2. The Dermot Finnigan story regarding NG's 400kV line at Sale, Manchester is taking another turn. He reports new evidence of procedural error in failing to give due notice for moving a pylon (APPENDIX A). See also news266, 264, 250 etc. (site search the revolt site for many more). Several matters seemed to have been resolved, albeit adversely for Dermot, but questions of procedural irregularities remained in dialogue between Dermot's agents and the government department (BERR/DECC). The case is not yet closed.
3. The Dermot Finnigan case has run for years and left him and his family devastated by severe and uncompensated loss of property value. A pylon was moved, with questions of illegality and breach of planning permission, from a position virtually out of sight of Dermot's house to a position on high ground with over-bearing visual impact. The new position of the conductors running to the north cut very close to the corner of Dermot's land, with questions of oversail and safety clearance, and questions of wayleave rights. Further, two semi-detached houses were to be demolished under planning permission for the pylon move in the green belt area, but they have been retained and occupied beside the new pylon, with probably very high EMF exposure.
4. British Columbia, Canada, government efforts to direct a buy-out of homes affected by a new powerline seem to be in chaos. The attorney general has been unseated and the new double 230kV line, installed to replace an existing line at Tsawwassen, B.C., might have been buried for less cost (APPENDIX B). A precedent of a power company buying out homes at market price for concerns about EMFs dates back to 1989 in Vancouver; the outcome was revealed this year (APPENDIX C). Cecil Dunn, co-chair of objectors' group TRAHVOL, comments on both buy-outs at Appendix D.

See also news241.2 and its Appendix B. The lesson for power companies in any country is to listen to the objectors and to seek reasonable compromise up-front.

5. The third Reith lecture 23-6-09 on genetic engineering was appropriately held at the Centre for Life in Newcastle. Discussion of drugs and genetics in sport touched some of my experience in sports governance. Prof Sandel argued eloquently as ever for moral considerations, not on a religious basis but in terms of positive values in society such as humility and solidarity being enriched by exposure to chance rather than having genetically engineered designer children. It sounds like utilitarian ethics again, arguing for chance not choice, in some things. But in what things? His discriminator is health: accepting genetic engineering for health purposes but not for competitive advantage. It's a fuzzy boundary. The WHO defines health as "*a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*". In that sense there surely are health effects of powerlines imposed on residents, and a moral impact on individuals and on society to consider.

6. Wind turbines on pylons? New vertical-axis designs are proposed in France:
<http://encoreheureux.org/site4/design/wind-it>

7. Europacables held a webinar event (!) 24-6-09 on underground cables. Caroline Paterson kindly passed on a powerpoint presentation (available on request) which outlines the key points to date, covering XLPE and HVDC, environmental issues and broad cost comparisons, with the latest European examples.

APPENDIX A report from Dermot Finnigan

Dermot writes 21-6-09:

There is very new evidence that National Grid breached the Electricity Act. They failed to publicise the construction of the new line in the local press or on street furniture. The Electricity Act clearly states they must and the contents of the notice must give the contact details of the Secretary of State to enable the public to write to comment or complain. That is a fundamental right under the Act. It is particularly relevant in my case as NG built the line in the wrong place contrary to the certified plans issued by the Secretary of State and furthermore the conditions attached to the Section 37 consent were not met either.

APPENDIX B Tsawwassen 2009 buy-out of homes

Sourced from articles copyright to The Province:

Issues of Deltaport, roads, power lines won't go away
BY BRIAN LEWIS, THE PROVINCE JUNE 8, 2009

Hydro power lines still spark outrage
Cost of burying system about equal to losses on home-buyout program

BY IAN AUSTIN, THE PROVINCE JUNE 8, 2009

B.C. Hydro now confirms that its government-ordered home buyout program will cost an estimated \$62 million. Some 104 of the owners with the powerlines right-of-way on their land have accepted it. Homeowners outside the right-of-way are not included.

Hydro projects a bottom-line loss of \$23 million after it resells the homes and covers its expenses. Tsawwassen Residents Against High Voltage Overhead Lines (TRAHVOL) estimated a total net cost of \$17 million to bury the lines, B.C. Transmission Corp. estimated \$24 million and the B.C. government estimated \$40 million.

APPENDIX C Vancouver 1989 precedent on power company buy out of homes

The following is extracted from:
13 Jan 2009 Page A7 PETE McMARTIN VANCOUVER SUN
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Alex Beleski, now of Surrey, emailed me. Beleski, formerly with BC Hydro's property division and now retired, wrote to say a precedent had been set long ago in 1989 on Vancouver Island.

"You may be interested in learning," Beleski wrote, "that BC Hydro set a precedent in 1989 for buying properties along the edge of a right-of-way in Courtenay. I am a retired Hydro real estate appraiser who was responsible in disposing the 58 properties purchased. Briefly, the circumstances were that Hydro was adding a second high-voltage line next to an existing one within a 600-foot right-of-way which paralleled these residential properties. Problem was that the full right-of-way was only cleared halfway so that the residents used the uncleared parts as though it was an extension of their properties."

It was the first time a public utility anywhere in North America had offered a buyout over electromagnetic field concerns.

The proposed increase of a modest transmission line to almost double the capacity; sudden complaints from previously silent homeowners of headaches and concerns of increased cancer risk. As the Tsawwassenites had, the neighbourhood committee in Courtenay produced a report by a New York researcher who suggested there was a possible link between EMFs and childhood cancers. As in the Tsawwassen case, government authorities produced reports and testimony contradicting that claim, and stating there was no empirical evidence linking EMFs to cancers or sicknesses of any kind.

A spokesman at BC Hydro confirmed Beleski's story, though he had got the number of homes acquired slightly wrong. In total, 59 homes were acquired at full market value, with BC Hydro paying all legal and moving costs.

BC Hydro also resold every single one of them, with a total aggregate loss of \$ 1.1 million.

Hydro had bought the homes, Beleski wrote, to "appease" the concerns of the homeowners, although, as he wrote in his email, of the 58 people who took Hydro's offer, it was his

recollection that "only 2/3 actually believed there was a danger." When resold, the properties were "listed on the open market with full disclosure of facts known at the time."

APPENDIX D Comment from Cecil Dunn, Co-Chair TRAHVOL
[row = right of way; 1mG = 0.1 μ T]

Hi Mike,

The buyout described was in Courtenay (Vancouver Island) in 1989. Interesting that the row was 600' wide and many of the homes were not close to the lines (existing or new). The Tsawwassen situation is very different. Hydro has a 175' wide row over the private properties of residents, several parks and a school ground. They could not point to any similar rows in the entire province. This meant that the new lines are typically less than 70' from the houses and the row actually extends into the homes some distance. As the lines go over the backyards of the residents, there is no way to escape from the predicted 149mG exposures that hydro calculated. I personally measured over 20mG in my house with only a small load actually on the lines this last January.

We worked for 4+ years to try to convince the hydro company to reroute the lines away from the residential corridor into an industrial corridor nearby, to no avail. Government simply followed the lead of the bureaucrats and tried to write us off as NIMBYs, etc. This didn't work and in the end the government took much heat about the whole mess. The Premier ultimately ordered BC Hydro to do the buyout, saying that "it was the right thing to do." This only after completely screwing up and ignoring cheaper compromise proposals we put forward. BC Hydro is not happy about having to do so and are reluctantly baby sitting 105 homes for up to two years from now, at great cost for security and maintenance. Will be interesting to see what they lose selling the homes later on.

They estimate that they will lose ~\$23M in the resale, however this is conservative in our view. It's sad to think that a proposal we had from a consultant would have allowed the lines to be buried in the existing row using horizontal directional drilling and pipe cables for less than the \$23M.

In our recent provincial election, the government member (attorney general no less), was defeated by an independent candidate. I am always surprised by the stupidity of government. Had they listened to our reasoned pleas and ideas, we would instead have had a safe installation in our backyards, BC Hydro would not have to deal with buying homes and the government would have safely elected their member.

Cecil Dunn
CO-CHAIR

TRAHVOL (Tsawwassen Residents Against Higher Voltage Overhead Lines)

