

1 FOR GENERATIONS

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19 **Introduction by Professor Cook**

20 Our speaker tonight is Mr. Jim Wilson. He was the Executive Director of BC Hydro and has been
21 Executive Director since 1973. Mr. Wilson is, as you all probably know, the father of this book called
22 *People in the Way*. The subtitle is ‘The Human aspect of the Columbia River Project’, which is also the
23 title of his talk this evening. Mr. Wilson comes to BC Hydro with a long career in planning. As a matter
24 of fact, the seven years previous to the appointing of Executive Director, he was teaching regional
25 planning at Waterloo University in Ontario. And it was previous to that period, from the years 1964 to 66,
26 he was regional planner for BC Hydro, which forms the basis of his book. Before that he worked for 13
27 years with the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. So, Mr. Wilson is speaking to us this evening
28 he is not going to be speaking about the river, the Columbia River or the Columbia River Treaty.

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30 Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I imagine there can’t be anything more disconcerting to an
31 audience than to be faced with a speaker who perceives to pick up his own book. But I assure you that I
32 won’t use the book as such. I won’t quote from it. I won’t read it.

33 I’ve found myself further embarrassed because I didn’t have the time I would have liked to have
34 to prepare a lecture. And what I intend to do actually is to simply sketch in some of the main sequences
35 and some of the consequences of the Columbia as I saw it, and hope that you, as an audience interested in
36 this subject, will pick up and engage in discussion with me.

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37 To go back to what your Chairman said, I don't intend to say anything about the Columbia River,
38 or the Columbia River Treaty. It's not that I don't know anything about them, but I was not in fact
39 involved in the Treaty which was concluded by the time I got on the scene. And it would be
40 presumptuous for me to do so because, in fact, the Columbia River Treaty is an immensely complex
41 thing, as is the operation in fact of the Treaty. Instead, I would like to talk about one of the consequences
42 of the Columbia River projects, namely the displacement of a large number of people, and what BC
43 Hydro and Power Authority did about these in pursuing the Columbia River Treaty.

44 What we're talking about here is the Arrow Lakes country. We're talking tonight only about the
45 Arrow Lakes, and the Arrow Lakes substantially is this long 150 mile stretch of river between Revelstoke
46 at the north end and Castlegar at the Trail area at the south end.

47 Now in effect, this consisted not of one area, but of three areas which at one time were connected
48 by the stern wheelers which ran on the lakes; and the lakes in those days acted in effect as the main street
49 of the region. But, shortly after the war, the stern wheeler was removed and the lakes then reverted to
50 three separate areas which were not then connected by water as a main stream. Now this has significance
51 for what I have to tell you tonight because people, as far as they were affected by the Columbia River
52 Treaty were concentrated in three main areas. One was in the North area, the other was in the extreme
53 South, and in the middle was the central part of the Arrow Lakes, which really was the subject of my
54 work.

55 The point about this was that there was no alternative for the people who were displaced at the
56 North end to do anything else than to go back to Revelstoke, or leave the region entirely. There simply
57 was no physical opportunity for them to resettle, had they wanted. The same is largely true in the south
58 area. The only area in which there was a choice of resettlement in that same region was in the central part
59 of the lakes around the Narrows.

60 And what we're talking about really is the fortunes of 2000 people, 600 families if you like. And
61 they in total were spread over these three areas. I have nothing much to say about the Northern area and
62 the Southern area, its not that nothing happened to people if they didn't go anywhere, but there wasn't
63 much that we could do about them or we needed because there were enough settlements in that area for
64 them to be able to resettle themselves in the housing market, and the land market in those areas.

65 The area where we did have to do something, because there were no real resources for them to
66 fall back on, was the area in the centre. And that really is what my story is about. So this story starts when
67 the decision to implement the Columbia River Treaty had been taken. That was in 1964. And at that time,
68 we started to become aware of some of the real consequences in terms of people which up to that time,
69 had been given relatively little thought by BC Hydro.

70 Now, I must be fair to BC Hydro at this point and say that some thought had been given to the
71 people, and what would happen to them. Not a great deal had been given, which was partly due to the
72 times, and partly due to the fact that the Treaty, and the pursuit of the Treaty had been treated by Mr.

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73 Bennett in particular as strictly a matter of water resources and engineering. And from everything I have
74 been able to find out, Mr. Bennett kept a very, very strict control over the purse including some of the
75 proprietary studies which should have been made, but were not made at that time.

76 So in many ways, in 1964, we started from scratch. The problem being what do you do about, or
77 with, 2000 people who are being displaced as a result of an international treaty. Well the first question I'd
78 have to ask, or you'd have to ask if you had that same job thrown at you was, "who were the people?"
79 Well there's much we could say about that. I'd simply say that typically the people who were being
80 displaced were scattered over many, many small communities. The region, at that time, it was fair to
81 describe as a backwater region; as a stagnant region. A region, literally, of no codes for fifty years. An
82 area whose glories had all gone because the glories of that region, such as they were, were in the period
83 before the First World War. In fact, around the year 1900 when there was a tremendous activity going on
84 in the area primarily based on the extraction of lumber.

85 One other thing I must say because it explains a great deal about the people and how they
86 managed to live there at all, that typically that was an area of subsistence economy. It was quite true that a
87 man might have a job in the woods... a permanent, regular, steady job with Celgar. But he might amplify
88 that by working 2 or 3 acres of land, or by keeping a few cattle, or by growing a little fruit. There were
89 many, many ways in which you could amplify an existence. And there were many, who as far as we
90 know, lived largely on their holdings plus pensions of different kinds. It's amazing to city people who
91 don't have to live that way how you can, in fact, eek a very satisfactory existence from very little that is
92 apparent to anybody who doesn't know what a rural economy is.

93 One other thing has to be said about the people, and that is, I think it's fair to say, that many of
94 them were stuck in the Arrow Lakes. And I'll have to explain the word stuck. Many of them I think were
95 the captives of their own memories, and their own associations. I knew, I did know, people who were
96 there because their husbands had been there decades before. Their homes were there, their memories were
97 there, and that is I think why many of them were still there. It was, by virtue of subsistence economy, a
98 cheap place, that is in cash terms, in which to live. And many of them, as far as we know, had relatively
99 little in the way of cash. And one of the significant things about the Columbia River Treaty for them, was
100 that it was the first time, to our knowledge, that many of them had had the opportunity of having a chunk
101 of cash in their hands, with which they could move out of the region if they wanted to. I'm not defending
102 anything when I say this. I'm simply saying that to some extent this was true. And as I elaborated to quite
103 some extent in my book, they were not urban people. They had their own standards, their own ways, their
104 own ambitions which were not ours. And I think that was not always appreciated by head office types in
105 BC Hydro.

106 If I had to classify these people now from a practical point of view, I would say there were
107 probably two types. There were the willing, and the unwilling; that is in terms of their willingness to
108 leave, or not leave, the region. The willing, I would say, were those who had no real ties, no ties of
109 memory and who had money for the first time which enabled them, in fact, to leave the region. Now I
110 hate to say it, but we knew very little at the time about the region, and the people, and why they were

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111 there at all. I learned more than I can ever admit in the course of writing a book long after the event. In
112 other words, I was one of the main beneficiaries of the experiences I myself have. So there were some at
113 least, I suspect quite a number, who were strictly willing to leave the Arrow Lakes, because it really was,
114 despite my fondness for the area, and the people, I have to say that in many ways, it was a depressed area
115 up until about 1964.

116 And then, of course, there were the others. They were the unwilling. If I had to describe them, I
117 would say they were primarily people who had been brought up in, or born in the Arrow Lakes, and who
118 had a fierce attachment to it. There were people, of course, who had jobs which they liked, and there were
119 a group, a very important group, who made a living off the land. There were very few of those, but their
120 attachment, their passion for the land was really something to experience, and some of the most disturbing
121 things I know that were done was the displacement of those few people, who cut poles, or who farmed,
122 but had a foot on the land. And then there were a few also, actually there were many, many types. There
123 were a few also who just liked living in the Arrow Lakes, period. No other reason needed to be given.
124 They also were deeply attached to the region. After having said all that, I have to say that the great, great
125 majority of people chose to move out, and a minority stayed.

126 Now the next thing I should say a little about is the approach that we took to the problem posed
127 by the people whom we were going to displace. And in the approach, we were conditioned to a large
128 extent by the history of the Columbia River, up to that point. And that was the history of tension, the
129 tension born of living with something for many, many years. You must remember the subject was raised
130 in the first place in 1944, and didn't come into fruition in terms of plans until 1959, in which for the first
131 time anyone said that could happen, or was likely to happen, in terms of the Columbia River
132 development. So there were 15 years in which I'm sure there were rumours flying all over the place at
133 different times. I know that at one time in 1947 or 48, I actually worked on the Columbia River for a little
134 while, that's something I'd forgotten, and we knew perfectly well what we were working, and I'm sure
135 many of the local people knew what we were doing. So they were living with this for many, many years.
136 The pace heated up after 1959, and there were 5 years of bargaining and negotiation. But they were living
137 with this all the time, and more than just living with it. It seemed to me they were living in a state of
138 suspended animation at the end of an infinitely long cord, from Victoria on one hand, to Ottawa on the
139 other, with branches off to Ottawa and other places, but always other places, not the Arrow Lakes.

140 And if you read the record, you'll find how miserable their means of communication were, and
141 how difficult it was even to get copies of official reports. So there's these tensions to live with. And then
142 something happened I think about 1962, in that public hearings, official public hearings, were held by the
143 Water Comptroller of the BC Government, who was compelled by his office, in the face of this kind of
144 development, to hold those hearings, and he did. I suspect they were done in good faith honestly, openly
145 by BC Hydro, but that wasn't necessarily the way it seemed to the people. Primarily because the BC
146 Hydro Authority at that time was not able to answer problems the people had. They knew some of their
147 own overall problems, and, of course, they had worked out answers to those otherwise you wouldn't have
148 a Treaty or a plan. But as far as details were concerned, "what's going to happen to my property", "what's
149 going to happen to this dike", "what's going to happen to this piece of land", - "sorry we can't tell you

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150 yet”, “don’t bother we’ll work that out”. Which wasn’t exactly comforting for the people who were left.

151 So they had gone through these hearings and they had become aware that, in a sense, the hearings
152 were a sham. They were a sham because there wasn’t the slightest chance that the Treaty as a whole
153 would not go through. And the hearings, in that sense, were cosmetic. I don’t say they were deliberately
154 cosmetic, but in terms of the effect they might have in overturning a Treaty in which some people
155 violently objected, was absolutely nil. And to that extent, many people felt they were a sham. They also
156 felt they had been let down by a number of politicians whom I won’t mention.

157 So, in other words, we inherited a very considerable legacy of suspicion and frustration at the
158 beginning. And at the very best, I would have to say the attitude of the people as we met them in 1964
159 was one of, “ok buster, show me”. At the very worst, there was deep suspicion, and in some cases
160 absolute hatred. There were some who welcomed it, rightly or wrongly, but I think the great majority
161 were saying, “Ok, Hydro, you say you’re going to be fair and honest and all that now show us.” I don’t
162 think they were ever better than that.

163 As far as process was concerned, this is what we went through in trying to cope with the
164 problems of the people, and especially to resettle them, those who wanted, in new communities. We
165 looked, and we talked, and we sized up the region by travels in and talks in the region itself, so that we
166 could figure out what the nature of the problem was. Then we tried to establish, and this was all on our
167 own part, one-sided up to this part, we tried to establish what the problems were, and what the
168 possibilities were of doing something about it. And we located a very limited number of areas in which
169 we thought new communities could be established. But at this time, of course, we had no means of
170 knowing who would want to, or if any in fact would want to, resettle in new communities. And there were
171 people like the Water Comptroller, a tough little cynical little engineer, who once said to me, “just give
172 them money and they will be only too glad to get the hell out”. That is literally what they said. And that
173 was one viewpoint taken at that time, but we didn’t know this.

174 I believed, and many people led me to believe, that there were many people who would stay and
175 we had to operate on this assumption. So then we looked the valley over, located a number of places
176 where they could settle because there were very few of those, and then Duke up plans for new
177 communities, for highways, for all the things that had to be done. And having done that, and this is no
178 mean step, we had to get the BC Hydro Authority, which meant the BC Hydro Board, committed to doing
179 something. And in the process, to signing a blank check because we still did not know how many people
180 would settle. In the long run it didn’t cost us any amount of money worth talking about in relation to the
181 expenditures involved in the Treaty, but we didn’t know. And you must remember this was 10 years ago,
182 and the Board was a lot more hard boiled, hard boiled in many ways than it is today. And, I believe, I
183 wasn’t involved I believe it took quite some arguing, especially on the part of Hugh Keenleyside, to get
184 this blank check signed, and to say, in fact publicly, that BC Hydro would build new communities if it
185 were asked to, and would fix the region up if it were asked to.

186 But that was done. It had to be done not only with BC Hydro, but with the Provincial government

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187 because we didn't build the highways, we had to persuade Highways to do that. We had to persuade the
188 Parks and Recreation people to takeover and develop parks. So it was not our show entirely. It had to be
189 Provincial. And we had quite a merry dance in getting the Provincial government to go along. And in fact,
190 although I won't detail the events now, we thought we were all hooked up to a regional redevelopment
191 scheme, and then when money got tight, Mr. Bennett withdrew the money which we had been promised,
192 and Mr. Gaglardi didn't build his bridge, and we found ourselves trying to implement plans when the
193 basis in terms of highways and bridges were not there.

194 So we had to work, to some extent, in the dark hope that BC Hydro and the government would
195 back us up, and in fact they did, as far as BC Hydro was concerned. Having done that, we then were able
196 to go to the public and say look here are the possibilities, here are the places you may settle. This, in
197 general terms, is what we will do for you if you want to stay, or if you want to move.

198 These were interesting meetings. One of them in particular I'll never forget. The very tense
199 meeting that was tense not because I was necessarily going to get thrown in the river, but because it was a
200 terribly, terribly tense situation for the people themselves. Because in that particular situation, I had to go
201 to people, and as far as I know they had no inkling of what was going to happen, and tell them "I'm sorry
202 but the community you have lived in for 50, 60 years is gone." You can imagine what kind of a meeting
203 that was. Anyways they were interesting meetings, they were productive. I think the public that were
204 there, contributed a great deal to the development of the real and realistic plans which followed. Having
205 held those meetings, and then having held surveys after that, we prepared plans for the new communities
206 out of the express wishes of the people, as far as we could get them.

207 Now this brings me to the subject of some of the difficulties involved in doing this. The first was
208 that there was nothing real about the whole business to the people concerned. The flooding hadn't
209 happened. The clearing hadn't happened, nothing had happened. And all you could do was say, "Look,
210 see up on that hill side, up there behind the trees, or up there behind that, well that's where we could
211 develop a new community, and we will if you want one". And they'd say "Well, where do you mean, up
212 there or over there or what?" In other words it wasn't real, it was still a chunk of raw landscape. No
213 tongues to be seen, no people, nothing. So there was an element of unreality in the whole thing which I
214 think must have been very difficult for them to cope with except on a basis of straight faith. And that was
215 a second difficulty. The fact that the faith had never been demonstrated. Anything they did, they had to
216 take on faith from an organization from which they had no right to expect faith. That was difficulty
217 number two.

218 The third one was as I said, that we depended to quite some extent upon the Provincial
219 government. And we depended in one particular respect, in the sense while we proposed three new
220 potential settlement communities from which they might choose, we had recommended strongly that they
221 chose one, that they try to build a bigger community with more facilities than they had otherwise had. We
222 suggested this on the assumption that a bridge was going to be built across the lakes at that point. And we
223 had had assurance as we thought, from the government and we had made those assurances public prior to
224 the meeting that that bridge would be built. In fact it was never built, and has never been built to this day.

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225 And yet it was the key to what we saw as the centrality and the attractiveness of that one community out
226 of three. But quite some time dragged on, while this bridge did not come to anything.

227 Another thing was, that development of the new communities was in fact rather slow. From what
228 I can see, not having been involved, it was rather inefficient for a number of reasons in which I can't
229 discuss indeed. Another difficulty was that especially in view of the slowness in developing the
230 communities, there was a certain amount of infighting amongst the inhabitants who were going to resettle.
231 And especially there was tension between two communities which were fairly close, and some of the
232 inhabitants could have settled in either. So it was a bit of a dog fight between who would go where, and
233 whether they were pinching each others potential residents and this sort of thing. So it was quite a
234 confused time.

235 Now talking about the results, the first thing I would say is that this is I think very significant. I
236 wish someone has suggested this, that this might be a principle one could work on. This was that those
237 who did resettle, by and large, went right back to the region they had been in before. In other words, very
238 few went from the area of this old community, to the area of that old community. Very few crossed over.
239 They homed right back substantially to where they had been. The homing instinct I think is very strong. I
240 don't think you can divorce this from landscape. When I say that, I'm not under playing the importance of
241 people... of having a group of people with whom you have associated, and who you hope to be your
242 neighbours again. I think landscape also has something to do with it. "Damn it I've been living with this
243 piece of Valley for 40 years, and I know that the sun rises over there. Don't ask me to go somewhere else
244 when the sun rises over another, or over somewhere else." I think it's a very significant, and a very literal
245 thing.

246 In any event, we built 3 communities. It's not what I would have preferred to do; didn't think it
247 made sense for them, but it wasn't my decision. In fact, they chose to resettle in three communities, one
248 of them nothing more than a hamlet, and the other 2 slightly larger hamlets. When I say that you must
249 remember however, you're talking about an area of considerable immobility. These people who typically
250 thought absolutely nothing of trucking over the hill to Vernon, or nearly 100 miles back to Nelson,
251 thought absolutely nothing of jumping in their cars and taking these trips, so mobility was a factor. And
252 you can't look at the communities as if they were necessarily self contained because you could travel out,
253 especially when the roads were fixed.

254 I've been doing injustice both to the people concerned and everything I learned out of the
255 Columbia River Treaty if I didn't say there was, there could not be, anything other than a very great deal
256 of stress, and distress involved on the part of the people who were displaced. There's no use blinking that
257 fact. For a certain period, there was a very great deal of real trauma, of real stress. I believe, and I wish
258 others would study it instead of myself now, that those who did, many of them settled down, as I hoped
259 they would, and have formed new communities, new ties, but obviously it takes time. And I suspect that
260 there will be some people who never quite get over the shock of experience of being moved, and never
261 quite build up, or re-establish ties they once had with their old friends around them.

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262 I did hear a very interesting remark when I was in Trail a couple of weeks ago when someone, to
263 my great delight, said, “Gee that’s an attractive little community at Edgewood.” He was talking about the
264 most vital of the three communities of the communities on the Arrow Lakes. Now that, did my heart good
265 because it suggested that there had been a real reconstitution of Edgewood as a community.

266 As a result, another result, where you once had a lake which flooded only for about 3 weeks in
267 the year, it really did flood, you now have a reservoir. And you could see this reservoir at its very worst
268 last year when it was typically 30 to 40 feet below full level almost all the year, and that I’m sure was
269 nothing happy to live with. If I was using one word expression, a one phrase expression, I would call it a
270 bath tub reservoir, or a bath tub lake. Because that’s exactly what it’s like. Water going up, and water
271 going down- bare banks, dust storms, and so on. There’s a vast difference between that, and the lake
272 which has natural shores, with the natural and prolific meeting of land and water. That, I think, is the
273 main physical difference in the lake.

274 Another one which I think is significant is depopulation, because after all, a great many people
275 left. A great deal of the social fabric moved, and those who did reconstitute their lives, did so on the basis
276 of a much smaller pool of people, and a pool of neighbours than they had had before. There was also a
277 great deal less waterfront, effective waterfront land, than there had been because the most prolific part of
278 the region before, and the most densely settled, was the Narrows, in which there was a great deal, of flat
279 and arable land.

280 Now let me say very briefly some of the lessons which I think we learned. Then I’ll hope you
281 pick up from there. The first thing is, I’m repeating myself to some extent, but there is absolutely no way
282 of displacing forcibly, people from a long establish environment, especially a rural one, without a great
283 deal of stress and distress. Having said that, I would go contrary to some of the conventional wisdom and
284 say money does help. There’s no question about it. Money helps, and the more money, I would say, the
285 better.

286 But where there’s a great deal of difficulty towards the giving of money by a public authority, and
287 that was the subject of a couple of chapters in the book, and one of the most puzzling, and one of the most
288 vexing things to me. How do you define justice? How do you define fairness? How do you define
289 generosity in terms that a civil servant can use? Just look at the legislature any day of the week, and find
290 out what the opposition members say if for one moment they smell the slightest suspicion of somebody
291 having spent the public monies wrongly. They’re chasing BC Hydro at the moment over the disposal of
292 some 60 year old power equipment in Jordan River.

293 But the point I’m making is that your civil servants are not supposed to spend your money in
294 arbitrary ways at their own discretion. They are supposed to look after your money, and to that extent
295 you lay down all sorts of rules whereby they may be constrained in the spending of it. Now, how then do
296 you expect or instruct a civil servant to be generous because he sees distress. How do you measure
297 distress? That is a civil servant’s dilemma. He may be the most sensitive man, the most compassionate
298 man on the face of the earth, but he’s also a civil servant. And if he’s not thinking about it, his boss or his

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299 directors are thinking about it, “What will the opposition say if we spend more than this?” Or if someone
300 complains to the Legislature that he got more than his neighbour did. That is a real dilemma. It wasn’t
301 helped at all in these circumstances that the expropriation of laws of BC, you can almost say, are non
302 existent. And they’re still non existent. I made a big pitch for better legislation in BC.

303 So there you are, BC Hydro and its civil servants, left to make these impossible decisions. And by
304 in large, they went a safe way towards generosity, but always safe. Now how could it be otherwise for
305 civil servants? And there were many phrases which I remember from those days which indicate quite
306 clearly the distress and the puzzlement of these people. They would say for example rationalizing and
307 defending themselves, we could make great guys of ourselves simply by giving money... suggesting that
308 they wanted to, but knew very well that they couldn’t. So that was really the dilemma. And until the
309 public, through legislation, frees the civil servants from those constraints, you will never have truly
310 generous settlements. And I’m convinced that true generosity, real generosity, is one of the things which
311 can assuage some of the hurts of people who were displaced. Not all of them, but some. If they feel they
312 are being meanly treated it just merely makes the whole thing a lot more bitter and nasty and frustrating
313 than it need have been.

314 Well, forgetting about that, and that’s one of the most important things in the whole experience as
315 far as I’m concerned, one of the basics was the inadequacy of the original concept in the Columbia River
316 Treaty. As I said earlier, the concept was really one of water, and power, and money. All the other things
317 were left to be solved, if they were to be solved, later on. And you can’t do that if you want to resettle
318 people; if you want to set up parks; if you want to reconstitute your region. If you want to mitigate the
319 losses from your natural resources, you have to think about them from the beginning. They have to be
320 built into your scheme. And they were not in the Columbia River; they couldn’t help that. We’re doing
321 much of that now. We’re still clearing; we’re still settling parks; we’re doing all sorts of things now, 10
322 years after the Treaty. So you have to start with a rounded and adequate and sensitive concept of what it is
323 you have done, and what it is you want to do.

324 Another obvious one of course is you have to have time to do these things. And it is rather ironic
325 in retrospect that the engineering, even the basic engineering studies not the design, took 15 years from
326 1944 to 1959. And yet in all that time there was virtually no thought given to the other aspects of the
327 Treaty. So, you need time, and you need facts. One of the things which I said was also you need adequate
328 administrative working mechanisms. Now BC Hydro existed as the so-called Entity responsible for
329 implementing the Treaty. And goodness knows it has problems of its own which stemmed to very large
330 measure from the fact that it had two heads. Not a BC Hydro, but a set of Hydra. And really that fact had
331 some very significant effects. How could you, for example, expect Dr. Keenleyside, trying to fix up
332 resettlement and land acquisition and so on, on the Arrow Lakes, when the land division wasn’t in his
333 piece of the organization, but in Dr. Shrum’s part. He wasn’t in control, full undisputed control of the
334 mechanisms he needed in order to bring about his particular needs in the Columbia River Treaty. And this
335 was only one of the frustrations and difficulty in this two-headed bit.

336 So apart from that, and apart from personality difficulties, and all the things that afflict men when

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337 they have to work together in large organizations, that was the fact that we had no real ties with the
338 provincial government. Victoria could have been in Tokyo as far as good communication was concerned.
339 We never really did get any mechanism other than the most sporadic contacts for bringing in the
340 provincial government Highways and Parks and all the others when they should have been brought in.
341 We're fortunate today in the sense that the so-called Environmental and Land Use Committee of the
342 Cabinet with the Secretary at its beginning to fill this role of forming a channel where a focus on the
343 provincial side whereby they knit their departments together and also feed out to the outside to bodies like
344 BC Hydro.

345 One of the other things we learned, is that in certain avenues as that, you cannot plan for, you can
346 only plan with. And we did that at the time. There really was no other way of doing it. But in many ways
347 in philosophical as well as practical ways, I cannot plan **for** you. I can plan **with** you, if you will let me
348 know what you want, what you need, what you will accept. But I can't plan for you. And in these
349 situations where you have kicked people out, and you're really trying to get them back on their feet again,
350 there's no other way. These are some of the things we learned. And perhaps that will enable you to shoot
351 a few arrows at me.

352 **Audience:** What alternatives were offered to those who chose to leave? What were they offered at all...
353 those who chose not to stay?

354 **Mr. Wilson:** Do you mind if I answer you first by a story about one of my favourite characters, Duke
355 Ellington? I first saw Duke Ellington on TV many years ago in London, England. I didn't know who the
356 man was, I had never seen him, and this whimsical looking character came on the screen and somebody
357 said, "Mr. Ellington how does it happen that you have managed to maintain for so many years a band
358 which itself contains so many first rate instrumentalists? How do you manage to keep them together when
359 they could all be Benny Goodman's, they could all be Duke Ellington's in their own right?" And he
360 chuckled as only he chuckles and he said, easy, I use a gimmick. Ok Mr. Ellington what's your gimmick.
361 I pay them money. And that's the only thing we could do in fact for the people who decided to leave. We
362 could only give them money. The only thing we could do beyond that, was that since there were a number
363 of people who were older, and not truly mobile, we could run them around, and take them to the areas
364 where they could find a home that they wanted, where they could spend the money in effect they had.
365 And that was one of the minor things we did. But in effect the only answer was we gave them money.
366 And introducing another subject, we didn't all just give them market value, although we had to maintain
367 that fiction. Sometimes they got much more than market value. Sometimes if it was quite obvious that the
368 money they would otherwise get wouldn't buy them anything, but by large, we gave them money.

369 **Audience:** [inaudible]

370 **Mr. Wilson:** I remember one of the things, one of the things I remember very well was the lawyer in
371 charge of the land acquisition program saying, "Wilson, as soon as we depart from market value, we're
372 sunk." That's the bind of the civil servant. Now I've already said that they didn't always, in fact, adhere
373 to that because they couldn't. Some of the shacks were pretty miserable- wouldn't have bought you a

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374 front door in many places - so they had to give them more than the value. But they could never admit that
375 they were giving a man more than market value.

376 **Audience:** [inaudible]

377 **Mr. Wilson:** No I'm sorry we don't. We didn't keep track of them. We don't know where they went. And
378 I'm very sorry that we don't because to that extent we don't know what we did to, or for, whether it
379 worked or whether it didn't, whether they died, if they did die why they died, we don't know. I think
380 that's one of the great tragedies and one of the great failings of the scheme.

381 **Audience:** [inaudible ... economic backwater?]

382 **Mr. Wilson:** Nope not really. It's always had a base in recent times in the sense that it is the centre of a
383 logging centre primarily of a forest management license area. There's a very active logging operation
384 right up and down the lakes, and down at the bottom river a pulp mill and sawmill. So it has a very good
385 and probably continuing base in the woods themselves. But as I said, the subsistence economy still works
386 for a number of people, so you can get along even though you don't have the normal steady job. But the
387 base is definitely logging. No question about that.

388 **Audience:** You mentioned there is a lack of communication between Victoria and the area itself. Was it
389 distance or was it partly due to the fact of the attitude of the people?

390 **Mr. Wilson:** Well I think there are a number of reasons for it. I would tend to put a lot of the blame for
391 that on simply the times, and our understanding of the way we had done things up 'till that point. The
392 provincial government and Hydro simply assumed they had a job to do. The job was building dams.
393 When you were ready, you went ahead and you built a dam and if there were people in the way well, you
394 cope with it then. I think this was the typical attitude. There was none of the participation that we are
395 beginning to take for granted. Another was that what information there was at that time was usually
396 highly technical and very limited in its circulation. So between that, and poor communication because the
397 area really was out of the way, in terms of access. The net effect the communications, the meaningful
398 communications were very, very poor.

399 **Audience:** Just extending that point that you made about communications, you also said that there really
400 were no strong ties in Victoria so far as BC Hydro was concerned. Why was it? Was that through a lack
401 of interest in Victoria, or ignorance or perversity? What can you attribute it to? The lack of
402 communication can also be two-sided.

403 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, I think part of the answer would have to be the answer I gave to this gentleman I gave
404 over here. We were accustomed to doing our jobs in bits and pieces. Highways built highways, and the
405 Water Comptroller looked after the water, and BC Hydro built the dams. They weren't in the habit of
406 getting together. But there were personalities involved in this too. It meant in effect that if we needed
407 anything, Dr. Keenleyside had to go out to Mr. Bennett in effect. And Mr. Bennett wasn't particularly
408 sympathetic to the sort of thing that Dr. Keenleyside was interested in. Now at one point, as I told you, we

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409 thought we had fixed up a regional redevelopment plan with quite a substantial budget attached to it. And
410 we had this arranged very officially, and very formally and I believe it had been met about twice, and then
411 money got tight and Mr. Bennett lowered the boom and nothing happened. To that extent, what
412 communication there was, was just chopped right in half. I don't think the fault was on BC Hydro's side
413 so much because we made the effort and Dr. Keenleyside acted as best he could as a link. But I think he
414 had a pretty rough time with Mr. Bennett. They just weren't soul mates.

415 **Audience:** [inaudible]

416 Mr. Wilson: The MLA. That's a very important point. It's always been a NDP riding, and it still is. And
417 the MLA was Ron Harding.

418 **Audience:** [inaudible]

419 **Mr. Wilson:** Well he was very effective, as far as he could be. He needled and needled us; and he
420 needled Victoria; and he raised hell in the House as far as an opposition member could; and he interceded
421 in all sorts of ways for his constituents individually. And he was the most useful man there was because
422 he was an active and useful man. But it suffered, I imagine, because it was in fact NDP territory. You
423 used to be able to tell literally in that riding where the paving stopped. I'll tell you exactly where the
424 paving stopped -at the Boundary of the riding.

425 **Audience (Tim Newton?):** Was BC Hydro in fact the right organization for doing this? It had sort of
426 tainted its reputation by being allied with the Treaty and everything else, and you mentioned that the
427 residents had no reason to trust BC Hydro at all. Wouldn't a completely independent organization have
428 been a better vehicle for this?

429 **Mr. Wilson:** I don't see there was a real alternative. You did need a large, and competent engineering
430 organization to do the job. BC Hydro existed. BC Hydro, in fact, had been working on the Columbia
431 River development for the last 20 years, so it was the obvious, body to do it, but it should not have had to
432 do it alone. And the faults of that were all too obvious. It should have been rounded out, bolstered by
433 better communications in Victoria, and some mechanism that brought all the pieces together. I wouldn't
434 say that it was BC Hydro's fault; I would say that was the government's fault.

435 **Audience (Tim Newton?):** In one other point you mentioned that money would help. One of our
436 previous speakers here suggested that an approach to this would be that incurring a cost-benefit analysis
437 you would take the profit over another scheme and this would be used to satisfy the people who were
438 directly suffering as a result of this particular project. Do you feel this would be an economic basis for
439 attacking this sort of problem?

440 **Mr. Wilson:** Well if you had a reasonable way of figuring out what the true profit was, that would be one
441 thing. The other thing is that, I don't know. I suppose that's the way an economist would look at it.
442 Trying to get a rational basis for doing something, that's the way one would look at it. But I think many
443 of the people would have been relatively happy, that is as happy as they could have been under the

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444 circumstances, had they felt they were given enough money truly to re-establish themselves in roughly the
445 same kind of house, and piece of land as they had had before. There were some scalpers of course, but I
446 didn't feel that there were many. And I think that given the shock I think they would have felt too
447 unhappy had they been able to settle without any worries about can I, or am I getting a shack where I
448 previously had a good home. I don't think most people worried too much about that. So provided we were
449 generous in the terms as by defined in their need, I think that would have been quite all right. I can't quite
450 buy the idea of truly trying to evaluate the profit, and giving them the profit. Because in an economists
451 sense, they hadn't done anything to earn that profit. And I think what you're really getting at not doing
452 them any damage. I don't like that answer.

453 **Audience:** You think there's many in the settlement in the three new communities now that feel better off
454 than they did before?

455 **Mr. Wilson:** Yes I'm reasonably sure that many of them do. I don't see how it's possible for example to
456 put people who had previously lived in very old houses, many of them without water, many of them
457 without electricity, and put them in completely new houses, and argue that they were not in pure physical
458 and maintenance terms better off than they were. And when I surveyed the place in 1970, this was the
459 place where there was almost complete unity. Yes, we're better off than we were before. You simply
460 can't argue about that. You can argue about the social effects, you can argue about the appearance of the
461 lake, you cannot really argue about the fact that most of them finished up with much better houses than
462 they had. They also finished up by and large with higher taxes. Not substantially higher, they were pretty
463 low, but I don't like to blink away that fact either. Because they had better property, therefore they had
464 higher taxes.

465 **Audience:** Just getting away from material, I wonder if you feel they should have been compensated for
466 the inconvenience, or the trauma of moving away, those kind of social effects. Do you feel those can be
467 financially compensated for?

468 **Mr. Wilson:** Well I do in the sense that if money as such would do something to ameliorate a man's
469 feeling that he has been, well sorry, screwed. If you could get away from that idea, then I think you'd
470 have done something. And if money would do that, and in many cases it would, I think that would be
471 money well spent.

472 **Audience:** Do you think they were adequately covered for?

473 **Mr. Wilson:** No, well depends what you mean by adequately. I have argued that I don't think they were
474 generously compensated. That is compensated clearly beyond the point of basic need. Up to the point
475 where they would feel they were getting a little more money than they had had. I don't think they were
476 compensated to that level. I'd like to think that with the exception of a few people, and this by
477 administrative mischance, I'd like to think by and large they were adequately compensated in our
478 calculating sort of way.

479 **Audience:** Would that be a policy ... would you feel...?

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480 **Mr. Wilson:** Yes I think so. I would, I didn't, pursue it because it simply wasn't getting anywhere at that
481 time. But I can't see, for example, why you shouldn't take the length of time that a man has stayed in the
482 Arrow Lakes into account in giving him something extra. That's only one approach one might take, but I
483 do believe that we could devise some means, no matter how rough they were, for measuring what
484 different people might get by way of a straight grant intended to assuage their feelings.

485 **Audience:** [inaudible... question about Waterfield's book.]

486 **Mr. Wilson:** Well you know I'd love to do that, but I don't know if I'm safe to do that. And I mean that
487 because a Bergy who is the subject of this book, is one of the most tenacious men you will ever meet.
488 And he is still doing everything he can through ministers and his member and everybody else, to, as he
489 would put it, 'recoup his fortunes'. So we are still in the process of having to cope with Bergy. Far be it
490 from me or anyone else to hold that against him. He just happens to be very tenacious man who feels he
491 was done wrong, and is determined to right it. Now, what can I say without getting myself into trouble
492 and into the headlines? Let me simply say that Waterfield wrote his book purely on the basis of what
493 Bergy told him. He never went near BC Hydro. I assure you, that BC Hydro has another story to tell.
494 Now my reason for my not wanting to go any further, apart from the fact that it's live, its still a
495 continuing problem with us, is that after all, Bergy's final settlement was made by a judge, in one of BC's
496 courts, after 3 or 4 days of hearing, with heaven knows how many appraisers and lawyers attached. The
497 process may and may not have been faulty but we went through pretty fully- a very exhaustive process.
498 He got what he got from the judge out of that process. And it's very, very difficult for an authority like
499 BC Hydro to open it up again and say, in effect, to the legal systems, "sorry you made a botch of that
500 one." Really the most important part I'm saying to you at the moment, that that was a one sided book. It
501 was a very useful book in one way. Very useful in the sense that Waterfield succeeds in portraying very
502 dramatically how a man feels when he's on the other side of the court room from a large corporation. He
503 did that very well. But having admitted that, and that's a valuable thing to demonstrate I think, I must
504 remind you that Waterfield's story was a one sided story, gained only from the man who stood to gain by
505 the story, and I assure you we have another one.

506 **Audience:** Getting back to this question of trying to compensate people for the personal effects the
507 movement had. You were trying to suggest that one of the problems was the framework within which you
508 had to work at the time, and also the mentality of the time? I was wondering, as a planner, was there
509 something about the state of the art of town planning that inhibited the breadth of the vision? Secondly,
510 has this experience with the people in the Arrow Lake and so forth, has that had any effect on the
511 philosophy of town planning, or the philosophy of planning?

512 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, let me tackle the second one first, and say that a very great deal has happened to the
513 teaching of planning, and the philosophy of planning, even in the ten years past. We're getting away from
514 a design basis for planning. You know, the purely rational engineering design basis for treating human
515 beings and their communities. We couldn't help it. We've been pushed by social sciences, and all the
516 other sciences in creation, and if we couldn't change, then there's no hope for us. But it has been changed
517 very, very considerably. Although, there are some schools that hadn't responded in that way and still have

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518 chosen design as a basis. I think the first question can be re-interpreted to mean, “Did you find yourself
519 handicapped, inhibited, limited by your training when you looked at the job?” I think I would best answer
520 that by saying that I think the real difficulties were not within my own competence. I don’t really think
521 there was anything really wrong with what we did, or what I did. It seemed to be the natural thing to do
522 under the circumstances. It’s the natural thing to do as soon as you leave the head office, and go there.
523 You just can’t miss once you go forth, what’s cooking, who the people are, and what they have to cope
524 with. And once you do that, you’re almost set on the right path. I don’t think, really, we went about a
525 rather difficult problem in the wrong way. But, we were stuck with the fact that we couldn’t do much with
526 the legal types who were heading land acquisition. And we couldn’t do much about Mr. Gaglardi and Mr.
527 Bennett. There were strict constraints all around us in what we did and I think these were really the more
528 important things in inhibiting us. I had some lovely battles with our legal people who couldn’t get away
529 from market value

530 **Audience:** Are you saying that the problem really was simply not enough thought were given to this
531 aspect of development?

532 **Mr. Wilson:** Well I think a considerable amount of unhappiness would have been saved, and many
533 people would have been a little happier had they been quite clear in their own minds they weren’t being
534 cheated. And a few more people might have settled.

535 **Audience:** [inaudible]

536 **Mr. Wilson:** Well there really wasn’t, they’re very small in scale you know. And there really wasn’t a
537 great deal that could be done. There wasn’t a great deal of flexibility in the situation. In fact, two of the
538 communities were considerably more computations in their settlement capacity and what was needed, so
539 there was always quite a bit of choice, for example, in what lot you would have. And once you had
540 decided that you want to settle in this community and not in that one, provided you had some choice in
541 lots, then there really wasn’t much more you could ask for, given we had done what we could in the way
542 of social facilities like community halls, and schools. Some insist we don’t have a dam thing to do with
543 the success of the community. They might be right, to a large extent. But there wasn’t a great deal of
544 flexibility at that scale once you had decided you wanted to settle there. I think this business of reaction as
545 Tanby would have said, reaction to adversity, that really I think had a lot to do with the way they felt.
546 They thought by the time the settlement was over them, they had done it. And to a large extent they were
547 right.

548 **Audience:** And who were they fighting, BC Hydro?

549 **Mr. Wilson:** Of course

550 **Audience:** [inaudible]

551 **Mr. Wilson:** No, I think we were the lightning rod in that. The only role that the BC government played
552 in some cases I think was as fixer around the back. In other words if you could get to the government, get

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553 to the minister, then he would prod Hydro so that they would do something in which they wouldn't
554 otherwise do. But I think we were the lightning rod. We were the obvious one with people who were
555 there, with people who were paying the money or were not paying it. To that extent, it was BC Hydro.

556 **Audience:** You fellows were carrying the can.

557 **Mr. Wilson:** We're carrying the can in many ways

558 **Audience:** [inaudible]

559 **Mr. Wilson:** Oh you mean.....

560 **Audience:** The average grant that you made to those who chose to go, that average figure, compared to
561 the average cost you incurred for those who cost to settle.

562 **Mr. Wilson:** I can't tell you, but I suspect that the people who settle, who remained, were probably better
563 off. If you looked at all the resources they finally finished up with. I think you could say without
564 exception, they had good houses for the simple reason that either they were brand new, or alternatively,
565 they were capable of being moved. So you can say without any doubt they all had new houses and the
566 terms of the moved houses, of reclaimed houses, were extremely generous. So I think that if you added up
567 all the values, those who stayed probably got a better value than those who left. Especially since, once
568 you left the Arrow Lakes, you were inevitably going into areas of higher values, higher property values.

569 **Audience:** But I was just wondering, interested about what the numbers were

570 **Mr. Wilson:** I couldn't begin to guess. They seemed pitiful by today's values. But that was 10 years ago
571 when inflation was just starting.

572 **Audience (Tim Newton?):** There always seems to be the difficulty that if you ask me what I want, my
573 immediate response is "What do you want for me?" In turn "Well, what would you like?" And you get
574 this sort of stand-off. I noticed that the approach you took was to build, plan your three communities
575 mentally, and then go out and offer these three alternatives to the people there. Would you do it again the
576 same way?

577 **Mr. Wilson:** Yes. I'd like to do it earlier, and I'd like to have many things they wanted tied up much
578 earlier. I would have liked to say, before I was able to, "Ok, we will give you, a new lot at the same value
579 as the old one whether or not that is a better one. We will not suffer the loss of a lot value." I would like
580 to be a lot further along in my planning. I would like to be able to say "If you decide to go here, we can
581 have this designed this within a year, and built within a year." But, in fact we took rather long over the
582 design and building of these communities, and some people drifted away in the process, and it was rather
583 a difficult process. I think to the extent that we were better planned and better organized, we would have
584 facilitated the process, and facilitated resettlement. But I would do it exactly the same way. I don't know
585 any other.

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586 **Audience (Tim Newton):** What sort of detail are you talking about? What time would you need between
587 when the water actually rose up from the time you started planning?

588 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, one thing we didn't have time for was detailed social survey. And this literally was
589 not possible in the time that we had. But we should have had very detailed survey's of who the people
590 were, what their economic support was, what their income was, what their desires were, if they could tell
591 us their desires. One of the problems that was obscured by this unfortunate legalistic approach to property
592 rather than people, was the problem of renters, who had no legal claim on BC Hydro at all. They might
593 have been living in somebody else's house for 50 years. But in law, because they were not property
594 owners, they had absolutely no claim against BC Hydro. Yet they might have been apart of the social
595 fabric and the economic fabric for 50 years. This was obscured because we started by talking about
596 property, property values, market values, and this certainly would have been smoked out by a decent
597 social survey to begin with.

598 **Audience (Tim Newton?):** At the time how long would this have taken?

599 **Mr. Wilson:** Given halfway competent people, 6 months to a year I would say. Not very long.

600 **Audience:** For 2000 people?

601 **Mr. Wilson:** Yes. 600 families.

602 **Audience:** That long?

603 **Mr. Wilson:** I'm guessing, could be shorter.

604 **Audience:** Who established the ground rules for taking a market approach?

605 **Mr. Wilson:** There's no question about it, in the sense that the law which was well known to BC Hydro's
606 land people, was well established. And BC Hydro has been acquiring property for many purposes, but
607 never on that scale for many years. In other words you have people quoting that knew their business.
608 Secondly, as is almost always the case, the people who headed land acquisition matters were lawyers who
609 will not, because they cannot, go beyond the law, and the rules of the law. And the rule in this case, was
610 the rule of market value. And damn it, it's still the rule, and that's what Mr. Justice Cline, while he was
611 still a Justice, said when he reviewed the expropriation of laws, he came back to market value. And one of
612 my beefs against his particular report, which is now (I forget) 6 to 10 years old, that he didn't have one
613 thing to say about people in that report. He went back to precedent for this and precedent for that, and
614 whether so and so complained, or whether so and so complained, and not one thing about people. But it
615 was due to practice, it was due to the law, and still is, and it was due to the people who handled the
616 business and who observed the law.

617 **Audience:** [inaudible]

618 **Mr. Wilson:** No, I wouldn't call them stop gap. No one was forced to go back to these communities.

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619 It's true that some may have gone back because they couldn't think any place to go, but by in large the
620 people who went back, went back very, very deliberately. In fact, some of them in fact went back with
621 absolute resolution of what they thought was an attempt by BC Hydro to push them out. And I can only
622 say that if you doubt the attachment of many of these people to that kind of life, and that kind of
623 landscape, then you need to go and see it and feel it for yourself. It's not a second rate kind of existence
624 that would really rather be in Vancouver and Victoria. No.

625 **Audience:** [inaudible]

626 **Mr. Wilson:** They are attracting some people slowly. But to answer you basic question, it is not stop-gap.
627 In fact Nakusp, and some of these communities have been taking on a new lease on life. It's quite marked
628 from what it was in 1950 ... 1964.

629 **Audience:** You mention crucifying- How many people were actually renters, rather than property
630 owners?

631 **Mr. Wilson:** Well we didn't try, we stumbled over that problem.

632 **Audience:** So you have no idea how many people at all?

633 **Mr. Wilson:** No.

634 **Audience:** Were in that position?

635 **Mr. Wilson:** Were in that position, no.

636 **Audience:** Do you think it would be worth while in a quantitative point of view to look at the census, and
637 the water rates, and the gas rates, and that sort of thing to find out how many people were in the area at
638 that time, and what happened to them after

639 **Mr. Wilson:** Well that would be true if they had water, and if they had gas.

640 **Audience:** What about the census?

641 **Mr. Wilson:** Censuses at that time, at 10 year intervals, by big chunks, enumeration areas, couldn't tell
642 you very much. Nope, you have to get down on the ground, household by household, all different. It
643 wasn't really a very big task after all. There were only roughly 600 families. Could have been done, given
644 time.

645 **Audience:** Would the residence the area be interested in that bridge you spoke of?

646 **Mr. Wilson:** You bet they would. At the moment they've got a ferry.

647 **Audience:** Is there any chase of getting the government, the NDP government perhaps?

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648 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, I'm sure they will get it some time. There getting along as far as I know, quite well on
649 the basis of ferry, in which they always had only a little better. Not faster, but better. And they don't
650 suffer unduly by that. You have queues in the summer time when people come visiting, or people coming
651 through the region. But it works, and it would cost 10 million, 15 million in that particular site to build a
652 half decent bridge. They'd love it of course.

653 **Audience:** [inaudible]

654 **Mr. Wilson:** Our dams ... where on Vancouver island?

655 **Audience:** [inaudible]

656 **Mr. Wilson:** I'm sorry are you talking about the Kokish one, in the north end of Vancouver Island. I
657 should say at this point not my subject.

658 **Audience:** Can you elaborate on that?

659 **Mr. Wilson:** Yes I'd love to. I can't tell you much about the Kokish except that the preliminary
660 investigations that were made suggest that the environmental damage would be fairly considerable. Quite
661 a bit of land would be flooded, relatively speaking, quite a bit would be flooded. And it's a relatively
662 productive, and prolific land. And I believe that all together the damage to fish, and wildlife and land
663 would be quite considerable. But the point I really want to make, and this is just amazing how silly things
664 can get between the press and politics sometimes, all we're doing there, and all we have been doing, but
665 we have been doing it for oh nearly 20 years in fact, we're studying the Kokish as a possibility. And how
666 do you know whether it is a possibility until you study it? How do you know what you can do in the way
667 of power in the province until you study it? But as soon as someone gets hold of the idea, "good heavens,
668 they may build a dam on the Kokish!", up we go.

669 **Audience:** [inaudible]

670 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, if you like to take over the power program in BC, fine. That's what it means.

671 **Audience:** Do you have any idea what the other alternatives were?

672 **Mr. Wilson:** Yes, Vancouver Island is very limited in its resources because its area is limited. So if
673 you're satisfied that you have used all the water power that you can, or should use on Vancouver Island,
674 there are only two things you can do. You can supply the Vancouver Island from the mainland, which we
675 do now by cable. And this has only two problems attached to it. One is that cables get dragged up by
676 anchors, quite regularly. We're really worried about that. They have been dragged in the past, and they
677 will probably be dragged again. Do you then keep adding cables, when you know there are more tankers,
678 and more super ports and all this sort of thing in a relatively narrow channel? But we have done, and we
679 will be building more cables. The other problem attached to cables is, you're taking power from
680 somewhere else on the mainland, right though this narrow strip in the lower mainland, and you feed it

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681 into more cables. And the people in the lower mainland, places like Delta, are beginning to not like that
682 either. They don't see why they should be the transmission corridor for power to go to Vancouver Island,
683 just as the people in the Kootenays are beginning to be tired about being the power ground for the Lower
684 Mainland. There's a sort of pecking order all the way through the province. The other alternative if you
685 don't like cables, or you feel that there are a limit of safety and reliability in cables, is to build, produce
686 power by thermal plants. And thermal means coal, or gas, or oil. You have to burn it. You have air
687 pollution; you may have thermal pollution. And if you don't like that, then you have nuclear. And it
688 depends on what cap you belong to. Whether you live in Nanaimo, and are attached to the Chamber of
689 Commerce, or whether you're someone else like Dr. Keenleyside who will not tolerate nuclear at any
690 price. If you want power, and we unfortunately know no way of damping down society's use of power,
691 then you have to chose some way of getting the power, and that amounts to choosing which kind of
692 damage you will prefer. Over to you.

693 **Audience:** [inaudible]

694 **Mr. Wilson:** Well obviously they've considered it seriously enough to go on with further studies. What
695 we're beginning to do now, and this is new, what can we do to minimize the damage, or to build on what
696 we're doing. We're doing this in certain models, on the Pend d'Oreille River for example. Not just a
697 negative question of how much damage are you creating but, what can you do about it? And we're
698 beginning to spend money on doing. We run up against interesting problems- how do you fix a piece of
699 natural environment? How do you look after the deer who normally look after themselves. How do you
700 reconstitute fish. How do you get deer to cross highways where you want them so they won't get knocked
701 over by cars? Reconstituting nature is quite a business, that we're beginning to get into.

702 **Audience:** Can you say in your studies which you're doing, I don't know the name is ...

703 **Mr. Wilson:** It's the Kokish River, Kokish Lakes.

704 **Audience:** Can you say, can you point to any specific sorts of things that BC Hydro is doing in it's study
705 which it can say, it learned from the experience of the Columbia?

706 **Mr. Wilson:** Not yet. We're still at a very basic stage in the Kokish, and it really amounts to what would
707 you do about the fish, what are the fish, where do they spawn, what would happen to the temperature in
708 the lakes if you dam them. It's those fairly basic things which are built up on really, on accumulated
709 knowledge of the fish and wildlife people. That's the stage we're at, at the moment. Kokish, if it came
710 about, would never involve people, but it would involve a lot of natural factors.

711 **Audience:** Can you tell us whether the Fraser has been eliminated as a power river?

712 **Mr. Wilson:** Well I'm afraid you have to put a timeframe on that. I think there's absolutely nobody
713 proposing to dam the main stem of the Fraser. Whether we still take that view in 1990, I wouldn't know,
714 and I won't be there to tell you. But at the moment, I don't think anyone is seriously considering the main
715 stem of the Fraser River.

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716 **Audience:** What about the Moran Dam proposal?

717 **Mr. Wilson:** That's what I mean. We are considering more or less actually some of the upper tributaries
718 of the Fraser, including a possible diversion from the Fraser, into the Peace system. In the McGregor
719 Diversion that would help to control the flood risk in the Fraser River. And having tried to cope with the
720 flood plain damage in 1952, I shudder when I think of the number of people in Richmond, and anything
721 we can do to make the Fraser a little more safe is probably a pretty good thing to be doing. Boy how is
722 that as a headline tomorrow? What did I say?

723 **Audience:** What is your opinion of advantages or disadvantages of nuclear power?

724 **Mr. Wilson:** I can't answer that. I really can't give you a good answer at the moment that's one that I
725 want to give.

726 **Audience:** Do you know anything about Douglas point. The plan on Lake Huron, and the effect of it's
727 heavy water part of it, and it's effect on the surrounding area.

728 **Mr. Wilson:** I bet Patrick can tell me, I can't, do you know?

729 **Patrick:** Well they've had to close the Provincial park.

730 **Mr. Wilson:** Have they?

731 **Patrick:** And they moved everyone.

732 **Mr. Wilson:** Why for a risk? Or for measured risk?

733 **Patrick:** Well, because of the gas given off from the Hydrogen Sulphide. They've brought truckers
734 through the park as a stop gathering for 2 years, and now they have to hose down the park, lose all the
735 money they put in as a recreation area, and start all over again farther north.

736 **Mr. Wilson:** Well that's a heavy water plant though ... production plant, I see. I was going to say what
737 about Pickering, but that's different, that's just a nuclear plant itself.

738 **Audience:** For the next two years after that, the rates fell for residential owners.

739 **Mr. Wilson:** Fell? They were pushed down by Premier Bennett.

740 **Audience:** Was it a government subsidy, or why did the rates.....

741 **Mr. Wilson:** I think it was a subsidy for a limited while. Do you know that Neil?

742 **Neil:** No I don't think it was a subsidy.

743 **Mr. Wilson:** It wasn't a subsidy, then how did he manage to do it?

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744 **Neil:** [inaudible]

745 **Mr. Wilson:** Well I wonder what that means though. Does that mean that we sailed a bit closer to the
746 wind and we didn't? We raised less of our own capital out of current earnings and we borrowed more,
747 was that what it meant?

748 **Audience:** some would call it, one of the points the Premier made at the time, 1961/62, was that he was
749 going to do this with about, I think about 45 million dollars worth of cash. In a differed taxation reserve
750 that the BC rectified. See, he was able to sequester and distribute in this way because it was no longer tax
751 reserves.

752 **Mr. Wilson:** But then it went on from year to year. Must have been reflected in some way.

753 **Audience:** Now we're just about back up to where they were in '61.

754 **Mr. Wilson:** Not quite, I had reason to write a letter to a lady that was objecting ... I had to remind her
755 that she was paying less now, than she would have paid under the 1961 rates. So we're just about up to
756 the same level.

757 **Audience:** The other thing that, as I recall, that Cabinet insisted at the time, the new BC Authority do in
758 1962 when the Power Commission and the BC Electric was put together, was introduce the postage stamp
759 rate. A new one right throughout the whole province.

760 **Mr. Wilson:** Well not quite, but almost. Yes that's true. Of course that was the reason for the formation
761 of the BC power commission at all that if you go back to 1944 or 45 or whatever it was, the only power of
762 any consequence produced in BC was in the Lower Mainland and Victoria where there was to be profit
763 from power. The BC Power Commission was brought into being in order to bring public power to the rest
764 of the province. That was how it started. And the postage stamp rate, and the integrated system, are
765 merely evolutions of this philosophy.

766 **Audience (Tim Newton?):** One of the points that sort of sums it up, if we tie all of these sort of points
767 together, we find that somebody in the Arrow Lakes is suffering as a result of wanting power here, or
768 we're suffering for people who want power on the island. BC Hydro's in the middle. Do you feel that BC
769 Hydro has somehow upon reflecting on the customer the cost that he personally is causing? Would BC
770 Hydro consider something like rationing power, or could this be done politically to show that, in fact, the
771 extra power I'm using in my house is costing somebody inconvenience, or sorrow, or anguish in the
772 Arrow Valley.

773 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, there's an awful lot we don't know about power, and how it's used, and how it's
774 valued. And I suspect that one of the reasons is, is that power is so cheap. Do you think about flicking on
775 a switch? You don't. I would say that nobody, literally nobody except the odd pensioner, they get it in the
776 neck again, no one thinks about power except the large user of power, for whom it is a large chunk of an
777 industrial or commercial production bill. Nobody thinks about power. We know a lot about how it's used,

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778 what it's used for, but its uses are so diverse, and their so completely integrated with our way of living, in
779 an unimaginable number of ways that it's difficult really, to think about substantial reduction in the use of
780 power. Especially that one of the bases of entry to power is the fact that we're all more affluent, and we
781 build bigger houses and we want to heat them the easy and the cheap way. Not the cheap way but the easy
782 and clean way. And we still buy cars, and some of us buy boats and it's more, more of things and size,
783 and we want power to go along with that. And it's difficult with the most serious intention of the world,
784 in the world, of getting grips with the power consumption bit. It's very difficult for us to foresee that we
785 can make more than a very limited amount of difference to the power that people use. Now we're
786 beginning to study this very seriously, but to get back to one of your suggestions, I don't think that BC
787 Hydro, as a provincial agency, could possibly ration power. I doubt if we will be allowed politically to
788 raise the price of power to the point where it hurts. That's the point where you become aware of it. I
789 question whether we'll be able to raise the price to the point where that as such begins to act as a
790 deterrent. You mustn't, I'm sure you'll accept that the raising of power rate is a very sensitive matter
791 politically. Not just the fact that you raise it from 5 cents to 7 cents per mills. But where do you raise it?
792 Does it fall on the big user or the small user or the man in the middle? Do you have an inverted rate or
793 whatever kind of rate? It's a very complex, very sensitive business. I don't think BC Hydro as a
794 provincial administrative agency can do that, to any effect. The other thing, in this particular government,
795 as far as I know, like no other, power and how it's produced and how it's paid for, and how it will be paid
796 for through rates is a matter of Ministerial scrutiny as it had never been before. In other words, Mr.
797 Williams takes an intense and knowledgeable interest in precisely what BC Hydro is doing. And that is
798 new in BC Hydro's experience. To my mind it's a most welcome change because you can say to that
799 extent that what we are doing has the sanction of the people, if the democratic process means anything.
800 We are not now an agency off by our own, producing power and to hell with you. We're now producing
801 power according to rules set by in large by a minister who is presumably responsive to what his voters are
802 saying.

803 **Audience:** [inaudible]

804 **Mr. Wilson:** You're talking about flexibility, not flexibility, elasticity in power use?

805 **Audience:** [inaudible]

806 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, one thing, we know that power, the use of power is elastic, but you have to ask
807 yourself under what conditions, and for how long. We know very well people will do things, amazing
808 things under periods of stress, in periods of crisis, in times of war, for limited periods, they will do all of
809 these things, and you can cut down the demand for the use of power quite drastically. But our people are
810 such that they will not tolerate it without a very good, apparent reason for it. And they will not willingly
811 put up with it for very long. Now we know this. People have tried it, and it's quite a game you know for a
812 while. Switch the light off buster, or keep your bath temperature down, or whatever. But after awhile it
813 becomes a bore. It's not the easy thing to do, and people don't do it unless there is real pressure and I
814 think it would take more than a shift from 5 mills to say 8 mills or even 10 mills, except for the older
815 people, and poorer people who will be hit. So it is elastic, within limits. But going to the way in which

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816 power is disseminated through all of society's activities, it's very difficult to zero in on anything other
817 then society as a whole and it's useless in an attempt to cut down power. Now as long as that is so, then
818 we are back to what I said earlier. We are back to the choice of doing the least disruptive thing. And
819 believe me, we were trying like mad to do that.

820 **Audience:** If the Peace River development was not going on at the same time as the Columbia River
821 development, would you suppose there would have been money available for more studies about its
822 people?

823 **Mr. Wilson:** I don't think the cost of studies had anything to do with it. If we had wanted to do the study
824 we could have done them. They wouldn't have added anymore than a half of a percent or something like
825 that to the cost of a project like that.

826 **Audience:** Was it just primarily the time factor?

827 **Mr. Wilson:** No it was our knowledge, our desire, our experience, as a society I mean. After all,
828 environment was not an issue for many people, 10 years ago. There weren't quite enough of us milling
829 around hard enough and destroying enough, except for the few people who saw it coming. We have lived
830 through the most fantastic revolution after all, in standards and expectations and concerns in the last 10
831 years. It's just fantastic how different the world is in terms of environmental concern and to a large extent
832 human concern. We're living in a different age.

833 **Audience:** [inaudible]

834 **Mr. Wilson:** Well, I wouldn't't blame our West Kootenay resident for saying that they were not
835 satisfactory to him. I can tell your valley like the Slocan Valley, because they have new transmission lines
836 through the Valley. If I were one of them, I'd say the same thing. If I were a provincial politician, or
837 provincial power administrator and I still had this inescapable need to provide power for the population
838 increase in the province, I might very well decide, and this is what has been decided that this is the least
839 disruptive place, the best place, the most economical place in which to do it. In that case, the people in the
840 West Kootenay just have to grin and bear that particular thing. That's the kind of decision we have to
841 make. And we're going on making them.

842 **Audience:** [inaudible]

843 **Mr. Wilson:** I'm sorry I'm not with you on that. Are you talking about West Kootenay Power and Light
844 here? Well, they do.... well actually we're getting into time problems here. West Kootenay Power and
845 Light produces power for two purposes. One is for Cominco's own needs, which is by far the bulk of the
846 power needs there. West Kootenay and Light itself, is the utility company which supplies power to the
847 people of that area, and into the Okanagan. They do now, in fact, they export power now. But, in a few
848 years time, and by a few, I mean less than five, that area, through it's own growth, will be short of power,
849 and they will need some of the power which we are now planning to produce out of the Pend d'Oreille.
850 But quite apart from that, as far as we can tell, the 7-Mile development on the Pend d'Oreille is the least

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851 disruptive, and most economic source of power available to us now for production five or six years hence.

852 **Audience:** I believe Mr. Montgomery is playing tricks on me. But in the mid-60's the residence of all the
853 communities served by West Kootenay petitioned the government to ensure they not be caught under the
854 umbrella of BC Hydro. I think their rates are lower.

855 **Mr. Wilson:** Their rates are lower, they are at the moment yes. Well they should be, they are sitting on
856 top of their own power with minimum transmission. And low cost power paid for with 3% borrowings. I
857 was really annoyed the other day when one of the chief executives of West Kootenay Power and Light
858 was saying in a rather disparaging way how efficient they were, and how much cheaper their power was
859 in West Kootenay. Well, heaven's above, any power produced 40 years ago at 3% money is bound to be
860 cheaper today than power produced today at 9%!

861 **Mr. Cook:** Anymore questions? Thank you very much indeed. I'm sure that it's a matter of some regret
862 on yourself as well as for the rest of the staff that Mr. Donald Waterfield who was to be here this evening
863 with Mr. Wilson, could not be here because he has suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, and is now in a
864 hospital in Victoria, and has been so for the next 3 or 4 weeks. Our plan originally was to try and establish
865 some link to Mr. Waterfield and Mr. Wilson. I would like to announce that our next talk is on Friday with
866 Ian McDougal, and is entitled 'Lessons of the Columbia River Treaty as applied to joint Energy
867 Development'.