

THE CONSTRUCTION OF DEPENDENCY: THE CASE OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HYDRO PROJECT

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ABSTRACT/RESUME

Between 1960 and 1962, the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro negotiated a settlement with three Cree Bands, compensating them for the flooding of much of their land, and relocating an entire village. In the twenty-five years since then, it is clear that the development and the negotiations changed an independent self-sufficient people into dependent societies unable to support themselves and suffering many social problems.

Entre 1960 et 1962, la province du Manitoba et le Manitoba Hydro ont établi un accord avec trois Bandes Cree, qui a consisté en compensation à ces Bandes pour l'inondation de leur terre et en établissement d'un nouveau domicile pour tout un village. Dans les vingt-cinq ans qui ont suivi l'accord, il était évident que le développement et les négociations ont converti un peuple indépendant en sociétés dépendantes incapables de s'occuper d'elle-mêmes et souffrant de beaucoup de problèmes sociaux.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself: Chief Seathl (DeFaveleri, 1984).

Manitoba Hydro's propensity to flood large tracts of northern Manitoba in the quest to generate cheap electric power has cost northern residents dear.¹ It has also had a disastrous impact on the ecology of northern Manitoba which contained, prior to the Grand Rapids Hydro development, "one of the last four extensive delta areas of wetland wildlife habitat, remaining in relatively unspoiled condition on the North American continent" (United States Department of the Interior, 1961: Executive Summary:2).

The Grand Rapids development, initiated in the late 1950's, involved the flooding of over 856 square miles of delta land, including 7,000 acres of Cree land belonging to the Chemawawin, Moose Lake and The Pas Bands. In order to proceed with the hydro development, the Province of Manitoba had to secure federal government approval for the inundation of Indian lands. However, as quickly became clear during negotiations, what was involved was not simply a loss of marginal land but the destruction of the traditional way of life of the two communities through the devastation of the local renewable resource economy which had sustained the traditional way of life for generations of Cree in hunting, trapping and fishing an area remarkably rich in resources. The completion of the project in 1962 resulted in the relocation of the Chemawawin from their traditional settlement to a rocky outcrop on the shores of the newly enlarged Cedar Lake, a lake now filled with the debris caused by hydro flooding and with very substantially reduced fishing opportunities.

The focus of this paper is on the way in which hydro development destroyed the traditional Cree way of life whilst offering no alternative economic future. What is also notable is the inability of the federal government to exercise any effective trusteeship on behalf of the Indian Bands threatened with Hydro development even though it was quickly recognized that such development would largely destroy the traditional resource base. Indeed the record of the negotiations from 1960 to 1962 reveals that the pace and direction were determined by Manitoba's commitment to develop the new generating facility at the earliest date whatever the negative impact on Native people. The federal government displayed no similar commitment to its trusteeship responsibilities. Thus, as it became clear that no alternative resource base could be identified which would sustain the Cree

economy, the federal government, rather than vetoing the proposed development, effectively served to facilitate discussions with Cree leaders and to secure their compliance to the terms offered. These terms were to spell the social, cultural and economic death of the impacted Cree.

The Saskatchewan River Delta Before The Project

The 1959 report entitled "Saskatchewan River Development and its Effects on Wildlife" provided a summary from a Manitoba biologist of some of the area's more outstanding features: "This area, including Cedar Lake, produced in the vicinity of \$2,300,000 worth of muskrat pelts in the period 1940-58 and some \$400,000 worth of other fur (total average annual value of \$150,000). It also harbours an estimated 400 moose and is internationally recognized as an excellent producer of migratory geese and ducks" (Bossenmaier, 1959:2). It was this area which was to be inundated and this resource base which would be lost to the Cree.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Report, commissioned by the Manitoba Government to establish ways of offsetting anticipated fish and wildlife losses consequent upon hydro development, noted: "fur animals, water fowl and moose of the reservoir site are estimated to have an average annual value of \$593,000 over a 50 year period without the project" (United States Department of the Interior, 1961, Executive Summary:4). This amounts to more than \$2.5m in contemporary values. The size of the income from fur was in part a result of the Summerberry Fur Development Project established by Manitoba in the 1930's to increase the muskrat population. This reflected the contemporary commitment to develop the north's renewable resources, a policy with evident benefit for the local Cree. A 1955 Provincial Report on the Project reported production since 1940 of over 2 million pelts with a cumulative value of over \$4 million (Report of Temporary Committee, 1955:6).

In addition to these assets fishery resources were: "of considerable economic importance for local people...the commercial fishery harvest from Cedar, Moose and Cross Lakes and the Saskatchewan river delta between Cedar Lake and The Pas have averaged about \$692,000 per year over the last several years with a dockside value to the fishermen of \$54,000 and a marketed value of about \$107,000...It is estimated that without the project, the average harvest could be at least doubled over a 50 year period and that value to the fishermen will be about \$108,000" (Ibid).

The Saskatchewan River Delta also offered considerable agricultural potential. This had been demonstrated by Tom Lamb, the local free trader in Moose Lake, through the development of a cattle ranch which confounded the sceptics by producing first-rate Herefords. Lamb, who was to become

a formidable opponent of the hydro development, was a major agricultural innovator. His explorations, not only with cattle, but in the production of a variety of grains and vegetables, convinced him of the rich potential of the area: "As rich soil for farming as you'll find in river deltas anywhere. And that government man told me that I wouldn't get a hundred productive acres out of 2,000 acres right here! All the way down the Saskatchewan delta to Grand Rapids there's nothing else but" (Stowe, 1983:193).

Tom Lamb attempted to alert a wider constituency to the dangers of hydro development. An article in March 1960, in the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported his claim that the Forebay created by the proposed dam: "would mean an end to the last large remaining duck and goose breeding ground of its size in all of Central Canada, destroy potential and proven cattle country and wipe out an unestimated wealth of wildlife" (March 28, 1960).

A Sufficient Life: The Moose Lake And Cedar Lake Communities Prior To Hydro Development

There are a variety of sources of data which can be drawn upon in assessing the viability of the local Indian economies prior to the hydro development. We have already made reference to some of the major studies and in addition information is available in provincial and federal files, from contemporary accounts, from the recollections of those involved and, in the case of the Chemawawin Band, from the work of two independent researchers (Landa, 1969; Waldram, 1980).

It is difficult to provide a precise quantification for each of the local economies since even those figures which exist must be treated with some caution. Hugh Brody, in his seminal study of Indians in northern British Columbia, notes the difficulties of attempting any precise measurement:

It is not easy to gather statistics for income for all available resources. The reluctance of hunters to give full details about their hunting, the fact that Indian trappers within the Treaty 8 area are not obliged to file fur returns, and people's imprecise recollection of exact numbers, even when volunteered, make quantification elusive. Accused, as they repeatedly are, of over-harvesting, waste and defiance of game laws, Indian hunters suspect that numbers may be used against them...Local Whites, and even some game management officials, have often said that Indians have ceased to use the bush. Conventional methods of calculating the Indian economy reinforce this notion. Wage employment and transfer payments...are recognized as income; earnings from the bush are not. Full-time

hunters are, therefore, officially classified as unemployed. Their earnings from the hunt, and even from trapping, are taken to be minimal or nil or unavailable. Conventional economic analyses thus systematically misrepresent the Indian economy (Brody, 1981:200).

Certainly, as we will see, the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro paid scant regard both to the viable nature of the existing Cree economy and the devastating impact that the hydro development would have on this.

The Chemawawin Band were engaged in a range of economic pursuits prior to the flooding. Trapping was carried out in the Summerberry Marshes where the spring muskrats and winter fine fur thrived. This could involve up to 70 residents each year. Fishing was undertaken in both summer and winter on Cedar Lake. Booth Fisheries oversaw the summer operation while Pouliot, the local free trader, ran a frozen fish industry during the winter. In addition to these commercial returns, fish, of course, provided an important source of food to the Cree.

The abundance of moose, deer and waterfowl made hunting an integral part of the local economy. Hunting provided access to ample, highly nutritional food supplies and afforded a lifestyle which provided significant physical, as well as spiritual rewards. Joe Keeper, a community worker sent up to Cedar Lake, prior to the flooding, noted the importance of local sources of food in his 1963 report: "The people of Cedar Lake depend to a very great extent upon the moose and fish and wildfowl for their own food. One of the reasons for this is the accessibility of wild game and of fish. In the four months the writer has been in Cedar Lake there have been over 20 moose killed by the local people...fish and wild game make up the staple food of the people of Cedar Lake as there is no commercial meat sold in Cedar Lake" (Keeper, 1963:9).

Many writers have drawn attention to the cultural importance of these traditional activities which affirm for Indian people their links not only with the past, but with the land. In the James Bay hearings, when a Cree trapper, Job Bearskin, was pushed to place a monetary value on his activities, he replied:

When you talk about money, it means nothing. There will never be enough money to pay for the damage that has been done. I'd rather think about the land and when I think about the land, I think about the children; what will they have when that land is destroyed? The money means nothing...It can never be that there will be enough money to help pay for what I get from trapping. I do not think in terms of money. I think more often of the

land because the land is something you will have for a long time. That is why we call our trap lines, our land, a garden (Richardson, 1975:121).

Hugh Brody and other writers have drawn attention to the inadequacy of conventional concepts of poverty when applied to hunting and trapping communities: "There is a great difference between a poor household that has a reliable and large supply of meat and the household that experiences the remorseless and debilitating effects of urban poverty" (Brody, 1981:212).

In addition to the significant income, in both cash and kind, generated at Cedar Lake from hunting and trapping and fishing, a small amount of income was also generated from gathering seneca root. The trader, Armand Pouliot, operated a saw mill and small fishbox manufacturing operation. A limited number of vegetables were grown and wild hay was gathered to feed the horses. This latter might seem a minor point but, in fact, without the availability of this resource it would have been impossible for members of the Band to have kept horses.

Welfare payments provided a significant source of cash income but it is important to note that these were generally received, *not by virtue of unemployment*, but as a consequence of receipts for old age, family allowance, disability or family status. Joe Keeper's report noted: "The only people receiving welfare on a permanent basis are the ones where the head of the family is mentally or physically disabled, is deceased, has deserted, etc." (Keeper, 1963). This provides an important element in the evidence for the viability of the local Cree economy. The provincial field representative, H.E. Wells, confirmed the strengths of the local economy: "In general it was true that there was a high level of employment at Cedar Lake not to be found in any other settlement in Northern Manitoba" (Wells, 1963:11).

This portrait of a community with a diverse but strong economic base stands in marked contrast to the pervasive welfare dependency which resulted from the resettlement process. The sound economy provided an important prop for the wider social stability which characterized Cedar Lake.

Waldram, in his research, cites the views of the free trader, Pouliot: "When I was there, there was no trouble at all. I could leave my door open and go and eat and come back. Nobody would disturb anything...They were always good people when I was with them. There was no trouble at all" (1980:57). Sigurdson, in his report for the Forebay Administration Committee set up as part of the hydro development process, offers an equally positive view: "A visit to the Cedar Lake gives one the impression of a well managed settlement. The grounds around the post are very neat and the grass is kept cut...The people of the settlement are rather content. Other

than anxiety over the impending move, *there are no apparent community problems*, (Sigurdson, 1963:13, emphasis added).

The Moose Lake Cree enjoyed a similar economic base to that of the Chemawawin Cree at Cedar Lake. Trapping, hunting and fishing and other land and water resources were the mainstay of the economy, with seneca root gathering and casual labour providing supplementary income. The free trader in the area, Tom Lamb, was an important element in the local economy. Lamb ran a muskrat ranch, a trading post and a successful cattle ranch. Band members were reported to be keen gardeners, growing a range of produce for local consumption.

The proposed inundation involved the loss of the majority of reserve land, some 2,827 of the total of 4,307 acres. This was the second major loss to the Band, as the North Arm Narrows, comprising some 7,000 acres, had been alienated from the Band in the 1890's.

It was clear that the proposed hydro development would have a devastating effect on the Moose Lake economy. The Manitoba Development Authority predicted, in late 1961, that: "Over a period of years it is forecast that the loss of moose and waterfowl in the area from which Moose Lake draws much of its livelihood, will represent a decrease of about 60-65% from its present level of \$125,000 - \$135,000 including loss of cash income from muskrat trapping...If there are no mitigating factors the loss of general resources to Moose Lake could be as high as seventy-five percent of their current value" (Manitoba Development Authority, 1961:5).

Before assessing the damage which the Grand Rapids Hydro Development did to the social and economic life of the impacted Bands, including, to a somewhat lesser extent, the Bands at Grand Rapids and The Pas, we briefly review the process by which the Indian lands were expropriated.

A Breach Of Trust

Clearly the Bands that we have described were, in the early 1960's, living very much a traditional way of life. Few members of the Bands spoke English, they had little contact with the outside world and no familiarity with complex negotiations with outside agencies. Nothing in their experience could conceivably have given them any understanding of a technological project such as the hydro development. To the local Cree it was literally inconceivable that water should rise, as in a flood, and yet not recede. Reporting the reaction of the James Bay Cree to the proposed hydro development in that area, Richardson records the experience of one Cree activist: "When we first told people about the scheme they just laughed. They couldn't really believe that anybody would do such a stupid thing as to flood the land. And they couldn't

understand the scale of the flooding that was proposed" (Richardson, 1976:82).

The provincial and federal governments were aware of the environmental consequences of the proposed project and of the adverse impact this would have on the Cree. In January 1960, A.G. Leslie, the Manitoba Regional Director for Indian Affairs, advised that: "The hunting, trapping and fishing grounds of these three Bands (Chemawawin, Moose Lake and Grand Rapids) constitutes mainly the Summerberry Muskrat Ranch which will be completely inundated having serious effects on wildlife and fish" (Memo to Indian Affairs in Ottawa, January 27, 1960).

In Ottawa, H.R. Corm, an Indian Affairs official who was a member of the two-man Headquarters Committee responsible for managing the federal dimensions of the proposed hydro project and its impact on Indian reserve land, warned of the potentially traumatic economic consequences of the proposed flooding: "Although a great deal of thought and effort has gone towards the selection of a new site for the Bands concerned, the record does not indicate how or where these people are going to earn their living when their reserves have been flooded... It is very doubtful if the wildlife resources will provide anything like the livelihood which has been available in the past" (Memo, November 1, 1960).

In the circumstances it would have been desirable for the Bands to have been provided with both legal and technical expertise. Neither was offered. Many of the meetings that took place lacked any effective interpretation and indeed it was the practice, rather than relying on professional interpreters, to use local Band members who had some understanding of English. Given the difficulties of simultaneous translation from English into Cree or Cree into English, which even professional interpreters sometimes experience, one would only need to add, to complete the picture, that much of the discussion was of a highly technical nature involving engineering and ecological arguments about the implications of the possible different water levels which the hydro project would necessitate.

The lack of sensitivity to the issue of interpretation was evidenced in the response made at a meeting to discuss cooperative fishing, in Grand Rapids, on March 5th. The Indian Affairs representative, Bell, noted in a memo to Leslie (March 12, 1962): "I asked if it would not be possible to have an interpreter in view of the fact that members from Moose Lake and Cedar Lake had a limited command of English and what transpired would have to be interpreted if they were to get anything out of the meeting". No interpreter could be found but the meeting proceeded. Bell noted that the Cree asked no questions: "As they had not understood what had been said" (Ibid). Perhaps not surprisingly, in the light of such experience, Bell concluded that he

was "left with the distinct feeling that no one could care less as to whether the people sink or swim" (Ibid), no doubt an unintentionally apt metaphor.

The framework in which the negotiations were conducted was not only one of marked inequality, where the legal advice, the technical expertise and the language of communication were all firmly loaded in favour of the provincial government of Manitoba Hydro, but also one where the conclusion was never in doubt (Waldram, 1984:206-217).

The certainty of the outcome was communicated to the Cree not only by the provincial and Hydro representatives but also by federal representatives. The report of a meeting at Cedar Lake, in March 1961, notes the response of the Indian Affairs representative to an uncooperative local resident: "John Lachose came forward and said 'a lot of people have no intention of leaving this place'. Mr Ball said - there are two ways of doing this - the hard way and the easy way. If you people say to yourselves, 'We won't do anything' that is the hard way and your land could be legally extracted at terms not of your own making. If you negotiate and co-operate you can probably get much better terms. He named and showed the Section under the Indian Act, covering expropriation of Indian lands" (Minutes of meeting, March 27, 1961). On balance it seems unlikely that a less co-operative approach from the local Bands would have resulted in terms any worse than those finally accepted. Indeed if the federal government had had the courage and the tenacity to resist any encroachment on Indian lands until satisfactory terms had been proposed, the subsequent devastation of the impacted Cree communities would have been avoided.

The records of Indian Affairs indicate clearly that there was a consistent awareness of the implications of the proposed Hydro Development for the Cree economy. Indeed, early internal memos suggest that the Department believed that development should only take place once alternative and satisfactory arrangements had been made for the Indians' future. An account of a meeting between regional Indian Affairs officials and provincial representatives in November 1960 noted: "In further discussion of the relocation programme, the question of the effect of flooding on the wildlife and fisheries resources, which are the main means of livelihood was the most important consideration...It was reiterated that any offer by the Hydro Electric Board, would be the starting point and not the end of negotiations, that the Indian acceptance of such an offer will depend largely on the provision being made for their future livelihood and *that the department could not submit or recommend any offer to the Indians until such time as this point had been clarified*" (Account by H.R. Conn of meeting of November 25, 1960, emphasis added). This was in marked contrast to the attitude of Manitoba which was perhaps aptly summarized in a memo from Bell to Leslie (September 11, 1961): "As

reported by Mr. Wells, Mr. Schortinghuis felt that it would be up to the people to figure out their own future and if this could not be done, the people would have to go on relief". Manitoba Hydro's broader ignorance of the issues of Indian rights and entitlements is well illustrated by the following extract from the minutes of a meeting later that year:

Mr. Rettie (Hydro) asked what made Indian lands so valuable...Mr. Battle said they gave up Canada and these little selected parcels are all they have left (Minutes of Federal-Provincial Meeting, December 14, 196t).

In spite of the evidence that Indian Affairs had a clear grasp of the way in which the proposed hydro development would impact the Cree economy, a study of the records indicates that the effective initiative remained with the provincial government. Thus an exchange of correspondence between C.H. Whitney, the provincial Minister of Mines and Natural Resources and Ellen Fairclough, the federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, responsible for the Indian Affairs Branch, resulted in the federal Minister observing on the provincial letter: "It would appear from the tone of this letter that we may have misunderstood their intentions. I have read this carefully and it looks as if they have made complete plans to take care of the Indians" (Fairclough to Davidson, February 20, 1961). The Minister was clearly more easily satisfied than the Bishop of Brandon, the Cree's religious leader, who, on February 22nd, two days later, wrote to the Minister:

I say in all confidence to you that I think a certain amount of pressure will have to be put on the Hydro Electric Board if they are to give fair compensation and if they are to find a way of settling the Indians so that there is some chance of them becoming independent persons and not just living from hand to mouth and on relief. The little experience that I had with them dealing with the Metis people is that they are trying to get land and houses for the very minimum sums that they can get the people to sign for and after all, merely to give the Indians or the Metis a sum of money which may seem to give them a fortune does not solve any problem for unless they can be re-established with some chance of providing for themselves, the Government is likely to have these people on the relief roles for the rest of their lives.

The federal government, notwithstanding the Minister's complacent attitude, continued to try to secure greater clarity from the provincial govern-

ment over what was to be offered to the Indians in compensation for their land. The principle difficulty lay in the selection of new land which would be of equivalent or better value and which would afford a similar resource base. In fact, given the scale of the Hydro project and the ecological devastation which would ensue, no such land and resource package in the locality could readily be identified. More vigorous negotiation might have sought to meet this problem by booking further afield at other parts of Manitoba or seeking a much enhanced cash compensation linked to finite commitments on the creation of an alternative economic future for the Cree. Instead, ultimately, the Cree were persuaded to settle for an inadequate land exchange and vague promises of future economic and social development which, more than a quarter of a century later, have still to be delivered.

William Waugh, a Canadian Labour Congress Representative, who opposed the Hydro Project, in marked contrast to the CLC's subsequent indifference to the impact of mega projects on northern peoples, voiced his own reservations about the shortage of suitable land in a letter to Indian Affairs, in March 1961:

If they have been promised new reservations, just where would these be? Should they be as abundant in fishing, hunting, and trapping as their old reservations? If such places exist, just what are they? Not the High Portage between the lake to be and Lake Winnipegosis (*in fact the precise location chosen for Easterville*). Not around Cormorant Lake, not at The Pas, no doubt they would be asked to move away to the East of this reservoir into the limestone area, where hunting, trapping, and fishing is poor and agriculture is non-existent and there are no other inhabitants. We hope that they will not be forced onto some unproductive area where they will have to live on welfare and charity (Letter to Leslie, March 23, 1961, italics added).

The Chemawawin band were relocated from their existing site to their present location at Easterville, while at Moose Lake the decision was made simply to re-locate some of the Cree on to higher ground. Neither of these solutions were satisfactory. It was soon to become apparent that Easterville was a very unsuitable site. One researcher, who lived in the community, noted: "The overall impression one gets of the community is that it is a very depressing place to live. The dominant feature is of rock and gravel which permeates the entire community. There is no such thing as a 'lawn' in Easterville. Within the inhabited area of the community, trees are sparse and stunted. As a result, in the summer it is very hot and dusty" (Waldram, 1980:110). The location also created potential health problems as the lime-

stone surface prevented the use of pit latrines. Waste matter is placed in buckets and cleaned by sanitation crews which has led to an increase in airborne bacteria, causing intestinal infections in young babies.

Visiting ministers, continuing the well established settler tradition of advising the Indians to take up farming (Chamberlin, 1975:84-86), have been advised that on the current Easterville site the residents would first need to be equipped with pneumatic drills.

The Moose Lake Band fared little better. They were not relocated but this decision seems largely to have stemmed from the absence of a suitable alternative location rather than any satisfaction with the kind of future which would be afforded to them after the Hydro development. Bell had warned, in January 1961, of the need to find a suitable new location: "It can only be assumed that many of the resources from which the people have derived a livelihood in the past and will need to derive a livelihood from in the future, will be lost or seriously depleted for a number of years and in some cases, possibly for ever" (Bell to Leslie, January 21, 1961).

In retrospect it might be asked why the Cree did not pursue more suitable sites with greater vigor. In understanding this it is worth recalling not only the absence of legal and technical representation for the Bands, the pressure they were under to come to some agreement and the absence of suitable alternative sites, but also the Band member's inability to comprehend the scale of the change which was to take place. Thus in discussing the choice of new sites, the Chemawawin Chief, Donald Easter, observed that the Band: "wouldn't want to go too far away as we know we can make our living here". In contrast to this sanguine view, a 1965 Indian Affairs survey indicates the magnitude of the change to the resource base caused by the dam.

Species	1960-61	1964-65
Moose	291	22
Deer	57	NIL
Caribou	35	5
Ducks	6,565	207
Geese	1,463	62
Other	822	50
Fish (Dom.)	103,025 lbs	77,000 lbs

(Bell to Connelly, April 27, 1965)

The Terms Of The Settlement

The Moose Lake and Chemawawin Bands came to agreement with the Province of Manitoba, in June 1962, with the acceptance of letters of intent

sent to the Chiefs. Later that year, in November, The Pas Band also came to agreement. Due to what remains an inexplicable oversight, the Grand Rapids Band, although impacted by the project, received no letter of intent and came to no agreement with the Province. The letters proposed a two for one land exchange plus additional financial compensation amounting to \$10,000 for Moose Lake and \$20,000 for Cedar Lake. The agreement reached with Manitoba covered land and minerals, economic development, resource development and community development. In the letters of intent the Province of Manitoba made a broad commitment to foster community and economic development. Item 13 of the agreement with the Chemawawin, for example, reads: "On behalf of the Government at Manitoba, to take every step possible to maintain the income of the people of Chemawawin of the new site with the advice and co-operation of Indian Affairs. To achieve this, and to endeavour to improve the economy, we will undertake studies to determine what economic development should take place and how any mutually agreed upon developments can be brought about".

It would require a separate article to detail the many ways in which the province of Manitoba failed to fulfil these commitments. The final judgement on the equity and the impact of the project can, nonetheless, reasonably be made by assessing the state of the communities at Easterville and Moose Lake today and comparing it with the picture we have already drawn of the economic and social life of the communities prior to hydro development.

A Social Catastrophe

One result of the Forebay Committee planning was the establishment of Easterville, a preplanned Indian-Metis community on the south shore of Cedar Lake...the residents chose the new site themselves...at Easterville, some fifty-five families, forty-three Indian and twelve Metis, were provided with new homes and buildings...Two, three and four-bedroom homes serviced with electricity, replaced overcrowded, mud caked, unfuelled log-cabins the people formerly occupied at Chemawawin...The new community was also furnished with new schools, a church and a fish warehouse (Manitoba Hydro, 1981).

There were many indications prior to the inundation of the Cree land of the economic and social disaster that lay ahead. Nonetheless the project proceeded. That these forebodings had been well merited was quickly confirmed. At Moose Lake the loss of much reserve land meant the re-location of many houses onto the limestone ridge. This destroyed the traditional pat-

tern of a dispersed settlement and resulted in residents living "cheek by jowl" with what a local community worker saw as a subsequent loss of "space" in social relations (Interview, Casteldon, November 5, 1985). The lack of thought which characterized the move also resulted in sanitation problems which had not been there before, as in the words of Bell: "the people did not reside on the limestone ridge in numbers like they do now because of town planning, and generally there was sufficient surface soil to allow for the pits" (March 31, 1964, cited IDS, 1978, section 5.6 p. 4). Dissatisfaction amongst Band members was so high that many wanted to move to a different area (Keeper to Langin, October 11, 1965). However, as we have already noted, the difficulty with this approach lay not only in provincial indifference but in the absence of a suitable alternative site.

Hunting and trapping at Moose Lake were both adversely affected. In 1969 the Acting Director of Wildlife for the Province reported that moose hunting opportunities were virtually non-existent. The flooding also terminated the range of employment opportunities which had been created for local residents through Tom Lamb's entrepreneurial activities.

The impact of the flooding had severe social consequences. Health standards declined, alcohol abuse became widespread and crime and vandalism, almost unknown in 1960, became rife. Welfare dependency is now pervasive. A study by the IDS consultants, commissioned by the impacted Bands, reported: "Ten of the eleven who claim that no one in their house was sick before the flooding cited illnesses afterward, ranging from frequent fever and flu (9 respondents) to high blood pressure and other serious illnesses" (IDS, 1978, Section 5.6, p. 7). IDS noted a similarly negative impact on traditional Cree culture:

The former system of sharing and looking out for one's neighbours and friends seems to have disappeared, replaced by a cash-oriented community whose members expect to pay even for wild foods and be paid for the smallest service...All 21 respondents express their belief that Indian culture and values have been weakened as a result of the hydro project. Most claim that fewer and fewer young people are learning and speaking Cree. Nor is there respect for elders that the young ones had...Stress, anxiety and fear have been much in evidence since the flooding (IDS, 1978, Section 5.9, p. 3-4).

The community has made a number of attempts to tackle its problems. The *Winnipeg Free Press* reports one: "By the late 1970's alcohol abuse and alcohol related violence had reached such proportions that the community voted the reserve dry. The Council also enlisted the co-operation of the ad-

jacent Metis community and the local RCMP in efforts to cut the drinking and the gasoline and glue sniffing that had become widespread among children" (February 28, 1980). This measure failed to solve the problem. In 1985 a near riot was reported in the community which led to the arrest of no less than 41 people and the hospitalization of a number of residents of the reserve and the neighbouring Metis community. Yet as we have made clear this was a community which, in the early 1960's exhibited no such social malaise. Indeed before the hydro project the Indians at Moose Lake could be described by the Chief Executive of the Royal Bank in The Pas as: "Better off than any I know of" (Stowe, 1983:172).

The Chemawawin experienced not only the destruction of much of their economic base but also the traumatic consequences of relocation. It is an indictment of the seeming indifference to the fate of the Chemawawin that scant attention was paid to the effects of such a dramatic move on the community's stability and cultural integrity. The consequences of the move quickly became apparent. Landa, an independent researcher working in Easterville in the late 1960's reported: "There is evidence that the family structure is breaking down...Parents report lack of control over the behaviour of young children and adolescents. Separation of spouses is reported and cases of severe child neglect due to the use of alcohol for long periods is also one of the main complaints of local informants and health officials as well...Vandalism, such as the breaking of windows in community buildings and private homes, is a common occurrence" (Landa, 1969:68-69). David Henderson, the Director of Planning for Manitoba in 1962, who was responsible for planning the new Easterville townsite, subsequently said he could see the "tragedy" which overtook the Chemawawin "coming" even then (Interview, November 8, 1985).

Writing in 1980, Waldram reported widespread health problems, violence and pervasive alcohol abuse: "The abuse of alcohol appears to be related to a form of mental depression which has developed since the relocation...According to one health official, "A lot of the older people are in a state of morbidity. A depression. A sort of low level depression...A lot of these people are sick and it is because they don't have the will and happiness to be healthy. Every elderly person in the community is a part of the case load" (Waldram, 1980:168).

At Easterville hunting and trapping opportunities have declined considerably. Cedar Lake has proved an uneven source of income. In 1970-73 the lake was closed for fishing because of mercury contamination. Local residents report at least six deaths amongst those fishing the lake, a figure which they believe reflects the danger created by the large amount of floating debris left in the wake of the hydro project. This is such that it is only

reasonable to fish in the lake if one man is posted in the bow as a lookout for submerged or floating logs. Welfare dependency, in a community which once enjoyed an enviable range of employment opportunities, is endemic.

Neither the Province of Manitoba nor the Government of Canada could make any reasonable claim to ignorance of the scale of the problems at Easterville. As long ago as 1966 the difficulties were identified in a report produced for the Federal-Provincial Coordinating Committee on Indian and Native Affairs. The report noted the failure to adequately prepare for the "human adjustment aspects of a public power project" (Jacobson, 1966:3). The report noted the failure of the Province to make any effective response to a range of proposals emanating from the Chemawawin: "Although supposedly an administrative unit, the Forebay Committee often acted as a bargaining agent of Government with the *responsibility for limiting the demands of those affected by the flooding*" (Ibid:8, emphasis added). The report noted:

the Province promised that the Chemawawin Band would not suffer as a result of the move...in spite of repeated requests for economic studies, there has only been a single report prepared for the Cedar Lake area...A fund of \$500,000 set up for economic development was nearly all spent within two years in the construction of a power line and on expenses connected with the resident Community Development Officer...There was an attempt to get some Government economists to draw up a more recent plan...The economists all found one reason or another to avoid working on the project. We speculate that the real reason is quite obvious the situation in Cedar Lake is so desparate that no economist would justify to himself to make a full survey. An honest attempt at economic analysis will certainly prove to be an embarrassment to the Government which sponsored, endorsed and encouraged a settlement to the limestone shores of Cedar Lake. Yet it remains that the Forebay Committee has promised to maintain the level of living that was "enjoyed" at the old settlement. The means by which this promise can reasonably be fulfilled without massive expenditure of welfare funds has not been made evident by anyone at any level of government (Ibid:39-41).

In the twenty-two years since Jacobson's report was written, the situation has simply been allowed to deteriorate. In the popular imagination the problems faced by Indian communities are frequently attributed to the lack of enterprise of their inhabitants and to the widespread social pathology

which appears to characterize the settlements. At first glance, and few look longer, this would no doubt appear a fitting description of the problems faced by the Cree at Moose Lake and Chemawawin. In this article we have sought to demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt that the dependency which these Bands face is not of their own making but is a direct and inevitable consequence of the destruction of their economic base by the Province of Manitoba and by Manitoba Hydro with the acquiescence of the Government of Canada.

Conclusion

The Cree Bands at The Pas, Grand Rapids, Easterville and Moose Lake are not the only unwilling victims of Manitoba's hydromania. The Grand Rapids Hydro Development was unleashed under the aegis of a Conservative Provincial Government. In the 1970's the social democratic NDP Government backed a new wave of Hydro projects on the Churchill and Nelson rivers. The initial strategy was to attempt to minimize or deny that Indian lands would be impacted. The subsequent report of the Tritschler Commission of Inquiry into Manitoba Hydro, found that the provincial government, including Premier Edward Schreyer, subsequently destined to become Canada's Governor General, were prepared to go to quite exceptional lengths in dealing with Native people unfamiliar with the ways of the modern world. The Commission concluded: "Mr. Martin, in his capacity as Special Advisor to the Premier and member of the Advisory Committee, when asserting the flooding would not occur at Nelson House was adopting a tactical position, concurred in by Premier Schreyer and the Advisory Committee, *knowing that it was incorrect*" (I'ritschler, 1979, emphasis added).

Ultimately the provincial government was compelled to come to an agreement with the impacted Bands and the Northern Flood Agreement, signed in 1977, with the Bands at Norway House, Split Lake, York Factory, Cross Lake and Nelson House was seen, at the time, as providing a legally binding basis for full and fair compensation. Ten years later the agreement, which has been estimated by the Neilsen taskforce to be worth between \$340 and \$550m, remains largely unfulfilled (*Winnipeg Free Press*, August 17, 1986). Manitoba Hydro and the Province of Manitoba have clearly learned that inertia in relation to Indian claims is the surest guide to success. What, after all, is the power of five small Cree Bands against the might of a hydro conglomerate and the Province of Manitoba? The hydro project is in place, the profits are being made and the Indian lands have been flooded.

The Cree are not the only losers from Manitoba's obsession with the mega project route to Northern development. A large part of the ecology of

northern Manitoba has been permanently damaged. Mega projects have crowded out other approaches, including an attempt, in 1975, by the NDP Government, to create a new model of northern development based on self-sustaining growth, through a strategy which would have used public sector investment to create a series of linked economic initiatives, intended to reduce the north's dependence on "imports". Forestry, construction, tourism, fishing and boatbuilding, machinery maintenance, agriculture and transportation were amongst the growth sectors identified. The key element of this strategy was the creation of a number of reinforcing linkages among the different initiatives, which would serve to increase the size of the northern market and retain capital in the north rather than see it drained off to the affluent south (Loxley, 1978). In the end this model failed to gain sufficient support to counteract the strong pressure from those who stand to profit by the continuation of mega construction projects. Nonetheless as we contemplate the gross injustice done to the Cree it is worth remembering that there is another way (Lockhart, in press), a route which would preserve for Native communities their traditional relationship with the land but which would also stand against the frenetic pursuit of growth which ultimately threatens all our futures.

Epitaph

There is, of course, nothing unique about the deleterious effects of hydro development on the residents of the impacted area. Indeed such projects characteristically provide considerable benefits to upper social groups, not least those involved in the construction and operation process, while the social costs are borne by less privileged social groups. Dr. Robert Goodland, an ecologist at the World Bank, reviewing the impact of large dams, writes: "In the past people were often relocated or resettled without regard to their individual, community or societal needs. Concern was often lacking for their future welfare; how or whether they would find employment, receive education and health care, retain their cultural and societal identity; ensure their safety and social continuity" (Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1984:17). To which it only needs to be added that the process continues to this day both in Canada and elsewhere. In Brazil, for example, it was reported in 1984 that some 34 indigenous Indian tribes were threatened by major hydro electric projects (Ibid:15). Survival International is currently protesting the forced resettlement of tribal peoples in India to make way for hydro projects in the Narmada Valley. This World Bank funded project will flood the lands of an estimated 1 million people (Survival International, 1987).

In presenting the case for hydro electric development, much is made of the possibilities of low cost power, yet these assertions are invariably based

on calculations which underestimate the economic costs of relocation and foregone alternative economic uses. Ackerman, for example, has argued that for the major African dams: "per capita relocation expenses have varied from approximately \$200 per capita to \$2,000. In all of these projects the relocation expenses have been at least three times the original estimates and sometimes substantially more...Sometimes, financial costs of resettlement may be sufficiently great to offset expected benefits of dam construction in comparison to alternate uses of funds" (Ibid:42). In northern Manitoba, in fact, hydro development has, to date, proceeded not only without adequate account of such costs but, more importantly, by evading the responsibility to pay satisfactory compensation to those impacted by hydro development.

The tendency to make extravagant claims about the benefits of large scale water diversion projects is unfortunately neither new nor localized. A recent cost benefit analysis of the world famous Tennessee Valley Authority, by the Environmental Policy Institute, found that the flood control and navigation projects had yet to pay for themselves, 50 years into the Authority's life (Blackwelder, 1984).

One uncalculated and incalculable cost of major water diversion projects is the damage to the cultural integrity of those who are "resettled" or otherwise traumatized by the project. Goldsmith and Hildyard, reviewing the impact of such resettlement projects in Africa, conclude: "Deprived of their traditional culture, and stripped of the support of their communities, many of those who are resettled drift towards the cities. There, a now familiar tragedy repeats itself. The men frequently turn to alcohol whilst the women are often forced to prostitute themselves simply to earn the where-with-all to feed themselves and their families. Malnutrition and disease are rife, jobs are almost impossible to find. It is a world far removed from the 'paradise' offered to them by the authorities. Unfortunately, it is a world in which most of them will spend the rest of their lives" (Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1984:48).

NOTES

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During the course of the research numerous federal and provincial government files were examined. Some of the federal documentation

was retrieved from the Public Archives in Ottawa, the remainder of the federal files were inspected at the Indian Affairs Regional Office in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Provincial files, including some Manitoba Hydro material, have been assembled and are located at the Programme Evaluation Branch of the Department of Mines and Natural Resources in Winnipeg.

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