

North Central Transmission Line Project

Report of
the Federal-Provincial
Environmental Assessment Panel

Submitted under the
Federal Environmental Assessment
and Review Process
and
Manitoba Environment Act

October, 1993

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North Central Transmission Line
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW PANEL

GEORGE CAMPBELL
Chairman

THOMAS HENLEY
Panel Member

HARRY WOOD
Panel Member

**OUR GUZDZNG
PRINCIPLES**

- *The review needs to be sensitive to cultural and community needs and must involve those most directly affected.*
- *The review process must be grounded in the impacted northern communities*
- *The process is as important as the final report to the Ministers.*

SECRETARIAT

The Panel is assisted by a Secretariat, located at:
Bldg. 3 - 139 Tuxedo Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 0H6
Telephone (204) 945-8425
Fax (204) 945-0175

LIAISON PERSONS

Liaison Persons, to assist local residents, are located in the seven communities which would be served by the project under review:

Oxford House
God's Lake Narrows
God's River
Red Sucker Lake
Garden Hill
Wasagamack
St. Theresa Point

September 29, 1993

The Honourable Pierre Vincent
Minister of the Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N8

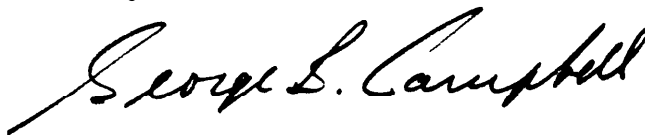
The Honourable Glen Cummings
Minister of the Environment
Manitoba Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

The Honourable Pauline Browne
Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1N8

Dear Ministers:

I am pleased to inform you that the Panel has completed its review of the North Central Transmission Line Project in accordance with the terms of reference issued in February, 1992. The Panel respectfully submits this final report for your consideration.

Sincerely,



George B. Campbell
Chairman

Canada

Manitoba 

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Manitoba Hydro has proposed, in response to interest from the project communities, and at the request of the Initiating Department, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, to construct about 520 km (320 miles) of transmission and distribution lines from Kelsey Station on the Nelson River to Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide the communities, currently served by local diesel generating plants, with unrestricted electrical supply. The proposal is known as the North Central Project (NCP) and has been planned by Manitoba Hydro, Canada, and Manitoba, working in association with the communities.

Initial environmental screening by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada indicated that the environmental effects of the project were unknown and might be significant. Recognition of that fact led the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to refer the project to the Federal Minister of Environment.

In February of 1992, the Federal Minister of Environment and the Provincial Minister of Environment appointed an independent Panel to undertake a joint federal-provincial review which would meet the requirements of both governments.

The Panel was mandated to examine the interrelationship of all of the environmental, social, cultural and economic factors, in keeping with the principles of sustainable development.

This assessment of the North Central Project constitutes the first joint environmental review to be completed between Canada and Manitoba. Additionally, the North Central Project is the first in Manitoba where the principles of sustainable development have been applied as part of the assessment process.

The Panel initially addressed the mandate by establishing Guiding Principles, by preparing a work plan and schedule, and by consulting with community leaders and other interested parties. From the outset, the Panel viewed the proposed North Central Project in the broader context of development which has occurred in northern Manitoba over the past several decades.

As well as seeking the advice and guidance of community leadership, the Panel visited the project communities, examined the proposed route by air, and reviewed existing documentation. To facilitate effective communication with the Aboriginal people in the project communities, the Panel contracted local liaison workers to prepare for the community meetings held during June and July of 1992. In addition to English, Cree and the Island Lake dialect

were used extensively throughout the public consultation process.

The comments made and the concerns raised at community meetings and in written submissions were reflected in the Panel's Draft Guidelines, a written report which was widely circulated for public review and comment in July of 1992.

The Panel revisited the project communities to receive oral and written responses on the Draft Guidelines and to ensure that community leadership and residents were satisfied that all matters of concern had been identified.

In September of 1992, the Panel issued Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement. This report was directed to Manitoba Hydro, and formed the basis for the preparation of the formal Environmental Impact Statement by the Proponent. The Guidelines were comprised of questions and concerns about the North Central Project.

Following release of the Guidelines, Manitoba Hydro worked on preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement while the Panel conducted follow-up work and prepared for the next phases of the environmental assessment process. The Panel held meetings with the North Central Agreement Committee, Northeast Leadership Group, the North Central Technical Advisory Committee, and senior officials from the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office and Manitoba Environment.

The Panel received the *North Central Project: Environmental Impact Statement* (EIS) from Manitoba Hydro in April, 1993. The Environmental Impact Statement contained four volumes: an Executive Summary, the main document, a folio of maps, and a volume of appendices. As a package, the four volumes of the EIS responded to questions and issues raised by people at the community meetings and return visits and in written submissions to the Panel.

The EIS was released to the public and interested parties immediately upon receipt. A period of assessment and review of documents followed during which the Panel received comments on, and evaluations of, the adequacy of the EIS. These responses were made available to all parties through the public registry system. In mid-June of 1993, the Panel concluded that the Proponent's EIS provided an adequate basis for the public review and announced public hearings for July and August, 1993.

Public hearings were held in Thompson, God's Lake Narrows, Oxford House, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack, and St. Theresa Point. Over 125 oral and written presentations were received on a

variety of topics related to the project from the more than 500 people who attended the public hearings.

The Panel concluded public hearings confident that all parties had participated in a fair and open forum where all views, concerns and issues had been discussed.

That dialogue, written submissions from interested parties, and the Environmental Impact Statement itself, served to provide the Panel with an extensive basis of information on which to prepare final conclusions and recommendations.

- 1) The Panel concludes, based upon a careful review of all data and information, that the proposed North Central Project is necessary to ensure that present and future generations are able to have access to unrestricted electrical service essential for development of a modern life-style and economy.

The Panel further concludes that the current diesel system is inadequate to meet future needs and to provide a level of service consistent with that available to other communities in Manitoba. Population growth in the project communities, demand for higher amperage service, and contamination associated with the spill of diesel fuel necessitate and lend urgency to more appropriate options.

The Panel also concludes that the proposed North Central Project may be completed in such a manner that negative project impacts on the environment, culture, and people are mitigable. In addition, the Panel concludes that the project can be constructed and operated in a manner consistent with the principles of sustainable development. The Panel is confident that the traditional Aboriginal way-of-life based upon trapping, fishing, hunting and gathering, so prevalent in the communities, will continue to meet people's needs for sustenance and personal well-being associated with harvesting activities on land and water.

- 2) The Panel examined closely both the process leading to route selection and the proposed routing of the line. The Panel concludes that cost and efficiency criteria have been complemented by attention to environmental factors such as sensitive areas, critical wildlife habitat, visual effects, and individuals' concerns regarding the project. There was clear evidence that alternate routes had been thoroughly examined and that input from local leadership and residents contributed to final route selection.

Final routing decisions remain for portions of the right-of-way between God's Lake Narrows and Garden Hill, and in the approach to Wasagamack. The Panel believes that the consultative process and good-

will demonstrated by all parties to date will lead to final resolution of these routing issues in a timely manner.

- 3) Following an extensive and systematic public consultation process, the Panel has **recognized** primary project impacts in four categories:
 - on the **biophysical environment** including, but not limited to, water crossings, wildlife habitat, wildlife (such as moose, caribou, birds), and vegetation;
 - on the **traditional Aboriginal way-of-life** including trapping, fishing, hunting, and gathering;
 - on **people in their communities** including ability to pay monthly electrical bills, house rewiring and retrofit, safety (**electro-magnetic** radiation, chemical use, and adequacy of the distribution system), and employment, education and training; and
 - on **legal and jurisdictional issues** including treaty land entitlement, use of reserve land, ownership of project facilities, economic development and related benefits (recreation, hospital, school, sewer and water, and government facilities), compensation, and improved working partnerships among interested parties.

The Panel concludes that effective action plans have been proposed to protect the environment, to respect the culture and values of Aboriginal people, and to meet the needs of present and future generations for access to unrestricted electrical service.

- 4) The Panel concludes that plans and mitigative measures related to decommissioning of diesel plants, safety and reliability, environmental monitoring and operating procedures are sufficient to protect the biophysical environment and the people resident in the project communities. Scrutiny by local people is anticipated to be essential for monitoring project impacts.
- 5) The Panel expects, and is confident, that action plans for the mitigation of negative impacts and for the enhancement of project benefits will ensure that the North Central Project conforms to both regulatory and community requirements. The Panel concludes that project success depends, to a large extent, on the continued development of effective partnerships and working relationships among the Proponent, community leadership and residents, governments and other agencies. The community-based approach used to date must be continued and strengthened.

Based upon a careful weighing of the evidence, and the conclusions described above, the Panel recommends that the North Central Project proceed.

Recommendations setting out specific terms and conditions are presented in Chapter 6.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES

Community Supported Agency (CSA) - was to be established according to the Project Agreement of March 16, 1992, between the federal and provincial governments and Manitoba Hydro. The Community Supported Agency is intended to help the communities maximize the benefits of the project. In order to achieve that objective, particularly in the areas of training, employment and business opportunities, the CSA would provide two-way communication and information between the communities and Manitoba Hydro, as well as the governments. Following extensive negotiations between the community leadership, Manitoba Hydro and the federal and provincial governments, funding for the CSA was confirmed in July, 1993.

Environment Protection Workers - would be qualified local people who would be trained by Manitoba Hydro to monitor and assess environmental performance and resource impacts in the field. These people would occupy specially created, part-time positions, financed by Manitoba Hydro.

Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Office (FEARO) - oversees the Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP), as applied throughout the Government of Canada, on behalf of the Minister of Environment. This takes the form of providing departments with procedural guidance for initial assessment and assists them in developing their own initial assessment procedures. Once a proposal is referred for public review, FEARO drafts the panel's terms of reference, identifies potential panel members and provides secretariat support to the panels.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) — is the Initiating Department in this review that provides primary funding to First Nations to enable them to provide programs and services such as local government, education, housing, economic development, community infrastructure and social development. In addition, the department has certain statutory obligations with respect to the administration of reserve lands. In some cases these responsibilities are delegated to the First Nations.

Island Land Tribal Council (ILTC) -was established by the four Island Lake First Nation communities of Garden Hill, St. Theresa Point, Wasagamack and Red Sucker Lake to work for the interests of the band members of the member communities. Operating under the guidance of its member Chiefs, ILTC staff offer expertise and support in the areas of finance, lands commission, education,

health services, technical services, tribal justice, family services, and economic development. Among its objectives, ILTC works to identify regional priorities for social and economic development, and to maximize the benefits of those opportunities. ILTC cooperates with all levels of government to further enhance Indian government. ILTC also works to ensure that the federal government honours and respects the existing trust relationship with First Nations.

Keewatin Tribal Council Inc. (KTC) — is a non-profit organization representing eleven First Nation members including three of the project communities, God's Lake Narrows, God's River and Oxford House. Responsibilities include: fostering inherent right of self-government of the member bands; developing and delivering programs and services; acting as a resource to enable such bands to better deal with government departments and with the private sector in the areas of self-determination, capital projects, development programs and service programs; and identifying and seeking financial resources and developing and implementing programs for the delivery of social, educational and economic services to the member bands.

Manitoba Environment — is a provincial government department which administers six acts, including The Environment Act, as part of its mission to ensure a high level of environmental quality for present and future generations of Manitobans. Under The Environment Act, the North Central Project requires an environmental licence before construction can begin. The North Central Panel was appointed to provide recommendations on whether a licence should be issued and, if so, under what terms and conditions.

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) — is incorporated to promote, advance and protect the interest of the membership. In particular MKO was established for the following purposes: to preserve and advance the culture and society of First Nation citizens; to protect and expand treaty and Aboriginal rights; to protect and advance the powers, authority and autonomy of member First Nations; and to promote and advance the economic, educational, social and cultural goals of the citizens of First Nations.

Manitoba Northern Affairs — coordinates provincial government activities and encourages human and economic development in northern Manitoba. As part of its jurisdiction, the department supports local government representation for 8,700 people in over 50 small non-reserve communities, including approximately 300

people in God's Lake Narrows, Island Lake, Red Sucker Lake and Oxford House. Manitoba Northern Affairs will contribute 15 percent of the capital cost of the North Central Project.

North Central Agreement Committee - oversees the implementation of the North Central Project Agreement that sets out the financial commitments of the federal and provincial governments and Manitoba Hydro to construct the North Central Project. The agreement was signed in March, 1992, by the Federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Manitoba Minister of Northern Affairs, and both the President and the Chairman of Manitoba Hydro, and was witnessed by the Chairman of the Northeast Leadership Group. Both governments, Manitoba Hydro and the Northeast Leadership Group are represented on the North Central Project Agreement Committee.

North Central Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) - was formed under the Manitoba Environment Act to provide a focussed provincial input into the environmental review of the North Central Project. The TAC was chaired by a representative of Manitoba Environment, with membership from the departments of Northern Affairs, Natural Resources, Highways and Transportation, Energy and Mines, and Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. Federal departments also provided expertise to the TAC.

Northeast Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee Inc. (NEMTCC) - was established in 1990 by the leadership of the communities of the North Central Project Region and the neighbouring community of Shamattawa, to identify and implement training programs to meet the needs of local socio-economic development. NEMTCC works in partnership with the elected leadership, and one resident of each member community is appointed to the board of directors. Most of the programs delivered to date have been in the construction trades, and future programs are also planned for business and computer skills. NEMTCC is funded under the Community Futures Program of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. NEMTCC is expected to perform an important role in providing training related to the North Central Project.

Northeast Leadership Group - is comprised of the Chiefs and Mayors of Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Island Lake, Wasagamack, and St. Theresa Point.

Wapanuk Corporation — is a business initiative owned by the seven First Nations of northeastern Manitoba and the community councils of God's Lake Narrows and Island

Lake. Wapanuk has undertaken two contracts with Manitoba Hydro since 1990, and plans to negotiate with Manitoba Hydro for all sole-sourced contracts for the North Central Project. In the future, Wapanuk expects to become involved in other major construction projects in northeastern Manitoba.

KEY TERMS IN THE REVIEW PROCESS

Aboriginal - is an individual who identifies himself or herself as a status Indian, non-status Indian, Inuit or **Metis**.

Biophysical - is the living (bio) and non-living (physical) components of the environment; in other words, the total environment.

Community Meetings - were held in the seven project communities, four neighbouring communities and Thompson between June 22 and July 13, 1992. At the meetings, people shared their questions and concerns about the proposed project with the Panel, in order to assist in the preparation of Draft Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement.

Draft Guidelines - were issued following the community meetings, to assist in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement. Released in August, 1992, the Draft Guidelines were contained in a document which also included a Preface and Chairman's Remarks, and was accompanied by tables which summarized issues raised by people at the community meetings. People were invited to respond to the Draft Guidelines and suggest improvements prior to finalization of the EIS Guidelines.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - was prepared by Manitoba Hydro according to the Guidelines issued by the Panel in September, 1992. Completed in April, 1993, the EIS is a documented assessment of the environmental and social consequences of the proposed project.

Guidelines - contained the questions and issues which Manitoba Hydro had to address in preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Guidelines were drafted as a result of oral and written presentations made by community leaders, local residents and other interested parties at community meetings and return visits between June and September, 1993. The Guidelines were issued by the Panel to Manitoba Hydro and released to the public in September, 1992.

Public Hearings - were held during June and July, 1993, in all project communities, as well as Thompson. Over 125

oral and written presentations were made by community leaders, residents, Aboriginal organizations, and government departments. The public hearings provided a forum for discussion about the proposed project, and along with information received during the environmental review, provided the Panel with the basis on which to make recommendations to the Ministers.

Public Registries-were established by the Panel in band offices in the project communities, as well as other key locations in other centres, to provide people with access

to information related to the environmental review. The Public Registries received regular updates of information from the Panel's secretariat office.

Return Visits - were held in August and September, 1992, in the project communities. In June and July, 1992, the Panel held community meetings (see above), following which the Panel released Draft Guidelines. At the return visits, people were able to make suggestions for improvement for the final Guidelines, and ensure that all their questions and concerns had been heard.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- February 27, 1992** The Federal and Provincial Ministers of Environment appointed George B. Campbell, Thomas J. Henley and Harry Wood to a Panel to undertake an independent, comprehensive review of the environmental impact of the proposed North Central Project.
- March 26, 1992** The Panel, at its first formal meeting, established three Guiding Principles, a **workplan** and a schedule for the environmental review.
- April, 1992** Liaison workers from the project communities were contracted and trained to inform local leaders and residents about the environmental review process. The liaison workers, all of whom were fully conversant with local customs and languages, also provided logistical support for the Panel.
- May 7, 1992** The Northeast Leadership Group and the Panel exchanged greetings and information at a meeting to discuss the environmental assessment process. The meeting concluded with the leadership's endorsement of the Panel's Guiding Principles, **workplan** and schedule.
- June 1 - 5, 1992** The Panel toured the project area, viewing sites where the proposed project may be constructed. During the site tour, the Panel also met with local leaders and residents to exchange greetings and inform them of the environmental review process.
- June 16 and 18, 1992** Community meetings were scheduled to begin on June 16. However, the Panel complied with a request from local leaders to postpone and reschedule the initial week of meetings, out of respect for an Elder who had passed away. On June 18, the Panel and representatives of Manitoba Hydro flew over the proposed transmission line route.
- June 21 - July 11, 1992** The Panel held community meetings in the project communities, the neighbouring communities of Cross Lake, Split Lake, Pikwitonei and Ilford-War Lake, and the regional centre of Thompson. Local residents shared concerns and questions about the proposed project with the Panel. Written submissions were also encouraged.
- August, 1992** Draft Guidelines, based on the presentations during the community meetings, were released by the Panel. The Draft Guidelines were accompanied by a Preface and Chairman's Remarks. The Draft Guidelines, Preface, and Chairman's Remarks were entitled, *Working Document to Assist in the Preparation of Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement*. Two appendices were printed under separate cover. One appendix contained all written submissions received during the community meetings and the other appendix contained tables that summarized issues raised during the community meetings.
- August 24 - September 3, 1992** The Panel made return visits to the project communities, to receive suggestions for changes and additions to the Draft Guidelines and to ensure that the leadership and residents were satisfied that all their questions and concerns had been identified. Written submissions were also accepted.

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- September 23, 1992** The Panel issued final Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement to Manitoba Hydro. The Guidelines contained the questions and issues which Manitoba Hydro had to address in preparing the Environmental Impact Statement. The document also contained the Chairman's Remarks and tables summarizing the issues raised at the community meetings and return visits. In addition to being issued to Manitoba Hydro, the Guidelines were widely distributed to a mailing list that included everyone who made a presentation at the community meetings and return visits as well as government departments and other interested parties.
- October, 1992
- March, 1993** While Manitoba Hydro prepared the EIS, the Panel prepared for the next phase of the environmental review. Plans for the next phase were the focus of meetings with key stakeholders, including the Northeast Leadership Group, North Central Agreement Committee, North Central Technical Advisory Committee, and senior federal and provincial environmental officials.
- April 13, 1993** Manitoba Hydro completed the Environmental Impact Statement and delivered it to the Panel. The EIS was immediately released to the public and government agencies for their comments on whether or not the EIS adequately addressed the Guidelines. A 60-day review period began to determine the adequacy of the EIS.
- May, 1993** Liaison workers were again contracted in the project communities. They informed people about the environmental review process, emphasizing the importance of the 60-day EIS review period and the public hearings. The EIS and the Executive Summary were provided to interested people, and newsletters were distributed. One panel member and the co-executive secretaries also visited the project communities to meet with local community representatives.
- June 15, 1993** Twenty written submissions from Aboriginal leadership and government departments were received by June 15, the deadline for the 60-day EIS review period. The written submissions discussed the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Statement, and also provided other observations and recommendations for the Panel's consideration.
- June 22, 1993** After careful review of the EIS and the comments received from interested parties, the Panel determined that the EIS adequately addressed the Guidelines, and announced public hearings to begin July 19. The twenty submissions received during the EIS review period were forwarded to Manitoba Hydro, so that the issues related to the proposed project could be addressed at the public hearings.
- July 19 - August 7, 1993** Public hearings were held in the project communities and Thompson. Over 125 oral and written submissions were received from some 500 people who attended the public hearings.
- August - September, 1993** The Panel completed an evaluation of information provided throughout the environmental assessment, and prepared the final conclusions and recommendations.
- September 29, 1993** The Panel completed its mandate upon sign-off of the final report.
- October, 1993** The report was printed for presentation to the Ministers.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Manitoba Hydro has proposed, in response to interest from the project communities, and at the request of the Initiating Department, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), to construct about 520 kilometers (320 miles) of transmission and distribution lines from Kelsey Station on the Nelson River to Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide the communities, currently served by local diesel generating plants, with unrestricted electrical supply. The proposal is known as the North Central Project (NCP) and has been planned by Manitoba Hydro, Canada, and Manitoba working in association with the communities.

Initial environmental screening by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada indicated that the environmental effects of the project were unknown and might be significant. Recognition of that fact led the Minister of Indian and

This assessment of the North Central Project constitutes the first joint environmental review to be completed between Canada and Manitoba.

Northern Affairs Canada to refer the project to the Federal Minister of Environment for an environmental review by an independent panel. The Manitoba Minister of Environment also decided to have a panel undertake an independent review, following Manitoba Hydro's application for a provincial environmental licence.

In February of 1992, the Federal Minister of Environment and the Provincial Minister of Environment appointed a Panel to undertake a joint federal-provincial review that would meet the requirements of both governments.

The Panel was mandated to examine the interrelationship of all of the environmental, social, cultural and economic factors, in keeping with the principles of sustainable development.

This assessment of the North Central Project constitutes the first joint environmental review to be completed between Canada and Manitoba. Additionally, the North Central Project is the first in Manitoba where the principles of sustainable development have been applied as part of the assessment process.

1.1 PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The Panel members were George B. Campbell (Chair), Thomas J. Henley, and Harry Wood. Biographies of Panel members are found in Appendix A. Assistance in the review was provided by a federal co-executive secretary, a provincial co-executive secretary, Panel analyst, office support staff, and liaison workers in the project communities. Contributors to the work of the Panel are acknowledged in Appendix B.

1.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel's Terms of Reference, in setting the scope of the review, called for an examination of:

- *the potential impacts of the project, including measures intended to mitigate adverse impacts, on the biophysical environment, human health, land and water use, Aboriginal resource use, and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems;*
- *the social, cultural, health and economic impacts directly related to the environmental effects of the project; and*
- *implications of the proposal for land and resource related agreements.*

To fulfill the Terms of Reference, the Panel's review included an evaluation of the social, economic and cultural circumstances of the people living in the affected communities.

The review was to include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following issues:

1. *The consistency of the project with the principles of sustainable development.*
2. *The process of determining the need for the proposal and any alternatives considered to supply electricity to the communities.*
3. *The process of route selection, including the definition of the study area, alternative corridors and centrelines, evaluation criteria and selection of a preferred centreline.*
4. *The effects of the general influx of workers, materials*

and equipment and effects of ongoing operation and maintenance activities on people, land, wildlife, terrestrial and aquatic resources.

5. *Adequacy of plans and procedures for the transportation, handling and disposal of dangerous goods and hazardous materials and for responding to environmental accidents and emergencies.*
6. *Adequacy of measures proposed to mitigate adverse impacts of the project and to compensate for residual effects.*

The full Terms of Reference are included in Appendix C, with Attachment 1 describing the specific issues to be examined and Attachment 2 outlining the main components of the review process.

The principles of sustainable development are set out in Appendix D.

1.3 PROJECT SUMMARY

The North Central Project is Manitoba Hydro's proposal to develop an electrical transmission and distribution system connecting communities in north-central Manitoba to Manitoba Hydro's central supply system. The communities are: Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill (and Island Lake), Wasagamack, and St. Theresa Point.

The proposed North Central Project includes the following components:

- **modifications and additions to the 138/230 kV (kilovolt) switchyard on the roof of the existing Kelsey Station powerhouse on the Nelson River and at the switchyard south of Kelsey;**
- **construction of a 138 kV AC (alternating current) transmission line linking Kelsey with the communities of Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, Garden Hill, and Wasagamack;**
- **construction of new transformer stations at those four communities to convert the 138 kV transmission voltage to the 25 kV level needed for intercommunity and local distribution;**
- **construction of 25 kV distribution lines from God's Lake Narrows to God's River and Red Sucker Lake;**
- **connection of the existing 25 kV distribution line between Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point;**

- **upgrading of all community distribution systems;**
- **salvaging and removal of the diesel generators and fuel storage facilities in all communities;**
- **restoration of the existing diesel station sites; and**
- **inclusion of a VHF (very high frequency) communications system required for construction, operation, and maintenance of the facilities.**

Project completion would require a five-year clearing and construction phase concluding in 1997.

1.4 BACKGROUND

The North Central Project region is located 560 kilometers northeast of Winnipeg (Figure 1). In broad terms, three groups of people reside in the area. Both Cree and Ojibway are indigenous to the northeastern part of Manitoba. Cree people reside in the communities of Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, and God's River, while the Ojibway people are resident in the Island Lake group of communities of Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack, and St. Theresa Point. Aboriginal people originally moved into the region on a seasonal basis, pursuing the traditional activities of hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering, eventually leading to permanent settlement.

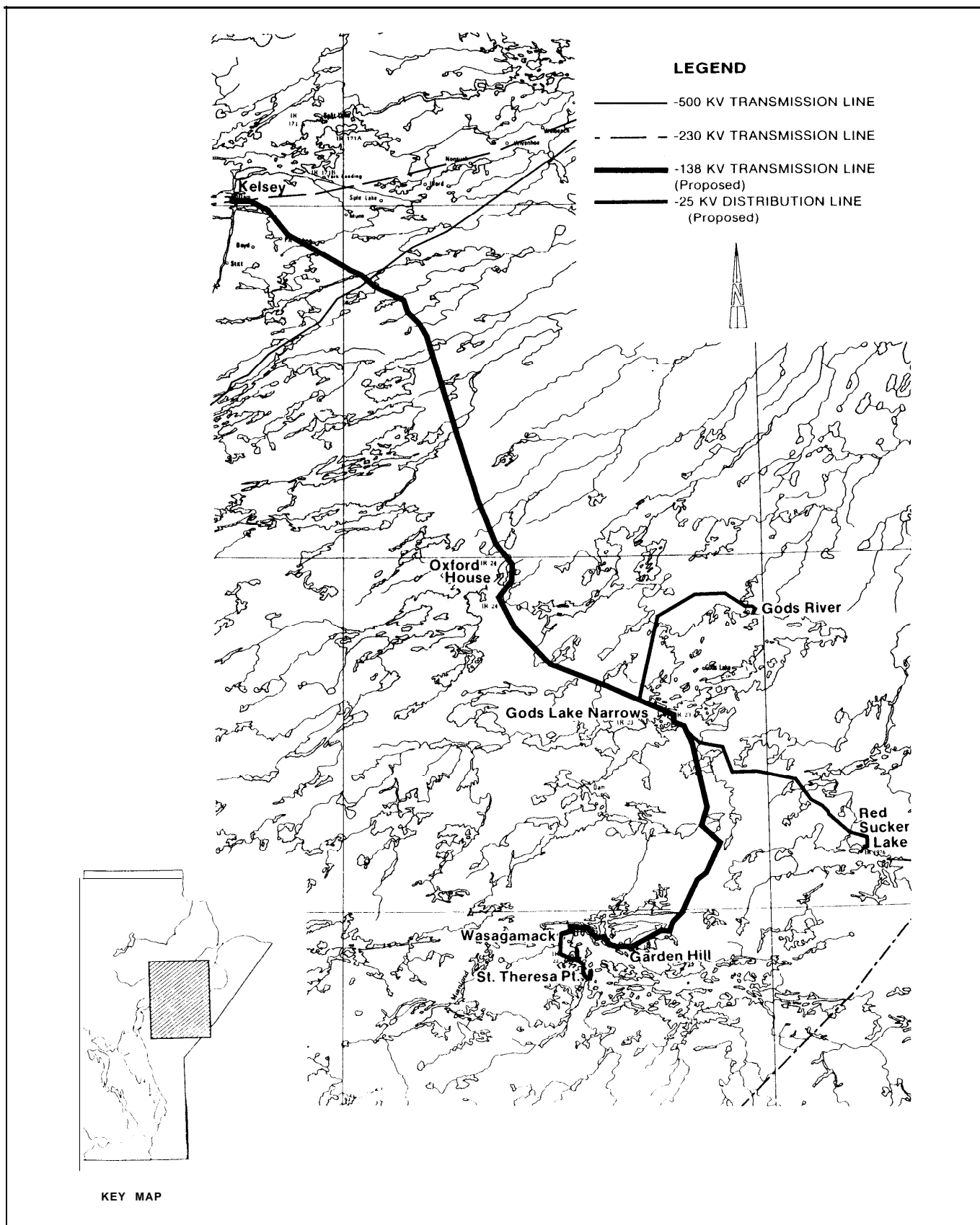
In the Island Lake area, a distinct language emerged. This language is often referred to as the Island Lake dialect.

The communities of Wasagamack, St. Theresa Point, Garden Hill and Red Sucker Lake act on common issues such as those dealing with land, treaties, and other matters of shared interest. On specific capital, program and service issues, each community pursues its own interests.

Small numbers of non-status Aboriginal people live in or near five communities: Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, Red Sucker Lake, Island Lake (near Garden Hill), and St. Theresa Point.

Itinerant, seasonal, quasi-permanent, or long-term residents who are associated with schools, health facilities, churches, social agencies, other public services, fishing and hunting lodges, and other private enterprises are the third group of people who live in the area.

Manitoba Hydro, in the EIS filed with the Panel, reports that the North Central Project is designed to provide a reliable and adequate supply of electrical energy to approximately 8,700 individuals living in northeastern



Source: Adapted from the EIS Summary

Figure 1: The project communities and proposed routing of the North Central Transmission Line

Manitoba. Most of the people to be serviced by the new line live in the First Nation communities, all within the Treaty 5 area.

The approximate populations of the seven First Nation communities and the two non-status communities who would be served by the transmission line are as follows:

The seven First Nation communities are:

- God's Lake Narrows (pop. 1,176)
- Oxford House (pop. 1,355)
- God's River (pop. 363)
- Red Sucker Lake (pop. 479)
- Garden Hill (pop. 2,274)
- Wasagamack (pop. 848)
- St. Theresa Point (pop. 1,916)

The two non-status Aboriginal communities are:

- God's Lake Narrows (pop. 105)
- Island Lake (pop. 92)

All of the communities are considered to be remote; none are connected by permanent road or rail to provincial or national transportation systems. Surface transportation to other communities is limited to winter road travel, all-terrain vehicles and boats. Electrical energy is supplied in each location by diesel electric generators installed between 1967 and 1972. The generating stations are operated using diesel fuel transported over winter roads.

The First Nation communities are governed by Chiefs and Band Councils. First Nations may join organizations such as tribal councils to provide support in dealing with land and treaty issues and other matters of shared interest.

Tribal councils are controlled by, and are responsible to, their member First Nations.

The economies of the communities rely heavily on traditional activities including hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering. Monetary income is low relative to Canadian and Manitoba averages; a recent economic report on northern Manitoba indicates that the average income for a First Nations' household is \$19,000, as compared to the average household income in Manitoba of \$31,300. Cash income sources include trapping, commercial fishing, wage employment related to provision of essential services, and pensions; various financial arrangements between INAC and the First Nations provide social assistance, education (including post-secondary education), and community capital infrastructure including housing. Reliance on traditional activities results in strong concern for resource conservation and resource management.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1 has introduced the environmental assessment process and the role of the North Central Panel, and provided a brief overview of the project communities. In Chapter 2, the environmental assessment review process is presented as it relates to the North Central Project and the major interested parties involved. Chapter 3 provides an overview of Manitoba Hydro's Environmental Impact Statement, including a project description, project impacts, and proposals for mitigating and managing the diverse impacts. Also included is a summary of the responses of the interested parties and the Panel to the EIS. Chapter 4 summarizes the presentations made at the public hearings by community leadership, individuals, Aboriginal organizations, and governments. Chapter 5 presents the Panel's commentary. Chapter 6 presents the Panel's final conclusions and recommendations.

Any material presented in italics is a direct quote from the original literature.

2.0 THE PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

The environmental assessment of the proposed North Central Project represents the first joint federal-provincial environmental assessment to be completed in Manitoba. The environmental assessment was intended to meet the requirements of both the federal and provincial environmental assessment processes, resulting in a single, comprehensive public review. The material that follows describes the process leading up to the appointment of the Panel, the Panel's Terms of Reference and approach to its work, and the public consultation process that led to public hearings. This chapter concludes with some general observations about the public review process as applied to the North Central Project.

2.1 FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS PRECEDENT TO THE PANEL REVIEW

The North Central environmental assessment review proceeded under the authority of the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process Guidelines Order (1984) and the Manitoba Environment Act and Regulations. Both processes are described below.

Federal Process

The Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) is an Order in Council which was passed by the Federal Cabinet in 1984. In February of 1989, following a court decision on the Rafferty-Alameda Dam, it became a law of general applicability.

The EARP is a planning tool used to assess potential adverse environmental effects of projects planned by the federal government. It is a means to identify potential environmental effects early in the planning process in order to determine whether or not the project should proceed and, if so, under what conditions.

Public consultation ensures that public values are incorporated into the government decision-making process.

The EARP is a self-assessment process which is divided into two phases. The first phase is the initial assessment phase in which the government department responsible for a particular project carries out a screening of the project. If the screening shows that there may be adverse potential environmental effects that are not mitigable with known technology, the department goes to a more detailed

level of assessment known as an initial environmental evaluation (IEE). If it is still not known if the potential environmental effects can be mitigated, the project is referred by the Minister of that department to the Minister of Environment for a public review. (Only a small minority of projects are referred for public review.)

The public review is the second phase of the Environmental Assessment and Review Process. The public review process adheres to principles of fairness and natural justice, and public participation is the cornerstone of this process.

The public reviews are conducted in the geographic areas of the proposed project and include the following general steps:

- a panel is appointed by the minister;

- terms of reference are made public;

- a panel issues operational procedures;

- a panel distributes a project description;

- a panel holds scoping meetings to listen to the issues and concerns from the public;

- a panel releases draft guidelines that incorporate the issues and concerns of the public, government agencies, special interest groups and any others who made oral or written presentations to the panel, that are within the mandate;

- draft guidelines are released for a public review period;

- a panel considers additional information and releases final guidelines;

- the initiating department and/or proponent have to respond to all the questions in the guidelines in the form of an environmental impact statement (EIS);

- a panel receives the EIS and releases it to the public for comment for a minimum 60-day review period for comments on the adequacy of the EIS, i.e., does it adequately address all the questions in the guidelines?

- if information received is adequate, review hearings are announced with a minimum 21 day notice;

- after completion of hearings, the panel produces a

report containing recommendations to the ministers in accordance with the mandate; and

- a report is submitted to the ministers for use in the decision-making process.

Provincial Process

The Manitoba Environment Act (1988) requires a public examination of all public and private sector developments that may significantly affect the environment. Before an environmental licence can be issued on a major project, an environmental assessment is required. The environmental assessment identifies potential environmental impacts and ways to mitigate those impacts while the project is still in the planning stages.

Public participation is a cornerstone of the provincial environmental assessment process. The public is informed of all applications for an environmental licence, and public response and input is solicited. In many cases, an environmental licence setting out appropriate terms and conditions for the project is granted after the public's comments are received and carefully considered, and after government departments have also conducted a review of the proposal. In other cases, the Minister may call on the Clean Environment Commission to conduct public hearings regarding the application and to make recommendations to be used in deciding whether or not a licence should be granted and, if so, what terms and conditions should be placed on the project.

In 1991, the Act was amended and the Joint Environmental Assessment Regulation was approved, to make a joint federal-provincial review possible.

North Central Project Referral

On March 20, 1990, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada wrote to the Federal Minister of Environment. That letter noted that INAC had completed an environmental screening of the project, concluding that the environmental effects of the proposal are unknown and might be significant. For that reason, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada asked for the establishment of an environmental assessment panel to conduct a public review of the project.

The letter continued: "The review *should include examination of the potential environmental effects of the proposal and the related social impacts. It should also examine general socio-economic effects and include an assessment of the need for the proposal.*" A copy of the letter of referral is attached as Appendix E.

In April, 1991, Manitoba Hydro applied to Manitoba



The Panel: Harry Wood, George Campbell, and Thomas Henley

Environment for a provincial licence for the North Central Project. The Federal Minister of Environment and the Manitoba Minister of Environment agreed to coordinate the federal and provincial environmental reviews. An agreement, entitled *The Canada Manitoba Agreement On Terms Of Reference For A Federal-Provincial Panel To Conduct A Public Environmental Assessment Review Of The Proposed North Central Transmission Line*, was signed by the Provincial Minister of Environment on August 27, 1991, and by the Federal Minister of Environment on September 17, 1991.

On February 27, 1992, the Ministers announced the appointment of the Panel which would conduct the joint environmental review.

2.2 PANEL APPOINTMENT AND COMPOSITION

The Federal and Provincial Ministers of Environment appointed three people to the Panel to conduct a public environmental review of the proposed North Central Transmission Line Project: George B. Campbell (Chairman), Thomas J. Henley and Harry Wood.

Mr. George Campbell, a retired public servant from Norway House, has extensive experience with Aboriginal issues and government departments and processes. Fluent in Cree, Mr. Campbell has maintained an extensive involvement with Aboriginal and private sector organizations concerned with northern resource development issues.

Mr. Harry Wood, a life-long resident of St. Theresa Point, brought to the Panel extensive experience gained from

service with the provincial government, the island Lake Tribal Council, and band administration. His fluency in Cree and the Island Lake dialect was an important asset to the Panel throughout the environmental assessment process.

Professor Thomas Henley, originally from the mining community of Lynn Lake, Manitoba, has taught environmental assessment and resources management at the Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba, for some twenty years. Professor Henley served as Chairman of the Northern Manitoba Economic Development Commission and has conducted research and other activities related to regional development in northern Manitoba.

The Panel members had quite different backgrounds and work experience which gave each of them different, but complementary, perspectives. This diversity influenced the Panel's approach to the review and impacted on the Panel's understanding of the Terms of Reference for the North Central Project.

Appendix F provides additional comments on the basis for the Panel's approach to its mandate.

2.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Terms of Reference mandated the Panel to examine the interrelationships of environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors related to the proposed project and the consistency of the project with the principles of sustainable development.

The Panel carefully examined the Terms of Reference and the letter of referral from the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and decided that it was appropriate to interpret "environment and related effects" in broad terms, and to focus closely upon those issues of direct interest to individuals in the project communities.

The Panel also developed principles that the Panel could use throughout the entire review to further clarify, provide a context, and focus its work. As such, the Panel established the following three Guiding Principles:

- **The review needs to be sensitive to cultural and community needs and must involve those most directly affected;**
- **The review process must be grounded in the impacted northern communities; and**
- **The process is as important as the final report to the Ministers.**

The Panel's interpretation of environment and the Guiding Principles were particularly well received by individuals in the project communities. The Panel's focus on direct effects on the biophysical environment closely coincided with the interest of Aboriginal people in the land, water and wildlife of the region.

Environmental effects of the project on Aboriginal resource use also coincided with a keen interest in trapping, fishing, hunting and gathering. Indirect effects of the project were

The governments also directed the Panel to examine the consistency of the project with the principles of sustainable development. It was this latter instruction that led the Panel to design a broader approach to the assessment that would examine the interrelationships between environment, economy and people's well being.

necessary areas of discussion in order to clarify people's understanding of the North Central Project and to answer their questions. Indirect effects include monthly hydro bills, re-wiring and retrofitting of houses, and provision of sewer and water services, as well as agreements for access to reserve and Crown land.

The Terms of Reference directed the Panel to assess impacts of the project related to the biophysical environment, human health, land and water use, Aboriginal resource use, and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Governments, through the Terms of Reference, also asked for a somewhat broader assessment that would encompass social, cultural, health and economic impacts directly related to the environmental effects of the project. Implications of the project in terms of proposed land and resource related agreements were also included.

The governments also directed the Panel to examine the consistency of the project with the principles of sustainable development. It was this latter instruction that led the Panel to design a broader approach to the assessment that would examine the interrelationships between environment, economy and people's well being.

Heightened awareness about sustainable development and about the "sustainability" of projects served to provide a context that complemented the Panel's understanding

of the need for a new approach to northern development generally. For the first time, key aspects of a new approach to development had been put in place by governments:

- Panel members were people with extensive northern experience and with complimentary backgrounds;
- a majority of Panel members were Aboriginal people;
- the assessment was to be conducted prior to a decision on project approval; and
- the Panel was mandated to directly involve the people of the North Central Project communities in the review and consultation process.

With these key considerations in place and with the provision of the necessary financial resources to conduct a full and fair assessment, the Panel proceeded to prepare a **workplan** and schedule appropriate to the project and the northern reality in the North Central Region. Aboriginal people in the project communities, perhaps for the first time, had been provided with the opportunity to influence, in a significant manner, the process of development which would provide both positive and negative impacts to their environment.

2.4 INTERESTED PARTIES

The parties interested in the environmental assessment of the North Central Project included: the community leadership and residents of the project communities; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations; Manitoba Hydro as Proponent and one of three primary funding partners; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, as one of the primary funding departments and as Aboriginal trustee and Initiating Department; and Manitoba Northern Affairs as one of the primary funding departments.

Community Leadership and Residents of the Project Communities

Over the past 20 years, the project communities have been examining the possibility of a transmission line. Community residents restricted to 15-amp service and limited in the appliances that they could use had long complained about the inadequacy of the service available relative to their needs. As early as 1984, the community leadership in the Island Lake area had commissioned financial and technical feasibility studies on several alternative means of securing a more reliable and adequate **supply** of electrical energy at reasonable cost. Small scale hydro-electric generation, wind, biomass and solar sources

were considered in addition to connection to the provincial power grid operated by Manitoba Hydro.

The initial study in 1984 concluded that the land line was the preferred option. The communities pressed for the project, largely with the expectation, and on the condition, that positive social and economic changes would result. Following more study and negotiations, the federal and provincial governments and Manitoba Hydro signed an agreement in March, 1992, setting out financial arrangements for the proposed North Central Project. Several presenters at the public hearings pointed out that, while the two governments and Manitoba Hydro had signed the Project Agreement, the community leadership signed only as a witness to the agreement.

Residents of the North Central Project communities were very familiar with the social and environmental impacts experienced by their neighbors in the communities directly impacted by the Churchill and Nelson river projects. They were concerned that they might experience similar impacts from the North Central Project.

Aboriginal Organizations

Aboriginal organizations, including the Northeast Leadership Group, Wapanuk, the Community Supported Agency, liaison committees, and an education and training agency are mandated to play a key role in the implementation of the North Central Project. Although some are of longer standing than others, each organization will seek to ensure that Aboriginal people are fully represented throughout the clearing and construction related to the project. In addition, Aboriginal organizations will ensure that Manitoba Hydro meets its commitments as stated in the EIS.

The Proponent

The North Central communities initiated and pressed for funding for the project for 20 years. They have done so largely with the expectation, and on the condition, that positive social and economic changes would result.

Manitoba Hydro, as Proponent, will be the owner and operator of the North Central Project. The Corporation is responsible for managing the planning, siting, environmental assessment, technical design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the project.

As a major developer of hydro-electric generating capacity in northern Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro has been responsible both for providing ample energy at the lowest cost in Canada, and also for causing severe environmental and social impacts to several Aboriginal communities related to the Churchill diversion and Nelson River hydro development in northern Manitoba.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is the Initiating Department and Aboriginal trustee responsible for providing First Nations with funding for costs associated with the provision of electrical service to schools, band offices, other federally-funded facilities, and homes in each community.

The rates charged to INAC by Manitoba Hydro are established at a level intended to meet the very high cost of diesel-electric generation. As such, INAC has a direct interest in the cost-savings that may ensue from land-line power associated with the North Central Project.

Manitoba Department of Northern Affairs

Manitoba Northern Affairs, which coordinates provincial government activities in northern Manitoba, represents the Province's interest in the North Central Project. The department is mandated to promote development in the North.

2.5 PARTICIPANT FUNDING

The Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office (FEARO) allocated \$100,000 to assist communities and organizations participating in the review process. FEARO established an independent Funding Review Committee to assess each of the applications for funding and to allocate monies as appropriate. The Funding Review Committee worked independently of the Environmental Review Panel. Membership on the Funding Review Committee included David Barnes (Chairman), Gilbert North of Oxford House, and Philip Dorion of The Pas. Appendix G describes the distribution of these funds.

2.6 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Terms of Reference (Appendix C) describe the main components of the review process. The Panel followed that process during the consultation process.

The Panel's first activity in preparing for the environmental assessment was to seek the advice and guidance of community leadership. The Panel extended greetings and shared information about the process with Chiefs, Mayors, and Councillors of the project communities. That initial dialogue led to the community leadership's endorsement of the process and the Panel's proposed workplan and schedule. The Panel also toured the project communities,

examined the proposed route by air with Manitoba Hydro personnel, and reviewed existing documentation.

Concurrently, the Panel developed operating procedures and a public information program, which was used throughout the review to ensure that interested parties were kept advised of each stage of the review.

To facilitate effective communication with the Aboriginal people in the project communities, the Panel contracted local liaison workers to prepare for community meetings held during June and July of 1992. The Cree language and Island Lake dialect were used extensively throughout the local consultation process. Public Registries, which were provided with regular updates of pertinent information, were also established (Appendix H).

People's comments and concerns regarding the project were reflected in the Panel's document, *Working Document to Assist in the Preparation of EIS Guidelines*. This document, which contained a Preface, Chairman's Remarks, and Draft Guidelines, was widely circulated for public review and comment in August of 1992. An Appendix of Written Presentations to Community Meetings was also prepared and circulated through the public registry system and to individuals and organizations directly. The Appendix was used and referred to throughout the public consultation process.

The Panel revisited the project communities in August and September to receive oral and written responses on the Draft Guidelines, and to ensure that community leadership and residents were satisfied that all matters of concern had been identified. Appendix I contains a list of everyone who made a presentation or submission to the community meetings and return visits. Final Guidelines were completed and widely distributed in September.

Upon receipt of the Guidelines, Manitoba Hydro worked on preparing the Environmental Impact Statement while the Panel conducted follow-up work and prepared for the next phases of the environmental assessment process. The Panel held meetings with the North Central Agreement Committee, Northeast Leadership Group, the North Central Technical Advisory Committee, and senior officials from the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office and Manitoba Environment.

The Panel received a report from Manitoba Hydro in April 1993 entitled *North Central Project: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*. This document was released to the public and interested parties immediately upon receipt.

During a 60-day period of assessment and review (April 15 to June 15), the Panel received twenty written submissions related to the adequacy of the EIS. Nine

submissions were from the provincial government, seven from the federal government, three from First Nation leadership, and one was from a private individual. These responses were made available to all parties through the public registry system.

There was general concurrence concerning the adequacy of the EIS. These submissions are discussed more fully in Chapter 3 under 3.3.

In mid-June, 1993, the Panel concluded that the Proponent's EIS provided an adequate basis for the review and announced that public hearings would be held in Thompson and the project communities. Following public hearings, the Panel conducted a thorough review of all of the information and prepared the final report for submission to the Ministers.

2.7 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings were held July 19 to August 7 in Thompson, God's Lake Narrows, Oxford House, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack, and St. Theresa Point. Over 125 oral and written presentations were received on a variety of topics related to the project. Some 500 people attended the public hearings.

The Panel concluded public hearings confident that all parties had participated in a fair and open forum where their views, concerns and issues had been discussed. That dialogue, together with written submissions from interested parties, and the Environmental Impact Statement, served to provide the Panel with an informed

and extensive basis of information on which to prepare final conclusions and recommendations.

2.8 PANEL OBSERVATIONS

The North Central Environmental Review Process was completed in a manner consistent with the Terms of Reference provided to the Panel and within the general principles established to guide the Panel's work. The project was also vetted against the principles of sustainable development by the Manitoba Sustainable Development Coordination Unit and the Panel. Every effort was made to ensure that all parties interested in the North Central Project were treated fairly and equitably and to ensure that their specific interests were understood by the Panel.

The process of identifying people's issues and concerns, and presenting them in Guidelines for the preparation of Manitoba Hydro's Environmental Impact Statement was a primary task at the outset of the Panel's work. Later, the Panel considered responses to the EIS prepared and filed by participants and interested parties.

The Panel itself reviewed the EIS and concluded that the Guidelines had been addressed, and an adequate basis existed to proceed to public hearings. Formal public hearings provided a forum where individuals' issues and concerns were addressed by either Manitoba Hydro or the appropriate government agency. Using the data and information gathered in each phase of the public consultation process, the Panel was able to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations on the environmental effects of the North Central Project.

3.0 THE PROPOSED NORTH CENTRAL PROJECT

Manitoba Hydro prepared a report entitled *North Central Project: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* in April, 1993, in response to the questions and issues contained in the Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement issued by the Panel. The Environmental Impact Statement included four volumes:

- Volume 1: Summary of the EIS, which was made available in English, Cree and French;
- Volume 2: *North Central Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*, the primary document;
- Volume 3: Map Folio, showing the proposed transmission and distribution line routes; and
- Volume 4: Appendices.

The sections that follow summarize the contents of Manitoba Hydro's EIS and the initial response to their work by interested parties and the Panel.

Manitoba Hydro's Environmental Impact Statement was the key document concerning the proposed project, its

The NCP involves no flooding of land and no changes to the levels and flows of any lake or river.

impacts, and the proposed management and mitigation of those impacts. The EIS also provided the basis of fact and information underpinning the public review process.

The following summary presents the main points in Manitoba Hydro's EIS. Observations related to the Panel's review of the EIS, and written submissions received from interested parties, and the Panel, are discussed at the conclusion of the chapter.

3.1 PROJECT PROPOSAL AND IMPACTS

Project Description

According to the EIS Summary, the NCP involves four principal activities:

- constructing about **520 kilometers (320 miles)** of tran-

mission and distribution lines to the project communities from Kelsey Station on the Nelson River;

- *constructing four transformer stations at Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, Garden Hill, and Wasagamack;*
- *rebuilding and upgrading the power distribution networks within all nine communities; and*
- *removing the existing local diesel plants and returning the use of all sites, after any needed clean-up, to the communities.*

The project also calls for connection of an already constructed distribution line segment of 12 kilometers between Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point.

The NCP involves no flooding of land and no changes to the levels and flows of any lake or river.

Project Objectives

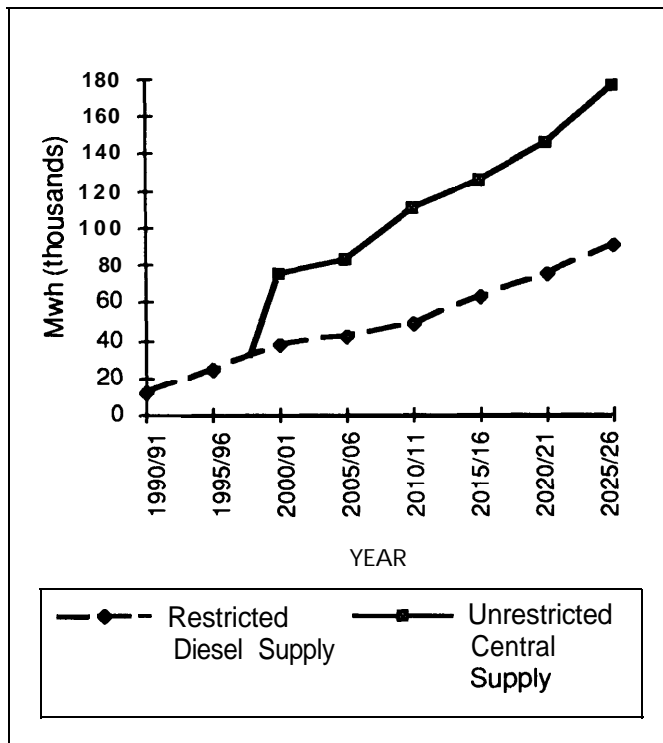
According to the EIS Summary, the objectives of the North Central Project are:

- *to provide residents and businesses in the North Central communities with the same standard and price of electrical service as that enjoyed by other Manitobans;*
- *to supply reliable and sufficient energy for use of more modern conveniences, improved heating and ventilation of buildings, and water and sewer services; and*
- *to create a power supply base for future economic and social development in the communities and the region.*

Existing Services

Manitoba Hydro installed diesel-electric generators in the North Central communities between 1967 and 1972. The 12 kilometer distribution line, which is being operated at 12 kV from the St. Theresa Point diesel station to Wasagamack, was completed in June, 1991. Once connected to the 138 kV transmission system at Wasagamack Station, it will be used for 25 kV operation to serve both communities.

Currently, most residences are provided with restricted 15 ampere service at rates comparable to full service rates in other Manitoba communities of similar size. However, a restricted 15 ampere service is sufficient only to provide



Source: Adapted from EIS Summary

Figure 2: Projected growth of electrical consumption in the North Central Project region

for the use of lighting and a few appliances at any one time. Residents must typically unplug some appliances before using other appliances. Some consumers in the communities, including schools, nursing stations, government buildings, and residences occupied by nurses, police and teachers, receive full service. These consumers pay rates that reflect the very high cost of diesel-electric generation. The full service rates are many times higher than the residential rates. The EIS states that the higher rates are used to subsidize the residential rates.

Projected Electricity Needs

Consumption of electricity in the communities is increasing on average by about 4% a year, as more houses are built and the population grows. In about 25 years, the peak demand for power is projected to be three times today's demand. (See Figure 2.)

Supply Alternatives

Manitoba Hydro, in the EIS, stated that a number of energy supply alternatives to the proposed transmission line were examined. These alternatives included:

- small hydro-electric generating plants;
- wind, solar, and biomass electrical generation; and
- enhanced diesel systems.

All were rejected on the basis of unacceptable environmental or financial costs.

Preferred Concept/Alternative

The alternative determined by Manitoba Hydro to be the most feasible in terms of both environmental and financial costs was the connection of the North Central communities to the northern power system by a land line. Connection to the provincial grid at Kelsey would provide:

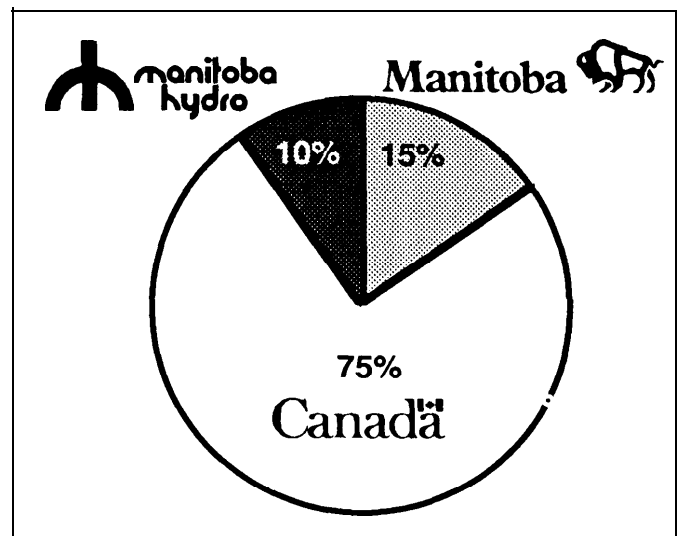
- unrestricted electrical service;
- reduced electrical rates for government facilities and larger commercial operations; and
- electrical service comparable to the rest of the province.

The diesel generating plants in the communities would be removed and the land restored once the communities were connected to the northern power system.

Project Agreement

On March 16, 1992, Canada, Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro, and the communities signed an agreement that provided for the funding and organization of the project.

The Project Agreement committed the parties to maximize the involvement, employment opportunities, and benefits to the communities.



Source: EIS Summary

Figure 3: Cost sharing for North Central Project

Project Cost

The estimated cost of the North Central Project is \$97.8 million (in 1993 dollars). Costs are to be shared by Canada

(75%); Manitoba (15%); and Manitoba Hydro (10%). (See Figure 3.)

Project Impacts

Manitoba Hydro has summarized project impacts in the EIS Summary. Those anticipated impacts are as follows:

- ° *few, if any, direct or indirect adverse effects on the land, plants, water and fish of the area during construction and operation;*
- ° *short-term disturbances of some animals during construction and minor disruptions to trappers and possibly other resource harvesters for two to three seasons;*
- ° *some unavoidable and permanent visual changes to the landscape, especially at water crossings;*
- ° *potentially significant short-term training, employment, and business opportunities for community residents during construction;*
- ° *few long- term Hydro jobs created directly by the project, but substantial potential for other secondary jobs related to housing and community services;*
- ° *a substantial increase in monthly electric bills for some residents, small businesses and Band facilities due to a rapid rise in consumption;*
- ° *substantial immediate and long-term savings (due to reduced rates) to the federal, provincial, and local governments in the operation of their facilities, and to larger businesses in their commercial operations;*
- ° *ability to provide unlimited power supply for long- term economic development of new local business, food processing, community services, and resource industries;*
- ° *no foreseeable changes in regional winter road transportation service and communications;*
- ° *the need to rewire and retrofit existing homes if more power is to be used;*
- ° *the availability of electric supply to service and reduce operating costs of existing and future community recreation, housing, and social facilities;*
- ° *the possibility of installing modern water and sewer services in all communities;*
- ° *the ability to make improvements in health, nutrition, and general well being;*



Oxford House Generating Station with tank farm, adjacent to community school

- ° *an increase in exposure to electric and magnetic fields; levels will be well within regulatory limits; cause-effect risks to human health are not scientifically proven;*
- ° *no increase in risk of contamination due to hazardous materials;*
- ° *elimination of transport and use of diesel fuel for Hydro purposes;*
- ° *return and reuse of a clean diesel plant site to each community;*
- ° *improvement in residential indoor air quality and fire safety with reduced use of old wood stoves and oil heaters;*
- ° *required use of some reserve land by Hydro for transmission facilities in two communities;*
- ° *safer use of electricity in all communities; and*
- ° *pressure on First Nation budgets to respond to increased utility bills, community demands for facility improvements, and increased expectations.*

The federal government's interest in the Project Agreement is represented by INAC, and the Province's interest by Manitoba Northern Affairs.

Manitoba Hydro has described its responsibility as follows:

Manitoba Hydro will be the owner and operator of the new North Central system. As such Hydro is responsible

for managing the planning, siting, environmental assessment, technical design, construction, operation and maintenance of the project.

Manitoba Hydro has indicated that it is prepared to consider any technically and financially feasible proposal the bands may in future wish to make regarding ownership of this system.

3.2 IMPACT MANAGEMENT

According to Manitoba Hydro's Environmental Impact Statement, adverse project impacts may be mitigated with the application of an effective and timely environmental protection and impact mitigation program. That program, as proposed by Manitoba Hydro, entails individual and collective responsibilities which include accountability for the success or failure of related actions. Hydro notes:

Without all-party cooperation throughout the project development period and afterward, the promise of significant project-related benefits may not be achieved.. direct and indirect end-use results.. largely depend on the decisions and actions taken by all parties - the First Nations, Canada, Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro.

The management of project impacts is described in Manitoba Hydro's EIS under the following headings:

- land, plants and water;
- wildlife, fish, and harvesting;
- visual effects;
- heritage resources;
- traditional way-of-life;
- construction contracts, employment and training;
- long-term employment and economic development;
- transportation and communication;
- community facilities and housing;
- consumer issues and cost of living;
- health and safety;
- community environment; and
- First Nation land and finances.

The impacts were the primary focus of interest during the public hearings related to the project. For this reason, the sections in the EIS Summary describing the Proponent's commitment to mitigate these project impacts are attached in Appendix J.

3.3 EIS REVIEW AND EVALUATION

A 60-day review period followed the receipt and distribution of the EIS. During this review, individuals, departments and agencies had the opportunity to offer written comments to the Panel on whether the EIS adequately addressed the questions and issues in the Guidelines. The Panel evaluated the EIS and reviewed the written submissions received from interested parties.

SUBMISSIONS FROM INTERESTED PARTIES

Twenty written submissions were received by the Panel during the 60-day EIS review period. Seven written submissions were from federal departments, nine were from provincial departments, three were from First Nation leadership and one was from an individual. Appendix K provides a listing of these written submissions. Appendix L gives a summary of the recommendations from government departments.

In general, written submissions received by the Panel stated that the information found in the EIS adequately addressed the Panel's Guidelines and provided the basis to proceed to public hearings.

The following is a summary of the written submissions.

Federal Departments

Federal departments provided seven written submissions to the Panel about the adequacy of the EIS.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada discussed the need to protect fish habitat and the need for the Proponent to adhere to provincial guidelines in this area.

The three submissions from Health and Welfare Canada provided general background material related to electromagnetic radiation and suggested some additional attention in the area of food and nutrition of residents of the project communities.

Environment Canada focussed their presentation on the area of long-term monitoring and mitigation of impacts on wildlife, with a particular emphasis on migratory birds. Commentary was also provided related to cumulative project effects.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada provided a description of the legal requirements necessary for the Proponent to access reserve lands. In particular, the First Nations at God's Lake Narrows and Wasagamack where substations are to be built may require a community referendum. Other communities seemed to be covered by a blanket permit with the exception of God's River.

In conclusion, **INAC** noted that procedures in this area are under review and subject to change. A legal interpretation based on a similar situation in British Columbia was also provided.

All departments recommended that public hearings proceed.

Provincial Departments

Six provincial departments made written submissions under the umbrella of the Technical Advisory Committee. That particular committee has served as the integrative mechanism to ensure a focussed provincial review since Manitoba Hydro's application for a provincial environmental licence.

Manitoba Environment provided a summary of provincial submissions in specific areas where departmental jurisdictions warranted particular attention.

The Department of Northern Affairs fully supported the EIS.

Manitoba Energy and Mines made a request to review the final transmission route in terms of avoidance of mineral deposits and made a minor comment on map terminology.

Manitoba Natural Resources noted that the EIS was thorough and well documented, incorporating most issues and concerns previously presented to Hydro by that department.

Manitoba Highways and Transportation was concerned primarily with the safety of transmission lines where the right-of-way coincides with winter roads, and suggested that special attention was needed where the transmission line passed in the vicinity of airfields.

The Historic Resources Branch emphasized that the branch should be contacted if human remains or archaeological artifacts were discovered during clearing of the right-of-way.

The Manitoba Sustainable Development Coordination Unit also provided a memorandum which concluded that the Environmental Impact Statement provided a comprehensive response to the Guidelines.

All provincial departments suggested that the environmental review proceed to public hearings.

First Nations' Leadership

Three submissions were received from First Nation leaders. Chief Peter Watt, writing on behalf of the Northeast Leadership Group, described the EIS as deficient, largely based on the lack of financial support for the proposed Community Supported Agency. Chief Watt noted the critical role anticipated for the Community Supported Agency in the EIS and questioned whether any credence could be given to the EIS in the absence of an agreement for CSA funding.

Chief Watt also provided a written submission on behalf of God's Lake Narrows First Nation. Several specific issues were raised: the need for negotiation of socio-economic concerns and the application of traditional ecological knowledge; the establishment of an on-going and effective working relationship between the community and Manitoba Hydro; and the need for additional discussion about the basis for compensation.

Split Lake Cree First Nation submitted a comprehensive document describing a number of concerns regarding the proposed routing, and their view of contractual obligations and outstanding issues stemming from the Northern Flood Agreement and the Split Lake Settlement Agreement, and raised several points about the transmission line's passage through their resource management area.

In the main, First Nation leadership was concerned about the ability of Manitoba Hydro to meet commitments and promises made in the EIS and to resolve outstanding issues in a timely manner.

Interested parties who provided written submissions to the Panel clearly had conducted a thorough review of Manitoba Hydro's EIS. The Panel was of the opinion that the written submissions were largely consistent with the general observations made by the Panel and concluded that there were no deficiencies of such a consequence as to preclude going directly to public hearings.

An overview of the written submissions received by the Panel indicated that:

- interested parties generally concurred that the project should proceed to public hearings;
- there was a broad range of opinion on the adequacy of the EIS;
- specific recommendations were made on issues described in the EIS; and

- the Northeast Leadership Group and Split Lake First Nation provided comprehensive overviews of the EIS, and submissions by government departments focussed more specifically on areas of direct jurisdiction.

The Panel's initial view of the EIS can be summarized as follows:

- The EIS addressed the questions posed in the Panel's Guidelines. The four-volume EIS was judged to contain a reasonably comprehensive and detailed assessment of the issues and concerns that had been submitted to the Panel. That data and information provided the basis for comments and discussion throughout the public hearings.
- The EIS documents were comprehensive and contained extensive technical detail which was essential to a full analysis of the issues under consideration. The documents, however, were not easily comprehended by people with a lay knowledge of the project. It was the Panel's view that community workshops would be needed to ensure that the individuals living in the project communities understood the Proponent's description of project impacts and their management. Because the Community Supported Agency was not funded in a timely manner, community

workshops to evaluate Manitoba Hydro's EIS were not held.

- The EIS Summary had been made available in English, Cree and French, as requested in the Panel's Guidelines. Additionally, a video had been prepared based on the Summary. The Summary and the video were distributed to the communities to provide important information about the project.

The Panel's conclusion was that the EIS provided a comprehensive basis on which to proceed to public hearings.

3.4 PANEL OBSERVATIONS

Manitoba Hydro's EIS examined biophysical, socio-economic, legal/jurisdictional and life-style impacts related to the North Central Project. Although many legitimate concerns regarding the project were raised during the review period, the Panel concluded that the EIS provided sufficient information to proceed to public hearings. During the public hearings that followed, the EIS served as the principle basis for discussion of the proposed project by community leadership, individuals, and government departments and private agencies.

4.0 PUBLIC HEARINGS

The public hearings were held to examine a variety of issues related to the North Central Project, and provided the opportunity for interested parties to interact with each other through the Chairman. The hearings served to raise people's awareness, and provided specific answers to questions that remained, or stemmed from, the Environmental Impact Statement.

By the time the public hearings began, numerous questions initially posed in the Guidelines had been addressed in the EIS or resolved through negotiation. What remained unresolved was a central core of questions for which community leaders and others required definitive statements and/or assurances **that** commitments had been made.

The material which follows describes the setting and context in which the public hearings took place. Presentations made by community leadership, Aboriginal organizations, individuals, and government departments are described. The chapter concludes with observations about the public hearing process and about the information used by the Panel as the basis for its final conclusions and recommendations.

4.1 SETTING

Community meetings were typically held in schools or band halls and involved the Panel and secretariat, Manitoba Hydro as the Proponent, First Nation leadership, Manitoba Northern Affairs, Manitoba Environment, band members and the public. An extra hearing day was arranged at St. Theresa Point to accommodate INAC and a **number of** the Aboriginal organizations. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, as both Initiating Department and Aboriginal trustee, performed a key role during the public hearings by responding to questions relating to its jurisdiction.

At the start of each meeting, an Elder in the community was called upon by the Chief to **offer** an opening prayer. This prayer was followed by welcoming remarks from the Chief and introductory remarks from **the** Panel Chairman.

Manitoba Hydro then made a presentation using slides, charts and maps specific to each community. A keynote presentation by Chief and Council either followed the Proponent's presentation **or was** given near the conclusion of public presentations. Community members and locally based organizations made oral presentations. There was substantial representation of Elders in the audience, with a low representation of women and youth. Meetings

extended in most cases from late morning until late in the evening.

A record of participants and presenters was kept for each community. (See Appendix M.) Presentations were both video and audio taped. The Panel secretariat supported the Panel throughout the hearings and attended to all administrative requirements for the effective coordination of public hearings. The Panel was also supported by an analyst who noted highlights of each presentation and organized written submissions.

Questions requiring clarification of information were directed through the Chair to the Proponent and/or other government departments. A lively but orderly interchange occurred among members of the public, the leadership, and the Proponent or INAC. Explanations often entailed careful interpretation, illustration with examples, and, on occasion, attendance by groups at the wall maps.

Simultaneous and consecutive interpretation services were provided by local interpreters in Cree, the Island Lake dialect and English. Although interpretation doubled or tripled the time required to cover peoples' issues and concerns, the Panel placed a high priority on clear communication and on informed and open discussions.

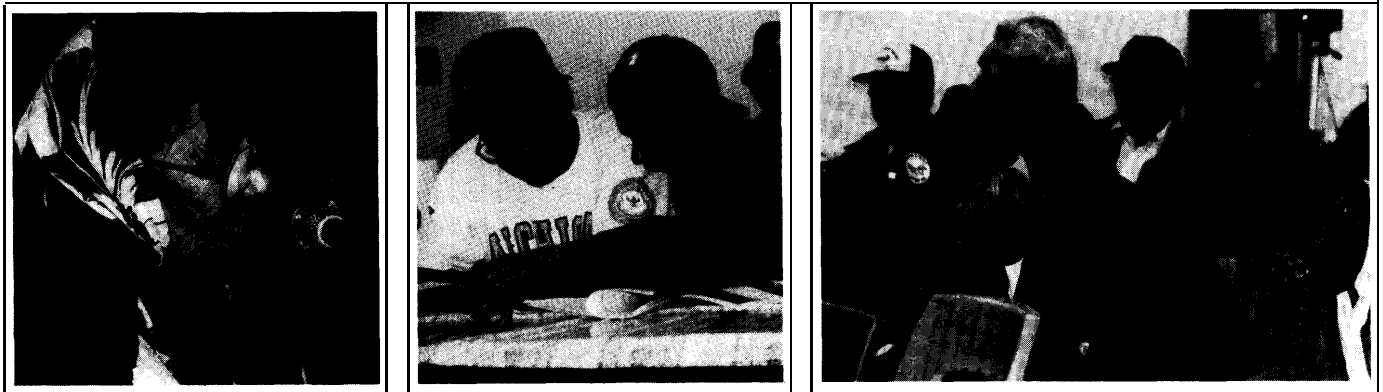
4.2 CONTEXT

Some 500 persons from the communities attended the hearings, and over 125 of them presented their views. This is a very high participation rate; by comparison, for example, in Winnipeg, this would equate to an attendance of 36,000 people.

Local radio and television broadcasts, when available, were used to reach a larger audience in the project communities. Elders confined to their homes were visited by the Panel at God's Lake Narrows at the request of the Chief.

Community leaders and individuals extended friendship and hospitality to the Panel throughout their many visits. Many residents expressed an appreciation that the Panel and others came to meet with them directly and to see first-hand the social and environmental conditions that would be impacted by the North Central Project. People also seemed to value the opportunities provided by the public hearings to air all of their concerns.

The initial round of community meetings in 1992 served to



Lydia Harper (left); Lance Harper and Hubert McDougall (centre); audience at a public hearing (right)

raise community awareness of the project. As a result, people in the communities were clearly more informed about the project a year later, and the public hearings in 1993 were able to focus on project detail and implementation issues. In each community, the Panel sought to understand and learn about project issues and opportunities from the perspective of the participants. The ready **access** to information and responses from Manitoba Hydro and INAC were a major component of the public hearings.

Three types of public hearings were convened during the **course** of the environmental assessment process: technical sessions, which were held in Thompson; community hearings, which were held at each of the project communities; and a closing session in which INAC and the Aboriginal organizations involved with the project clarified their roles and answered many of the questions raised in prior community hearings.

Each of the project communities was invited to send one representative to attend the technical hearing in Thompson, at the Panel's expense, and to report back to their communities.

4.3 PUBLIC HEARING PARTICIPANTS

Community leadership, Aboriginal organizations, individuals, and government departments were the principle interested parties. Data and information common to all of the project communities were compiled with respect to these categories. Additionally, community-specific issues were identified and examined in terms of the overall project assessment.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The Chief and Council in First Nation communities and the Mayor and Council in the non-status communities are

elected representatives of the people. The Panel was aware of the important role that the leadership plays at the community and regional level. Although participation by residents was low in some communities, the Panel was confident that peoples' ideas, concerns and issues were fairly and accurately reflected in the written submissions made by community leaders.

Community leaders were fully informed and clearly had a detailed knowledge of the North Central Project far exceeding that of community residents.

Legal and jurisdictional questions related to Manitoba Hydro's access to reserve land, treaty land entitlement, compensation, education, training, and employment were the central focus of the submissions made by community leaders. Protection of land and water, concern about the traditional Aboriginal way-of-life, and opportunities appropriate to the needs of future generations were also major concerns. Issues affecting individuals directly, such as monthly hydro bills, rewiring and retrofitting, were also raised.

Chief Peter Watt of God's Lake Narrows made a formal presentation as Chairman of the Northeast Leadership Group, representing seven First Nations and the non-status communities. His submission focussed on issues common to the First Nations and Community Councils. In his presentation, Chief Watt confirmed support for the North Central Project. Chief Watt noted:

This is as good a time as any to confirm that the North Central communities are basically in favour of the North Central Project in principle. We have all fought for many years for improved electrical service. We were especially pleased when the North Central Project was approved [with the Project Agreement] and it was indicated at the highest level that this would be a unique project. That uniqueness was explained as a different way of doing things - a way that respected the

values of our communities and involved us as full participants in the project. We will fight just as hard to protect that project's uniqueness.

*Any **support** of the North Central Project is not unconditional, but it is based on reasonable conditions in light of what was promised when the project was first announced. Therefore, we want to see the North Central Project proceed in a manner that **recognizes, respects and protects the inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights of our people.***

Chief Watt's submission examined twelve specific areas:

- respect for Aboriginal peoples' traditions, culture and future;
- the establishment of partnerships for all aspects of the North Central Project;
- the breadth of the environmental assessment review;
- the implications of a delay in project approval;
- the need for assistance in fully researching all project impacts;
- the need to fully understand the potential for economic development and training;
- consideration of questions related to a submarine cable crossing at God's Lake Narrows;
- protection of treaty rights and traditional uses of land;
- use of herbicides on North Central Project sites;
- fair, equitable and appropriate compensation for resource users;
- the need to upgrade houses for new electrical service; and
- the impact of increased hydro costs due to expanded service and increased consumption.

Summarized conclusions and recommendations from Chief Watt's written submission are attached as Appendix N.

Community leaders seemed to distrust Manitoba Hydro's ability to meet its promises and commitments, in part based on the reputation and record related to past hydro-electric development projects elsewhere in northern Manitoba.



Andy Miles (kneeling, middle) and Ken Erickson (kneeling, right) on site tour with Panel, secretariat, and community representatives

Mr. Andy Miles and Mr. Ken Erickson, representatives of Manitoba Hydro, and Mr. Don Epstein, consultant, had clearly worked hard to gain the respect and trust of community leaders. The Chiefs acknowledged that work, and commented on the high personal credibility of these representatives.

Several Chiefs raised specific issues in addition to those presented by Chief Peter Watt.

Chief Roger Ross of God's River attended the technical meetings at Thompson. In his presentation at God's River, he noted many specific items that needed to be addressed. In addition, Chief Ross provided commentary on the concerns regarding the proposed location of the proposed transmission line crossing the God's River.

In the absence of Chief Gabriel Hart of Oxford House, Deputy Chief Dennis Grieves presented his ideas about the North Central Project; routing of the line to the community; crossing over sensitive areas within the community's trapping and fishing areas; and technical aspects of the community distribution system regarding permafrost.

At Red Sucker Lake, Chief Fred Harper indicated the community's intention to take full and direct responsibility for right-of-way clearing and construction of the 25 kV distribution line to that community.

Chief Geordie Little of Garden Hill linked his community's support for the project to the needs of future generations and the desire for progress toward self-sufficiency and a modern economy.

At Wasagamack, Chief Alfred McDougall questioned routing of the transmission line to the community in terms of an island hopping approach versus a land based route north of Wasagamack Bay.

Chief Ken Wood noted that the St. Theresa Point-Wasagamack tie-line was in fact completed in 1990 and that no significant impacts on wildlife had occurred. Much of his presentation at St. Theresa Point involved a discussion of employment and economic initiatives that might evolve upon project completion.

Mayor Earlen Bland, Councillor Jeff Brightnose and Councillor Lesley Anderson made presentations on behalf of the community council in God's Lake Narrows. They focussed primarily upon issues relating to education and training, and participation in any employment opportunities which may arise from the project. In particular, mention was made of previous training experiences where local residents were unsuccessful in ultimately obtaining employment as hydro linesmen.

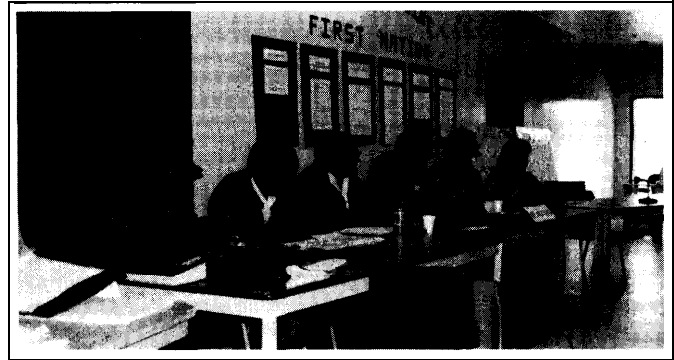
Community leaders, despite pressing day-to-day administrative necessities, made concerted efforts to stay well informed and maintain open lines of communication with the Proponent and others involved with the project. Their objective was to ensure that Aboriginal rights were respected, that land and water were protected, and that the needs of present and future generations were given careful consideration. Care and caution were advised for each stage of discussion and negotiation. The development of the North Central Project to the point where First Nations and others can make a decision regarding whether the project should proceed or not has involved a systematic approach over an extended period of time.

ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Aboriginal organizations involved in the project presented their ideas and thoughts about responsibilities for and implementation of the North Central Project.

Community residents in the past year have become more familiar with Manitoba Hydro's role in the proposed project. There is, however, limited awareness that existing and proposed Aboriginal organizations are intended to form a key and central component of the project. Some community councillors even asked the questions: What is Wapanuk? Who are the members of the Northeast Training Coordinating Committee? What is the role of the proposed community liaison committee and the environmental protection worker? Aboriginal organizations, in fact, are actively involved in explaining the role and purpose of these new organizations.

Mr. Stewart Hill of Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak



Northeast Leadership at concluding public hearing

(MKO) provided the Panel with an assessment of Manitoba Hydro's use of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), including ideas for more effective application of this information. He also described MKO's technical abilities in this area.

At the concluding day of public hearings, the Northeast Leadership Group, Island Lake Tribal Council, Wapanuk, the Community Supported Agency, and the Northeast Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee were represented. Their mandates, funding, relationships to the project, and associations with other agencies were discussed.

Chief Peter Watt, of the Northeast Leadership Group, indicated satisfaction with information brought forward by INAC on the financial aspects of the project. He also indicated strong support for the environmental review process, saying any final decision on community support for the project would be made only after the Panel's final report was released.

The Panel received a written presentation from Mr. Jack Flett, former Chief of St. Theresa Point, who witnessed the North Central Project Agreement (March 16, 1992) on behalf of the project communities. Now Executive Director of Wapanuk, Mr. Flett described progress to date and the readiness of Wapanuk to work with a joint venture partner for clearing and constructing the line and for specific tasks related to the construction of substations. Mr. Flett also discussed Wapanuk's responsibility for training, hiring, procuring, contracting and subcontracting. Mr. Flett noted that Wapanuk had received funding from INAC to assess the need to rewire and retrofit the existing housing stock in the project communities.

Mr. Joe Guy Wood, interim coordinator for the Community Supported Agency (CSA), made a presentation on the role and mandate of the CSA. In addition, he provided a brief overview of the North Central Project since its inception. Mr. Wood provided important insight into the communities' local aspirations. He placed the project in

perspective in terms of broader factors impacting on Aboriginal people and their changing way of life.

Chief Ken Wood of St. Theresa Point described the role that the Island Lake Tribal Council (ILTC) had assumed in initiating the feasibility assessment of unrestricted energy supply for the region. He also described the position of the Island Lake communities on issues related to land use and treaty land entitlement.

Ms. Elaine Cowan made a presentation on behalf of the Northeast Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee (NEMTCC) in which she described NEMTCC's roles and responsibilities related to the North Central Project. Ms. Cowan made several recommendations, including:

- that community-based training projects be developed for the North Central Project and associated activities;
- that signatories of the Project Agreement negotiate a comprehensive training strategy; and
- that Hydro show flexibility in training and hiring activities to the residents of the North Central Project Communities.

INDIVIDUALS

A significant portion of the people in each community participated in the public hearings. These individuals, who were often the Elders of the community, listened patiently to all presentations, frequently using the Executive Summary of the EIS as the basis for their questions. Only a few of the presentations were made by women or young people.

Community residents were primarily concerned with those aspects of the North Central Project which would have a direct impact on them. Some of the issues raised were:

- ability to pay monthly hydro bills;
- protection of the land and water that sustains their trapping, fishing, hunting, and gathering life-style;
- safety and reliability of the land line as compared to the existing diesel plants; and
- preparedness for any educational, training or employment opportunity that may arise.

Many presenters were unaware of progress which had been made in negotiations between the community leadership, Manitoba Hydro and INAC. In other cases, presenters were concerned about issues that remain

unresolved, for example, the role of the liaison committee and the environmental protection worker.

However, there was a clear indication from most people that they would respect the decisions made by community leaders. Each presenter also noted the importance of thinking not only about themselves but also about future generations.

Many people expressed concern in the area of employment, education and training. For example, several community members had participated in a Manitoba Hydro training program for linesmen offered at Riverton, Manitoba. Of 13 students participating from the project area, 11 graduated. Five of the graduates advanced to a skills assessment program, with only one ultimately being hired by Manitoba

However, there was a clear indication from most people that they would respect the decisions made by community leaders. Each presenter also noted the importance of thinking not only about themselves but also about future generations.

Hydro. Several other presenters commented unfavourably on their perception of the Limestone Training Initiative and stated their expectation that the unfortunate experience would not be repeated for Aboriginal people wishing to participate in the North Central Project.

Representatives of Split Lake Cree First Nation and Cross Lake First Nation made presentations to the Panel. Both groups focussed on the experiences their communities had with Manitoba Hydro during previous northern development projects. Advice was shared with the Northeast leadership and individuals of the project communities regarding the need to exercise care and caution throughout negotiations with Manitoba Hydro, and to ensure that any agreements were concluded in writing.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Federal, provincial and municipal government representatives made presentations to the Panel, primarily in Thompson, but in the case of INAC also at St. Theresa Point. These departments expressed support for the North Central Project, subject to specified terms and conditions. These conditions and recommendations are outlined in Appendix L.

Federal Departments

Mr. Don Cooke, representing Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), made a presentation that covered the proposal's background and the role of INAC. He committed to submitting (and later provided) detailed written explanations on project funding and responsibility for cost overruns. Mr. Cooke indicated that rewiring and retrofitting of houses was the responsibility of each First Nation and indicated that INAC is responsible for delivering welfare to First Nations through financial agreements with bands. A welfare manual and provincial rates are provided for bands to use as their guide in the administration of these funds.

Throughout the hearings, INAC provided written replies to the Panel's request for clarification of issues that resulted from presentations made at each individual community during the public hearings.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada sent a delegation to the hearing on the concluding day, headed by Mr. Arun Dighe and supported by Mr. Martin Egan (Manager, Environment), Ms. Patsy Turner (Funding Services Officer), Mr. Chester Letkeman (Special Projects, NCP), and Mr. David Borutski (A/Head, Land Administration Services). This group provided oral and written responses to four main areas:

- funding - an explanation was provided that 75% of the cost of the project would be provided by Ottawa, and possibly from the Manitoba region capital account;
- retrofitting and rebuilding of houses, and energy conservation loans;
- welfare rates - questions had been raised as to whether the allocation of monies for welfare would increase to cover the increase in Hydro bills; and
- employment, education and training.

INAC concluded by stating their willingness to work with First Nations to resolve any outstanding issues.

Mr. Henry Majewski, Senior Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada described the role and responsibility of his department in protecting fish habitat. The department's primary focus was on the protection of the biophysical environment including procedures related to the establishment, operation, and reclamation associated with borrow pits, borrow sites, and stream crossings. Additional commentary focussed on the use of herbicides and the handling of fuel.

Provincial Departments

Mr. Dan McNaughton appeared before the hearings on behalf of Manitoba Environment. Mr. McNaughton described the roles and responsibility of Manitoba Environment regarding both project licensing and environmental protection. He also agreed to provide the Panel with an organizational outline of provincial government departments regarding their responsibilities for the North Central Project. That outline, however, was not received.

Mr. Cam Elliot, a biologist with Manitoba Natural Resources, described the status of wildlife in the North Central Region, with emphasis on caribou, moose and birds. Data was presented about the Aboriginal wildlife harvest and the adequacy of both population and harvest data.

Mr. Robert Sopuck, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Coordination Unit, Winnipeg, discussed the North Central Project's assessment process in relation to the province's principles of sustainable development. He concluded that the Project was consistent with these principles. He further noted the importance of the joint environmental assessment review as a first to be completed between Manitoba and Canada.

Mr. Joe Morrisseau, Senior Analyst, Manitoba Northern Affairs, in response to a question from Chief Peter Watt, indicated that the provincial contribution to the North Central Project (15%) related to actual costs and was not capped. At the same time, Manitoba Hydro stated that their portion (10%) was also based on actual costs and was not capped.

Municipal Government

Mayor Bill Comaskey of Thompson indicated support for the project and described its importance both in terms of northern economic activity and the provision of electrical service to northerners commensurate with the level of service provided to other Manitoba communities. He noted the positive economic and social benefits typically associated with the provision of electricity in Manitoba.

Mr. Bob McCleverty, representing Pikwitonei Community Council, described the interest of Pikwitonei residents in the project. This interest pertained to potential employment, compensation, and ultimately the provision of a land line to that community. A retrospective overview of Pikwitonei's negotiations with Manitoba Hydro for a land line was provided.

4.4 PANEL OBSERVATIONS

The key points of the presentations made to the Panel were that:

- all parties expressed the need to protect land, water, and wildlife within the region;
- the needs of present and future generations for unrestricted electrical service was described in some detail; and
- community leaders, government and Aboriginal agencies, and the Panel were advised to exercise care **and** caution in the examination of environmental issues related to the North Central Project.

The Panel left the public hearings confident that a full and fair vetting of issues related to the North Central Project

had been achieved. That process, when complemented with the written data and information, provided a solid basis for the Panel's Final Report.



'Traditional circle' at final day of public hearings

5.0 PANEL COMMENTARY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The North Central Project represents a new approach to northern development. This new approach is reflected in the comprehensive nature of the Proponent's Environmental Impact Statement, as well as in the extensive nature of the public hearings and consultations which deferred to local language and cultural patterns. The old approach to development would likely not have involved First Nations' people, either in decision making or in the assessment of impacts. The Panel's approach in fulfilling its mandate has further contributed to the perception of the North Central Project as a unique project where social, cultural and environmental considerations are given equal weight to technical and economic considerations.

The Panel commentary begins by providing a brief perspective on the project. It goes on to describe the interested parties, including the community leadership and residents of the project communities, the Proponent, INAC, Aboriginal organizations and Manitoba Northern Affairs, and includes some observations about partnerships which are in their formative stages. The joint environmental review process is described next, followed by the Panel's comments regarding the project's anticipated impacts and their management.

Finally, a discussion of the level of public awareness and frequently expressed concerns is provided. The Panel's general observations regarding the North Central Project conclude the commentary.

5.2 NORTH CENTRAL IN PERSPECTIVE

INAC has stated that, in order to proceed to effective approval, the North Central Project must meet three criteria:

- ▣ environmental acceptability;
- ▣ community support; and
- ▣ cost effectiveness.

Although the Panel has received data and information regarding each of these areas, the Panel has given particular attention to its primary focus on environmental considerations. The environmental assessment process



Construction of the Wasagamack - St. Theresa Point tie-line

being conducted by the Panel has been a comprehensive one, and, with the exception of one small segment of the project, has been completed prior to project approval. The exception is the 12 kilometers of distribution line between Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point that was completed in June 1991 with only provincial environmental licensing. Because the Wasagamack-St. Theresa Point tie-line is part of the North Central Project, the Panel was asked to include it as part of the environmental review of the project.

The Panel also recognizes that the relationship among interested parties continues to strengthen and evolve as working partnerships are transformed into contractual arrangements. The Panel believes that initial distrust is gradually giving way to some measure of goodwill and confidence. The parties involved may take satisfaction from their work to date.

Approval will be needed from the First Nations, in the

event of final approval by the federal and provincial governments.

The cost effectiveness of the project is a matter to be determined by the Project Agreement partners as part of final, effective Treasury Board approval.

Manitoba Hydro has recognized that misunderstanding and unfulfilled expectations, based on past northern hydro-electric projects, have seriously harmed the Corporation's image and reputation. In responding to this reality and in an attempt to improve its relations with Aboriginal people, Manitoba Hydro has indicated that the Environmental Impact Statement constitutes a clearwritten presentation of its commitments prior to project initiation. In addition, Manitoba Hydro has made a number of policy and program commitments to be implemented during the construction and operation phases of the project. These commitments constitute both mitigative and enhancement measures related to the impacts of the project.

5.3 INTERESTED PARTIES

The working relationships among parties involved in the North Central Project are clearly of central importance to the project. Many of those working relationships are at a formative stage - Manitoba Hydro's corporate culture has adjusted, and will, the Panel believes, continue to adjust and adapt as Manitoba Hydro works to establish credibility and partnerships with community leaders and Aboriginal people. Similarly, First Nation governments are adjusting in order to become full and effective partners with other governments and Manitoba Hydro.

Manitoba Hydro has participated in the project with a serious disadvantage related to its reputation stemming from earlier hydro-electric developments. Flooding from these previous developments and related social and environmental impacts are well known in the Aboriginal community. New corporate policies related to northern preference clauses for Aboriginal hiring, contracting, subcontracting, and equipment leasing are only part of a broader initiative by Manitoba Hydro to improve its relationship with Aboriginal people. For example, Manitoba Hydro has worked with the Split Lake Cree First Nation to clear and construct a transmission line from Kelsey to Split Lake. That project was completed with the Split Lake First Nation providing the majority of the clearing and construction while acting as the general contractor in association with a joint venture partner.

First Nation governments are also in a changing relationship with INAC. Although the movement to self government seems to continue at a slow pace, INAC has increasingly



A family at a traditional camp

delegated responsibility for the administration of programs and services, through a variety of funding agreements with First Nations. Diminished financial resources and ever increasing needs stemming from population growth in the Aboriginal communities have strained both government's abilities to respond and the working relationship between INAC and First Nations.

Aboriginal people within the project communities are increasingly confronted by change. Elders and others involved in trapping, fishing, hunting and gathering are concerned about threats to the continuation of that way-of-life. Community residents are also concerned about poor living conditions, high unemployment, the high cost of living, lack of basic infrastructure and recreational facilities, and the future for youth. Community leadership is in the difficult position of trying to retain the best of the traditional Aboriginal way-of-life and culture while addressing the needs of future generations.

People's expression of interest in education, training, and employment suggests a commitment to personal responsibility for improving skills. Community residents realize that they must have the appropriate skills to benefit from any opportunities that may be available as a result of the North Central Project.

Competing uses of provincial Crown land are a widespread concern in northern Manitoba. The need to settle treaty land entitlements and to co-manage natural resources on which remote communities depend, has resulted in the Province seeking new partnerships with Aboriginal people. Industrial development relating to mining, forestry and

hydro-electric development in the past has led to conflict over the allocation of Crown land. Traditional land use and occupancy by Aboriginal people provides a strong moral basis for initiating development only with the consent of the Aboriginal people who are directly affected.

5.4 JOINT REVIEW PROCESS

Consistent with the Terms of Reference provided by governments, the environmental assessment of the North Central Project has entailed the following steps:

preparation of the Guidelines based on peoples' identified questions, issues and concerns;

development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the Proponent in response to the Guidelines;

review and assessment by all parties of the EIS;

public hearings;

final evaluation of data and information by the Panel; and

preparation of conclusions and recommendations.

At each stage of the process, awareness about the project, related impacts, and impact management was documented and communicated to interested parties.

As a unique project directed towards Aboriginal people in traditional remote communities, the North Central Project clearly involves more than simple construction in a technical sense. The challenge faced by all parties involved with the project must be to ensure that both change and positive and negative project impacts are identified, discussed and managed in a series of working partnerships among the Proponent, governments, community leadership, Aboriginal organizations and individuals.

5.5 IMPACTS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

Manitoba Hydro's EIS constitutes a comprehensive compilation of data and information. In responding to concerns of broken promises and unfulfilled expectations raised by community residents at the public hearings, Manitoba Hydro has indicated that the North Central EIS, prepared prior to project construction, constitutes a written statement of policies, promises and commitments that the Corporation intends to uphold. What follows is a brief

commentary providing the Panel's observations of certain aspects of the EIS.

The need for the North Central Project is documented in a series of forecasts and projections in the Proponent's EIS. The need for the project is also apparent from the statements made by community residents about the repeated overloading of circuit breakers, community blackouts from failure of the diesel-electric generators, and the lack of unrestricted electricity for modern household appliances. The Panel believes that the project will have a positive impact not only for government departments

The challenge faced by all parties involved with the project must be to ensure that both change, and positive and negative project impacts, are identified, discussed and managed in a series of working partnerships among the Proponent, governments, community leadership, Aboriginal organizations and individuals.

now paying high diesel rates, but also for the average household where running water and sewer services may eventually improve individual living conditions.

The unrestricted electrical service readily available to other Manitoba communities is needed in the project communities to ensure future economic and social development. Basic community infrastructure such as sewer and water can, in practical terms, only be made available with the provision of an unrestricted supply of electricity. Higher standards of living and the availability of modern medical and technological appliances or equipment are only possible with secure and unrestricted power. The Panel was particularly moved by a presenter describing the need for reliable power for dialysis machines and other modern medical equipment that would enable community residents to be treated locally, rather than being forced to travel to, or to reside in, Winnipeg.

For individuals to realize opportunities that may flow from employment, education and training, or business development, there must be progress in terms of basic infrastructure that will lead to, and support, personal and community initiatives.

Changes to the biophysical environment will result from



New commercial enterprise under construction in a project community

clearing the right-of-way and construction activities. The land area involved, however, is modest in comparison with lands traditionally used and occupied by Aboriginal people from the project communities. It is the Panel's opinion that impacts on land, water and wildlife will be in the main short-term and manageable with known technologies. Vigilance and monitoring by community residents, in a formal and informal sense, will be needed to ensure that commitments to mitigate environmental impacts are met.

The traditional Aboriginal way-of-life based upon trapping, fishing, hunting and gathering will be disrupted on a temporary basis. Employment opportunities and compensation for those whose livelihoods are directly and negatively affected are necessary to ensure fairness and acceptance of the project by local people.

Routing of the transmission line remains to be finalized for some portions for the project, often those portions in close proximity to the communities. The Panel believes that the outstanding routing issues are minor when compared to the many routing decisions which have already been resolved between the Proponent and affected parties. The goodwill and trust generated to date will provide the basis to reach those final routing decisions. Similarly, avoidance of sensitive areas and minimization of visual impacts also require some further negotiation to achieve final resolution.

The question of future ownership of the transmission facilities was raised during the hearings. It was suggested that ownership or partial ownership should be transferred to the communities or perhaps to some organization owned by the communities. Manitoba Hydro is prepared to discuss this matter.

Neither INAC nor Manitoba Northern Affairs expressed interest in ownership of the proposed facilities. The communities, however, are moving toward an increased level of political and financial autonomy, and are interested in control of capital infrastructure and essential services. It may well be that ownership of the proposed energy distribution facilities would be in harmony with these social and economic goals.

The agreement under which the facilities will be financed relies upon INAC to meet 75% of the costs and Manitoba Northern Affairs 15%. In the future, government facilities will pay electrical rates comparable to those charged in other communities served by line power. The prospect of lower future rates, which would offset the capital cost of the transmission line, provided the incentive for INAC to commit to pay 75% of the project costs.

The Panel believes that Manitoba Hydro and community leaders have worked hard to minimize negative impacts and to enhance or maximize positive benefits associated

The expenditure of public monies for the North Central Project constitutes the culmination of a local initiative sustained over a period of more than a decade by community leaders. The contribution of the project to local people, to the region, and to the province as a whole is significant.

with the project. The Panel notes particularly the importance of the involvement of local Aboriginal people in all aspects of project activity. This should ensure both close scrutiny of clearing and construction activities, and local accountability related to adherence to the terms and conditions of the environmental licence.

The Panel is of the firm belief that the present diesel system is inadequate to meet community needs from many perspectives. These inadequacies are as follows:

- in a technical sense, the diesel system fails to meet even the present demand;
- in environmental terms, the spills, noise, dust, emissions, safety, visual impact, and the extensive land used are detrimental;
- in economic terms, the cost and inefficiency associated

with this form and quality of electrical production would be unacceptable to most people in the province;

- ° in terms of policy associated with diesel-electric generation, two factors must be considered. The first factor is that local people and developers (often the First Nations) are required to pay all costs associated with the extension of the electrical service. By contrast, unrestricted land line power enables these costs to be recovered from Manitoba Hydro following electrification of the subdivision. The second factor is that increasingly, the subsidization of local household rates by commercial and government facilities is open to question and review; and
- ° in terms of future development options, the present diesel system precludes sewer and water and other public infrastructure, and expansion of commercial activity and other developments that may be necessary for the economic and social well being of individuals in the communities.

The Panel believes that the legal, jurisdictional and financial arrangements necessary for the approval and implementation of the project are in place or under active

Further, the Panel notes that the extension of land line power to communities such as Pukitawagan and Split Lake has not precluded the pursuit of both a traditional Aboriginal way-of-life and the development of a modern infrastructure so essential to people's progress.

negotiation. The expenditure of public monies for the North Central Project constitutes the culmination of a local initiative sustained over a period of more than a decade by community leaders. The contribution of the project to local people, to the region, and to the province as a whole is significant.

5.6 PUBLIC AWARENESS

Peoples' ideas, questions and concerns as expressed in the public hearings were based partially on their awareness of the project through word of mouth, review of the Guidelines and the Environmental Impact Statement, and



Aboriginal workers on Split Lake Transmission Line

general impressions about change as it has affected the community and peoples' way-of-life. In addition to the formal Panel meetings associated with the environmental review process, community leaders and Manitoba Hydro held their own community meetings which assisted in raising public awareness about the project. The Panel noticed individuals in the communities were clearly more informed at the public hearings than they were a year earlier, and therefore were able to focus on project details and implementation issues.

The initial lack of project awareness was replaced with questions and concerns quite detailed in nature, and often focussed on household matters and traditional harvesting activities. For example, monthly hydro bills, social welfare rates, house rewiring and retrofitting, safety, and concern about impacts on land, water, and wildlife predominated in the public presentations.

Natural Environment

Individuals recounted stories of birds killed by striking hydro lines or by animals becoming entangled in abandoned transmission line wires. Comments were often heard to the effect that animals and fish did not taste as good as in the past. Some community members provided another perspective in noting that existing environmental conditions within their community constituted a significant negative environmental condition.

Impacts on the natural environment were often expressed as destruction of the land, contamination of the water, and on occasion, a perception that impacts would be similar to those associated with the impacts experienced in communities such as Cross Lake and Split Lake. Individuals seemed reassured when explanations about the actual anticipated impacts were provided or when comments were made about the Wasagamack-St. Theresa tie-line

as representative of the actual impacts that might be expected.

The Panel believes that the acceptance of, and comments related to, the tie-line between Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point constitute a realistic and current example of people's anticipated reaction to the North Central Project upon completion. Further, the Panel notes that the extension of land line power to communities such as

The Panel noted particularly that people are presently incurring substantial monthly bills for heating their homes during the winter with wood or oil.

Pukitawagan and Split Lake has not precluded the pursuit of both a traditional Aboriginal way-of-life and the development of a modern infrastructure so essential to people's progress.

In general terms, the impact of transmission lines on the biophysical environment may be described as modest when compared to those environmental and social impacts associated with the development of hydro-electric generating facilities.

Rates

At the household level, people were concerned about present and future monthly hydro bills and their ability to pay for these services. Several individuals had their electric service disconnected in the past by Manitoba Hydro and felt badly treated in that process. There was often confusion related to statements by Manitoba Hydro in the EIS on "community rebuilds". Manitoba Hydro was referring to the community distribution system; individuals inferred that Manitoba Hydro would rebuild their houses to appropriate standards for electrification.

Manitoba Hydro's presentation concerning monthly electric rates and consumption got the most attention from people at community hearings. (See Figures 4a and 4b.) The comparison of their situation with other communities in northern Manitoba was carefully scrutinized and was the subject of considerable discussion and questioning. The Panel noted particularly that people are presently incurring substantial monthly bills for heating their homes during the winter with wood or oil.

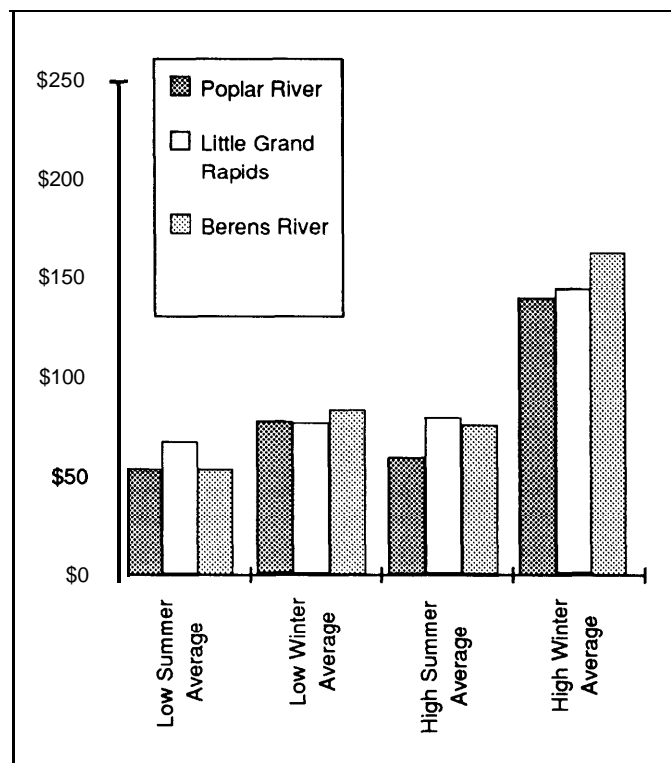


Figure 4a: Comparison of average electrical costs in homes without electrical heat

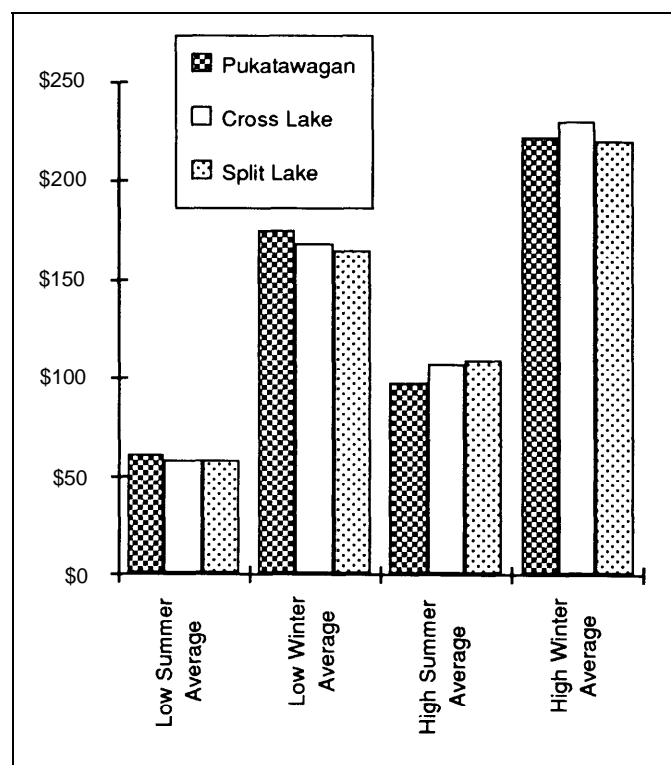


Figure 4b: Comparison of average electrical costs in homes with electrical heat

Safety and Reliability

The safety and reliability of land line power as compared to the present diesel system was often raised as an area of concern. Some people noted the lack of maintenance associated with the present community distribution system where trees and shrubs threatened to contact hydro lines. Poles were often cited as being of poor quality. Individuals had questions about the perceived new voltage in the line and the personal consequences for their safety. Others, however, looked forward to the opportunity to be able to use standard stoves, fridges, freezers, and microwaves.

Social Issues

Social welfare rates are another area where further information and communication is needed. Old age pensioners on fixed income and the working poor are two groups who may be more adversely impacted by the cost associated with increased consumption of electricity. Manitoba Hydro proposed that these groups maintain 15 amp service as a means of ensuring that consumption of electricity will be limited. The Panel believes that First Nation leadership recognized implications in this area for the band operating budget.

Training and Education

People in the communities are aware of the need for education and training in order for them to be able to take advantage of employment opportunities that may arise from the North Central Project. There is concern, however, that employment barriers, job readiness, and lack of basic life-style skills will preclude local people from realizing employment opportunities that may be available to them.

The Northeast Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee has begun the task of matching the inventory of available labour force in the communities with Manitoba Hydro's job requirements. Pre-employment training; driver's licences for private and commercial vehicles; basic life-skills training; and technical and vocational training of considerable duration are prerequisites for effective participation by local people. The Panel recognizes that the educational program offered at Sakatay College at Garden Hill as representative of that needed to maximize people's participation in the project.

The Panel is also of the belief that non-Aboriginal employees involved in the North Central Project must also develop a sensitivity to the Aboriginal culture and traditions through cross-cultural workshops. The interaction between corporate and Aboriginal cultures will be enhanced by these preparatory workshops.

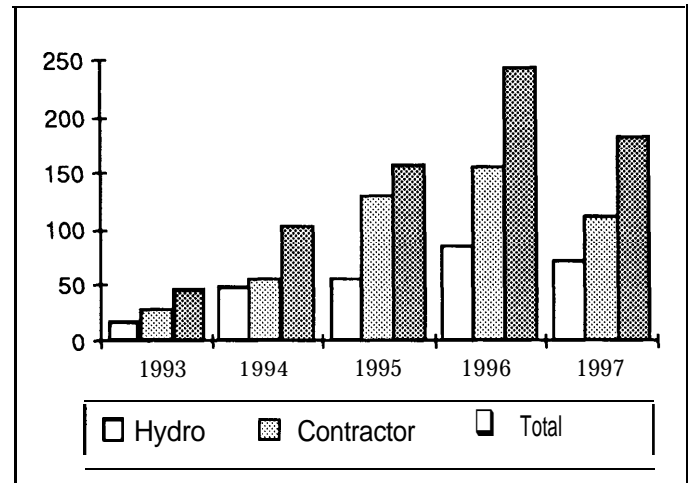


Figure 5: Peak employment in each year of project construction

Jurisdiction

The Panel believes that the lack of adequate resources and confusion over jurisdiction has hampered efforts in the areas of education and training. The Panel made particular note of comments made by Manitoba Hydro representatives that community residents who had participated in the linesmen training program at Riverton would be particularly well positioned to benefit from employment opportunities that may arise from the North Central Project.

Employment

Manitoba Hydro presented overhead charts that depicted in some detail the number of person hours available each year for the North Central Project. This information was categorized in terms of the Hydro workforce and employees of the private contractors. (See Figure 5). In the peak year of construction, 1996, some 243 seasonal jobs would be available to members of the project communities. The Panel notes that although the employment associated with clearing and construction is substantial, the permanent long term employment outlook should be the focus of additional attention in preparing community members to act as electricians, carpenters, plumbers, and business operators and managers.

5.7 PANEL OBSERVATIONS

People seemed to appreciate the role played by the Panel in providing a forum for the Proponent, community leaders,

government departments and others to address community issues and concerns. Several presenters proposed an ongoing role for the Panel in the resolution of outstanding issues.

There are so many organizations involved in the North Central Project that most parties are confused over what role each organization will play; for example, the role of the liaison committee and the environmental protection worker was not clearly understood by most parties.

Given the number of departments and organizations involved in the project, care must be taken in the integration and coordination of all activities. The Panel believes that in most instances, outstanding issues can and will be

The Panel believes that in most instances, outstanding issues can and will be resolved among affected parties. However, where impasses do occur, an entity may be necessary to provide mediation. In those instances, where mediation is found to be necessary, credibility, independence and process are key factors essential to problem resolution.

resolved among affected parties. However, where impasses do occur, an entity may be necessary to provide mediation. In those instances, where mediation is found to be necessary, credibility, independence and process are key factors essential to problem resolution.

There was considerable distrust and doubt associated with the ability and intention of the Proponent and some government departments to fulfil their commitments and promises. Many presentations contained specific recommendations related to terms and conditions that individuals felt should be placed on the environmental licence granted to Manitoba Hydro.

Information before the Panel seemed to indicate that fragmented jurisdiction and disparate interests may necessitate careful consultation and integration of community and regulatory requirements and action related to decisions regarding the North Central project.

The Panel recognizes that initiatives are required on two fronts:

- the integration and coordination of the regulatory activities of governmental departments; and
- ensuring that local people, perhaps through the local liaison committee or indirectly through project employment, monitor the clearing of the right-of-way and construction of the transmission line.

Community leaders and their Aboriginal organizations are actively involved with the partners of the North Central Agreement. To ensure long-term success, the Panel recognizes the fact that the Aboriginal organizations are new and that the lack of resources and trained manpower are obstacles to be overcome. There is a clear commitment by Manitoba Hydro to maximize the role and responsibility of First Nations in project activities and to develop stronger working relationships among all parties in the process. The Panel is encouraged by Manitoba Hydro's commitment. The Panel is confident that a solid basis exists to draw the final conclusions necessary for project approval and implementation.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 1) The Panel concludes, based upon a careful review of all data and information, that the proposed North Central Project is necessary to ensure that present and future generations of people are able to have access to unrestricted electrical service essential for development of a modern life-style and economy.

The Panel further concludes that the current diesel system is inadequate to meet future needs and to provide a level of service consistent with that available to other communities in Manitoba. Population growth in the project communities, demand for higher amperage service, and contamination associated with the spill of diesel fuel necessitate and lend urgency to more appropriate options.

The Panel also concludes that the proposed North Central Project may be completed in such a manner that negative project impacts on the environment, culture, and people are mitigable. In addition, the Panel concludes that the project can be constructed and operated in a manner consistent with the principles of sustainable development. The Panel is confident that the traditional Aboriginal way-of-life based upon trapping, fishing, hunting and gathering, so prevalent in the communities, will continue to meet people's needs for sustenance and personal well-being associated with harvesting activities on land and water.

- 2) The Panel examined closely both the process leading to route selection and the proposed routing of the line. The Panel concludes that cost and efficiency criteria have been complemented by attention to environmental factors such as sensitive areas, critical wildlife habitat, visual effects, and individuals' concerns regarding the project. There was clear evidence that alternate routes had been thoroughly examined and that input from local leadership and residents contributed to final route selection.

Final routing decisions remain for portions of the right-of-way between God's Lake Narrows and Garden Hill, and in the approach to Wasagamack. The Panel believes that the consultative process and goodwill demonstrated by all parties to date will lead to final resolution of these routing issues in a timely manner.

- 3) Following an extensive and systematic public consultation process, the Panel has recognized primary project impacts in four categories:

- on the **biophysical environment** including, but not limited to, water crossings, wildlife habitat, wildlife (such as moose, caribou, birds), and vegetation;
- on the **traditional Aboriginal way-of-life** including trapping, fishing, hunting, and gathering;
- on **people in their communities** including ability to pay monthly electrical bills, house rewiring and retrofit, safety (electro-magnetic radiation, chemical use, and adequacy of the distribution system), and employment, education and training; and
- on **legal and jurisdictional issues** including treaty land entitlement, use of reserve land, ownership of project facilities, economic development and related benefits (recreation, hospital, school, sewer and water, and government facilities), compensation, and improved working partnerships among interested parties.

The Panel concludes that effective action plans have been proposed to protect the environment, to respect the culture and values of Aboriginal people, and to meet the needs of present and future generations for access to unrestricted electrical service.

- 4) The Panel concludes that plans and mitigative measures related to decommissioning of diesel plants, safety and reliability, environmental monitoring and operating procedures are sufficient to protect the biophysical environment and the people resident in the project communities. Scrutiny by local people is anticipated to be essential for monitoring project impacts.
- 5) The Panel expects, and is confident, that action plans for the mitigation of negative impacts and for the enhancement of project benefits will ensure that the North Central Project conforms to both regulatory and community requirements. The Panel concludes that project success depends, to a large extent, on the continued development of effective partnerships and working relationships among the Proponent, community leadership and residents, governments and other agencies. The community-based approach used to date must be continued and strengthened.

Based upon a careful weighing of the evidence, and the conclusions described above, the Panel is now prepared to present the following recommendations.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1) PROJECT

The Panel recommends that the North Central Transmission Line Project proceed.

2) HERBICIDES

The use of herbicides was consistently questioned by residents of the project communities. Manitoba Hydro indicated in the EIS that herbicides would not be used in the transmission line right-of-way but would be used to control weeds at the station sites. Hydro conceded, however, that removal of the weeds by hand or prevention of weed growth by placement of landscaping cloth under surfacing material may in fact be viable alternatives to the use of herbicides.

The Panel recommends that no herbicides be used for any portion of the North Central Project.

3) MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

There is concern regarding the absence of accurate data to describe the plants and animals of the region. Manitoba Hydro, prior to and throughout preparation of the EIS, commissioned research reports and used traditional ecological knowledge to describe the biophysical baseline condition.

The Panel recommends that an integrated approach by governments, the Proponent and the communities be utilized to measure and monitor environmental conditions in a systematic manner both during and after construction.

Concerns were identified related to the need to monitor and enforce promises and commitments made by the Proponent and others, and to do so in a systematic manner. Manitoba Hydro commits in the EIS to using the Community Supported Agency, liaison committees in each community, and environmental protection workers to address this concern.

The Panel recommends that an independent mediator be appointed, on a case-by-case basis, to facilitate and ensure the resolution of impasses that may develop among parties to the agreement.

4) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED BENEFITS

Concerns were expressed about the level of community and local organizational preparedness to capture direct,

indirect, and induced benefits of project construction and operation. Manitoba Hydro has prepared a detailed action plan in order to ensure that project-related benefits will be realized.

The Panel recommends that:

- a) community leadership work with the federal and provincial governments to maximize benefits to be realized from the project during construction. After project completion, long-term economic development is expected to flow from those developmental contracts that may be associated with unrestricted electrical supply, for example, businesses, installation of water and sewer facilities, and expansion of tourist facilities; and**
- b) Aboriginal organizations with responsibility for development in the project area should consider relocating their head offices within the project communities rather than in Winnipeg. This action would have significant, long term, permanent employment impacts and would provide both awareness and accountability to local people.**

5) EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Community members identified the need for pre-employment education and on-the-job training as essential to their effective participation in the project. Manitoba Hydro has indicated its commitment to on-the-job training only.

The Panel recommends that:

- a) First Nations and provincial and federal governments address as quickly as possible the question of responsibility for training, and in particular pre-employment training;**
- b) education and training facilities for the project, in terms of pre-employment and job-readiness training, be established as appropriate. In addition, cross-cultural workshops should be offered to non-Aboriginal project employees; and**
- c) wherever possible, a community-based approach be followed in the areas of education and training.**

Concern was expressed in the communities about the opportunity for employment and the preparedness of local individuals to seize employment opportunities. Manitoba Hydro has described plans and activities

that should maximize local employment related to right-of-way clearing and construction.

The Panel believes that major employment impacts will be associated with indirect and induced project activities, including such areas as rewiring, retrofitting, catering and accommodation, sewer and water projects that may follow, and business developments that may become feasible with **access** to unrestricted electrical power.

The Panel recommends that:

- d) **First Nations and Manitoba Hydro place the project's employment impacts in perspective when compared to community unemployment levels, i.e., clearing and construction jobs are primarily of short-term duration and non-permanent in nature;**
- e) **local people prepare themselves in vocational and apprenticeship programs for training electricians, electrical technicians, appliance repairmen, carpenters, plumbers and business administrators and managers; and**
- f) **interested parties resolve the questions of jurisdiction and responsibility for pre-employment training in the areas of basic literacy, life-skills, and appropriate licensing (both private and commercial driver's licence). These are areas that require urgent attention because the Panel believes that confusion over jurisdiction has jeopardized progress in this area to date. A consequence is a lack of job readiness that will limit local peoples' ability to be employed on the project.**

6) LEGAL AND JURISDICTIONAL

The cost sharing arrangements among INAC, Manitoba Hydro, and the Department of Northern Affairs were the focus of extensive discussion by community residents. Many felt that the INAC contribution should either be repaid by Manitoba Hydro or be contributed towards an ownership position by the communities in the North Central Project. Manitoba Hydro indicated in the EIS a willingness to negotiate with First Nations the question of ownership feasibility.

The Panel recommends that, following project completion, community leaders assess the economic feasibility of First Nations' ownership of project facilities.

7) TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL WAY-OF-LIFE

Elders and others in each project community expressed deep concern about the need to protect land, water, and wildlife that provide the basis for **Aboriginal** trapping, fishing, hunting and gathering activities. Manitoba Hydro, in the EIS, has stated that impacts on the traditional Aboriginal way-of-life would be temporary and compensation would be provided for periods of disruption based upon actual losses.

The Panel recommends that, to the extent possible, trappers, fishermen, hunters, and gatherers be directly included in monitoring project activities and in receiving project employment while their livelihoods are disrupted. For example, where clearing and construction are occurring within a trapper's Registered Trapping Area (RTA), that trapper's traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) should be sought and utilized to mitigate biophysical or cultural impacts.

8) INFRASTRUCTURE

Community residents were concerned about the impact of the North Central Project in terms of infrastructure required by the Proponent (camps, access roads, hunting policies, etc.). In addition, there was a concern that reduced demand for diesel fuel would impact on the economic viability of the winter road system essential to project communities for supplies such as food, housing materials, petroleum products and other general merchandise.

The EIS stated that on transmission line segments, mobile construction camps will be used to house workers. It also stated that Manitoba Hydro does not intend to set up camps on distribution line rights-of-way. Workers will reside in nearby communities.

The region is served by a winter road system, cost shared 50-50 by the federal and provincial governments. Manitoba Highways and Transportation is committed to ongoing support for the winter roads system, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada indicated support would depend upon the position of First Nations and the department's share of the costs.

Finally, the relationship between the land line and

community water and sewer systems was closely questioned. Both the Proponent and Initiating Department, INAC, linked the land line project with provision of sewer and water systems.

The Panel recommends that:

- a) Manitoba Hydro utilize the existing winter road system and the transmission line rights-of-way during clearing and construction;**
- b) catering and accommodation for Manitoba Hydro employees and contractors be provided by and within the local communities;**
- c) INAC follow up with each First Nation to ensure the timely preparation of plans and schedules related to the provision of sewer and water services;**
- d) INAC and Manitoba Hydro identify and assess any barriers that may limit Aboriginal people's access to Manitoba Hydro energy conservation loan programs and means be found to overcome these barriers;**
- e) First Nations and supporting government departments prepare detailed plans to capture employment, education and training benefits associated with the project and future developments; and**
- f) communities prepare plans to provide the required support facilities for the construction work force.**

9) MITIGATION

Individuals expressed interest in those means that would be used by Manitoba Hydro and its contractors to mitigate impacts on the biophysical environment (for example, ice bridges to protect shorelines, winter construction, and removal of logs used for winter stream crossing).

Manitoba Hydro, in responding to community members concerns about past broken promises, described the *North Central Project Environmental Impact Statement* as a clear statement of promises, policies and commitments applicable to the project.

The Panel recommends that local liaison

committees, wherever possible, be utilized to ensure that mitigative measures are applied systematically and in a manner consistent with commitments made in the EIS.

10) SOCIAL

A primary concern of community members was the ability to pay monthly hydro bills, the cost of rewiring and retrofitting of homes and safety and efficiency in the use of hydro-electric appliances. Manitoba Hydro and INAC have committed to a careful examination of these related issues.

The Panel recommends that:

- a) Manitoba Hydro prepare culturally sensitive training modules in the areas of energy conservation, home assessments, and safety;**
- b) First Nations and INAC work together to prepare a plan related to technical, economic, and safety considerations associated with rewiring and retrofitting; and**
- c) First Nations and INAC should give careful consideration to the financial needs of pensioners and low income earners who are not welfare recipients, to pay their electrical bills.**

11) COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community members expressed the need to be involved and informed about all aspects of the North Central Project activities. Manitoba Hydro and its Project Agreement partners have finalized arrangements for the establishment and funding of a Community Supported Agency (CSA) to facilitate ongoing communications and public information processing.

The Panel recommends that particular focus and emphasis by all parties be directed towards the meaningful involvement of the Elders, women and youth in all aspects of North Central Project activities.

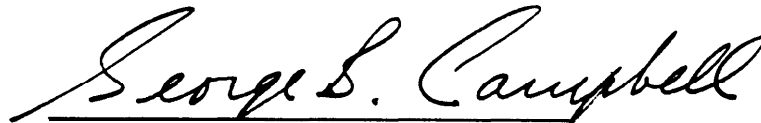
12) PARTNERSHIPS

Community leadership and residents expressed considerable concern about developing sound and

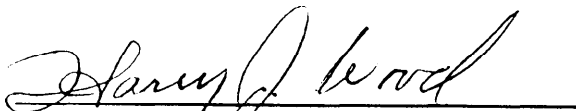
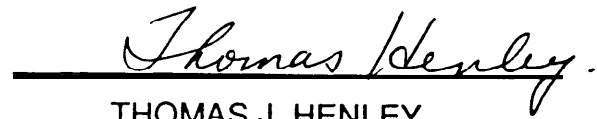
meaningful working relationships between the Proponent, communities, and governments. The Agreement Management Committee agreed to provide funding for a Community Supported Agency. It was also unclear at the time of Panel reporting that a smoothly functioning integrated approach by the departments involved is in place or even anticipated.

The Panel recommends interested parties use a **community-based approach to ensure both awareness and accountability to local residents. Wherever possible, community meetings should be held on a regular basis where residents and interested parties form a “traditional circle” to discuss project issues.**

**North Central Project
Environmental Assessment Panel**



GEORGE B. CAMPBELL
Chairman


HARRY J. WOOD
THOMAS J. HENLEY

Appendix A

PANEL MEMBERS' BIOGRAPHIES

GEORGE B. CAMPBELL (Chairman)

Mr. Campbell retired from the Public Service in 1987, after spending 35 years in a variety of positions in the departments of **Health** and Welfare Canada, Medical Services Branch (MSB), and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

Prior to serving in Ottawa with Health and Welfare Canada (MSB) as Director General in charge of field operations in Canada and abroad, he was Chief of Finance and Administration, Zone Director and Regional Director for MSB in Manitoba. Mr. Campbell also worked for MSB in Ontario, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Campbell also served as Regional Director General for INAC for the Manitoba Region. In the final year and a half before retirement, he was Senior Representative and Special Advisor to the Deputy Minister of INAC in the Development, Management and Implementation of Indian Self-Government to those First Nations who wanted to move in this direction. Mr. Campbell has extensive experience and knowledge of Aboriginal communities and their issues including socio-economic development, policy, financial, personnel and management development.

As senior administrator at the executive level, he spent much of his career in the implementation of government policy and the provision of a variety of programs and services to Aboriginal reserves and communities in Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Campbell is skilled in communication in both English and Cree, as well as the provision of common sense management and administrative direction. He was born in Norway House, Manitoba.

THOMAS JOHN HENLEY

Professor Henley is Associate Director and Associate Professor at the Natural Resources Institute, University of

Manitoba. He has served as a faculty member at the university since 1974, both as a professor and administrator.

He is a member of the Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy. Professor Henley has also chaired the Northern Manitoba Economic Development Commission, thereby acquiring considerable knowledge and experience in the area of the evaluation and assessment of economic and environmental impacts of industrial projects on communities and natural resources.

Professor Henley has specific responsibilities in the areas of communication, report writing and administration. His publications are in the area of northern, regional and sustainable development.

HARRY WOOD

A life-time resident of St. Theresa Point, one of the communities affected by the North Central Project, Mr. Wood has been active in his community for more than 30 years and has been elected twice to band council. He served for more than a decade as Vice-President of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood and worked with the Province in economic development for several years. Mr. Wood was a founding member of the Island Lake Tribal Council where he served initially as Coordinator and finally as Tribal Government Advisor until his appointment to the Panel.

Mr. Wood is fluent in English, Cree and the Island Lake dialect. His ability to communicate with members of the project communities was an important asset to the Panel, and one that he has used for many years in his work for the Northeastern communities. Mr. Wood is widely respected for his common sense and good judgement, both within the Aboriginal community and the larger Manitoba society. He has played an important role in Aboriginal issues at the local, regional and national level.

Appendix B

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The North Central Environmental Assessment Panel wishes to thank the public and members of government departments as well as Manitoba Hydro for their cooperation. The Panel would also like to thank:

- the **media of northern Manitoba** - Mikisew News (Native Communications Inc.), CBC Radio, CHTM Radio, Nickel Belt News, Thompson Citizen, and Mr. Bob Lowery of the Winnipeg Free Press for their news coverage.
- Paula Caldwell, federal co-executive secretary, and Ryan Kustra, provincial co-executive secretary;
- Jaye Shuttleworth, Erik Davies, Pierre Bernier, Keith Grady and Betty Leitch from FEARO; **Sandi** Kippen and Sharon Gluting from Manitoba Environment; and Helen Fast and Don Cameron;
- local liaison workers: Jeff Brightnose, Roy Flett, John James Harper, Larry Knott, Clark Little, James Mason, Murdo McDougall, Martin McKay, and Roy Monias; and
- interpreters: Billy Joe Flett, Carl Flett, John Flett, Cindy Grieves, Eli Harper, **Zack** Harper, Doug Hastings, Gilbert North, and Ambrose Wood.

Appendix C

CANADA MANITOBA AGREEMENT ON TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A FEDERAL - PROVINCIAL PANEL TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED NORTH CENTRAL TRANSMISSION LINE

Background

Manitoba Hydro plans to construct an electrical transmission line and related installations to connect the communities of Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point with the provincial power grid at Kelsey. The project would be cost shared by Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Manitoba Hydro and the Province of Manitoba. Manitoba Hydro would be responsible for design and construction of all facilities and would be the exclusive owner/operator of the system upon completion.

A licence is required pursuant to the Manitoba **Environment Act** as the proposed project falls within the category of a Class 2 development in accordance with Manitoba Regulation **164/88**. Public hearings will be required under the provincial assessment process. In addition, the federal Minister of the Environment has been requested by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to appoint an environmental assessment Panel to conduct a public review of the proposed North Central Transmission Line under the **Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) Guidelines Order**.

The North Central Environmental Assessment Panel (Panel) has been established in accordance with the Manitoba **Environment Act** and Regulations and under authority of the federal **EARP Guidelines Order**. These Terms of Reference for the Panel are issued jointly by the federal and Manitoba Ministers of the Environment.

Project Description

The proposed North Central Transmission Line project consists of the design, construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a 138 kV transmission line linking the Kelsey Generating Station on the Nelson River with Oxford House, God's Lake Narrows, Garden Hill and Wasagamack; 25 kV distribution lines from God's Lake Narrows to God's River and Red Sucker Lake; and a connection to the 12 kV distribution line from Wasagamack to St. Theresa Point; modifications to the switchyard at Kelsey; siting and construction of community transformer stations; decommissioning of existing diesel generators; upgrading of internal distribution systems within the communities; inclusion of a VHF communications system to facilitate the development; and any ancillary installations, and facilities. Project related activities include but are not limited to timber clearing, stream crossings, road development, drilling, tower base preparation and the erection of towers and cables.

Panel Membership

The Panel will consist of a chairperson and two members, one of whom will be the alternate chairperson, appointed by both the provincial Minister of the Environment and the federal Minister of the Environment. All members will be unbiased, free of any potential of conflict of interest relative to the proposal under review, free of political influence and will have special knowledge or experience relevant to the consideration of its anticipated effects.

Mandate of the Panel

The Panel shall conduct a public environmental review of the proposed North Central Transmission Line Project. The Panel may request that the Ministers review and clarify these Terms of Reference at any time.

The Panel shall make every reasonable effort to submit its final recommendations to the Ministers within twelve months of the appointment of the Panel.

Scope of the Review

The review shall examine:

- potential impacts of the project, including measures intended to mitigate adverse impacts, on the bio-physical environment, human health, land and water use, aboriginal resource use and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems:
- the social, cultural, health and economic impacts directly related to the environmental effects of the project: and

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- implications of the proposal for land and resource related agreements.

The review shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the issues outlined in **Attachment 1**.

Review Process

The review **shall** follow the general process outlined in **Attachment 2**.

Public Participation Program

The Panel shall conduct a public information program to advise **the** public of its review and to ensure that the public has access to relevant information, including the project proposal, the guidelines for the preparation of the environmental impact **statement(EIS)**, the EIS and the government review of the EIS. The Panel will release all documents generated by the review to the public by filing them in the public registries and at Band and Community Offices within the impacted area, the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office (**FEARO**), the Manitoba Environmental Council, the Manitoba **EcoNet**, and other locations the panel deems appropriate. The public will have opportunity to participate in the identification of issues relating to the proposal, the development of guidelines for the EIS, and in public hearings and meetings.

A program of participant assistance will be provided to help the public to participate effectively in this review.

Legal and Technical Support

The Panel may retain independent legal counsel to advise and assist the Panel,

The Panel may engage technical specialists to assist their examination and understanding of issues. At the discretion of the Panel, these specialists may be made available to participants to assist in their understanding of the issues.

Secretariat and Cost Sharing Arrangements

Secretariat support to assist the Panel with day-to-day management of its activities shall be shared by co-executive secretaries assigned by Manitoba Environment and FEARO.

Costs associated with the public review shall be shared between Manitoba and Canada. A memorandum of understanding on cost sharing will be entered into by assigned officials representing both jurisdictions.

Attachments 1 and 2 and Schedule 1 form part of this agreement, and together with this agreement represent the entire agreement relating to the project.

The Honourable Jean Charest
Minister of the Environment
Government of Canada

Dated:

17 sept. 1991

Jean Charest

Witness:

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[Signature] 17/9/91

The Honourable J. Glen Cummings
Minister of the Environment
Province of Manitoba

Dated:

Aug 27 / 91

J. Glen Cummings

Witness:

[Signature]

ATTACHMENT 1

Issues:

The review shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following issues:

1. The consistency of the project with principles of sustainable development.
2. The process of determining the need for the proposal and any alternatives considered to supply electricity to the communities.
3. The process of route selection, including the definition of the study area, alternative corridors and centerlines, evaluation criteria and selection of a preferred centerline.
4. The effects of the general influx of workers, materials and equipment and effects of ongoing operation and maintenance activities on people, land, wildlife, terrestrial and aquatic resources.
5. Adequacy of plans and procedures for the transportation, handling and disposal of dangerous goods and hazardous materials and for responding to environmental accidents and emergencies.
6. Adequacy of measures proposed to mitigate adverse impacts of the project and to compensate for residual effects.

ATTACHMENT 2

The main components of the review process shall be:

1. Upon receipt of the project proposal, Manitoba Environment shall notify the public through advertisements in the newspapers as set out in Schedule 1, and shall release a copy of the proposal to the public. The advertisements will invite written comments and objections regarding the proposal.
2. Manitoba Environment shall provide to the proponent and make available to the public, draft guidelines for preparation of the EIS which will be developed in consultation with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of provincial and federal representatives. The public will be provided with the opportunity to comment to the Panel on the draft guidelines, in writing and through public meetings.
3. As soon as possible after its appointment, the Panel shall establish a public information program and shall establish and release to the public, operating procedures for the review consistent with the operating guidelines followed by FEARO.
4. The Panel shall hold meetings in communities within the impacted area and elsewhere as it deems appropriate, to obtain public input in the scoping of issues that should be addressed in the review.
5. The Panel shall issue to the proponent and make available to the public, final guidelines for the preparation of the EIS after considering comments from the public, draft guidelines provided to the proponent by Manitoba Environment and any other information which the Panel considers relevant.
6. Following receipt of the EIS from the proponent, the Panel shall release it to the public, the TAC and shall provide an opportunity for comment on the adequacy of the document. The Panel shall also release to the public the TAC review of the EIS and provide opportunity for the public to submit written comments and objections.
7. If necessary after reviewing the EIS, the TAC report and any public comments received, the Panel may issue a deficiency statement(s) with instructions that the proponent conduct further assessment work.

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8. When the Panel determines that the EIS is acceptable, it shall give reasonable notice and shall hold public hearings in communities within the impacted area and elsewhere as it considers appropriate.
9. Following the public hearings, the Panel shall prepare a written report with conclusions and recommendations and submit it to the federal Ministers of Environment and Indian Affairs and Northern Development and to the Manitoba Minister of Environment . The Ministers shall release the report to the public prior to decisions being made respecting the project.
10. Following receipt of the Panel report, governmental decisions shall be made and announced in accordance with the requirements of the Manitoba **Environment Act** and regulations and the federal Environmental **Assessment and Review Process Guidelines Order**.
11. The Manitoba Director may require further information from the proponent in the event that there is insufficient information available through the review for the purposes of making a licensing decision as required by the Manitoba **Environment Act**.
12. Pursuant to the Manitoba **Environment Act**, the licensing decision may be appealed to the provincial Minister.

schedule 1

Winnipeg Free Press
La Liberte
Thompson Nickel Belt News
Thompson Citizen
The New Breed
The Weetama
The Interlake Spectator

Appendix D

PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The following are the principles of sustainable development as outlined in Towards a **Sustainable** Development Strategy for Manitobans:

1. Integration of Environmental and Economic Decisions

This principle requires that we ensure economic decisions adequately reflect environmental impacts including human health. Environmental initiatives shall adequately take into account economic consequences.

2. Stewardship

This principle requires that we manage the environment and economy for the benefit of present and future generations.

Stewardship requires the recognition that we are caretakers of the environment and economy for the benefit of present and future generations of Manitobans. A balance must be struck between today's decisions and tomorrow's impacts.

3. Shared Responsibility

This principle requires that all Manitobans acknowledge responsibility for sustaining the environment and economy, with each being accountable for decisions and actions, in a spirit of partnership and open cooperation.

4. Prevention

This principle requires that we anticipate, prevent or mitigate significant adverse environmental (including human health) and economic impacts of policy, programs and decisions.

5. Conservation

This principle requires that we maintain essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life-support systems of our environment; harvest renewable resources on a sustained yield basis; and make wise

and efficient use of our renewable and non-renewable resources.

6. Recycling

This principle requires that we endeavor to reduce, reuse, and recover the products of our society.

7. Enhancement

This principle requires that we enhance the long-term productive capability, quality and capacity of our natural ecosystems.

8. Rehabilitation and Reclamation

This principle requires that we endeavor to restore damaged or degraded environments to beneficial uses.

Rehabilitation and reclamation require ameliorating damage caused in the past. Future policies, programs and developments should take into consideration the need for rehabilitation and reclamation.

9. Scientific and Technological Innovation

This principle requires that we research, develop, test and implement technologies essential to further environmental quality including human health and economic growth.

10. Global Responsibility

This principle requires that we think globally when we act locally.

Global responsibility requires that we recognize there are no boundaries to our environment, and that there is ecological interdependence among provinces and nations. There is a need to work cooperatively within Canada, and internationally, to accelerate the merger of environment and economics in decision making and to develop comprehensive and equitable solutions to problems.

Appendix E

LETTER OF REFERRAL

Original letter was in French and was dated March 20, 1990.

TRANSLATION

The Honourable Lucien Bouchard, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment
Room 511-S, Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague:

My department has completed an environmental screening, in accordance with the Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) Guidelines Order, on a proposal to enter into a three-party funding agreement with the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro. The purpose of the agreement is to enable seven isolated Indian communities to be connected to the provincial electrical grid via a transmission line.

The conclusion reached following the screening is that the environmental effects of the proposal are unknown and may be significant. Therefore, I request that you establish an Environmental Assessment panel to conduct a public review of the proposal.

As the proposal is also subject to public review under the Manitoba Environment Act, I believe it would be appropriate to undertake a joint federal/provincial review which would meet both federal and provincial requirements. The review should include examination of the potential environmental effects of the proposal and the related social impacts. It should also examine general socio-economic effects and include an assessment of the need for the proposal. Given that there may be both positive and negative effects on Indian people, I suggest that an Indian representative be appointed to the review panel.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Siddon, P.C., M.P.

Appendix F

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF PANEL PROCESS

Serving on the North Central Environmental Review Panel has been an honour for my colleagues, Thomas Henley and Harry Wood, and myself. We were privileged to work closely with representatives of organizations committed to improving the lives of the **people** of northeastern Manitoba, and, most significantly, we were privileged to work with the people themselves in determining the outcome of a project which holds the promise of important improvements for their communities and lives.

Our immediate attention was focused on fulfilling the requirements of the North Central Project environmental review, as set out in the Terms of Reference. That milestone has been reached, with the completion of this final report. But, from the outset, we were also committed to ensuring that the review went beyond the immediate task of writing a report and providing recommendations for government. The review had to work closely and meaningfully with the people in the project communities. Now, as we look back over the past 18 months, we can take pride in breaking new ground in northern development with our approach to public consultation. We would like to share the lessons we have learned, so that others working in the North may benefit from our experience.

Public consultation is fundamental to environmental assessment. The public naturally expects to be consulted about projects which could affect them. Any developer or planner who attempts to ignore the public's right to be involved, does so at their peril. There is also a pragmatic reason to involve the public: the public has knowledge not otherwise available. By consulting the public during an environmental assessment, significant improvements can be made to a project before plans are completed or construction has begun.

Independent Panel

The environmental assessment of the North Central Project offered that precise opportunity. We were an independent Panel appointed to conduct a public review before final decisions were made about licensing or proceeding with the project.

From the beginning, we were aware that this process had never occurred before in northern Manitoba. Never before had a project undergone an environmental assessment conducted by an independent Panel in direct consultation with the residents of the area. Never before had the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in northern Manitoba, who would be affected by a major project, been afforded the opportunity for such direct input and influence on the recommendations which had been commissioned by three Ministers of the federal and provincial governments. In fulfilling the requirements of the environmental assessment of the North Central Project, we were also cognoscente of developing an approach to public consultation in northern and Aboriginal communities.

Northern Reality

All three Panel members have lived the northern reality. We were only too familiar with the legacy in Aboriginal communities left by previous northern developments, particularly those undertaken by Manitoba Hydro. While we each brought our individual backgrounds and perspectives to the Panel, we also complemented each other's experience, and as a team shared common interests and sensitivity to the need to involve local residents in determining the future course of development in the area.

The contribution of Panel member Harry Wood deserves special mention. As a resident of the project communities, he faced the daily pressure of maintaining his neutral and independent position and of protecting the integrity of the environmental review process. At the same time, he instilled in his Panel colleagues an empathy for the people of the project communities. It is rare for a resident of a project community to be a member of an environmental review Panel. In the case of the North Central Panel, Mr. Wood's contribution proved valuable to the Panel's understanding of the communities and to the credibility of the process in the project communities.

At our first meeting in March, 1992, three principles were established to guide the environmental review. They are worth repeating here:

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- The review needs to be sensitive to cultural and community needs and must involve those most directly affected.
- The review process must be grounded in the impacted northern communities.
- The process is as important as the final report to the Ministers.

The Guiding Principles became the cornerstone of the North Central Project environmental review. For many participants in the review, the Guiding Principles were the yardstick by which the success of the environmental review was measured. As the third principle states, "The review process is as important as the final report to the Ministers." As a Panel, we believe that the process measures up very well, by directly involving, listening, sharing and responding to the needs and concerns of the people in a manner which not only met the requirements of the Panel mandate but also reflected traditional customs and values.

Just as the Guiding Principles were the cornerstone of the review, the efforts to inform and involve the local leaders and residents were the building blocks. A great deal of work had to be done before the Panel could formally consult with the public at community meetings or public hearings. The environmental review process can be complex for people who have minimal experience with government or environmental reviews; even the experienced practitioner needs time to absorb all the information which may be generated. In fairness to the people whose lives would be directly affected by the proposed project, time and effort had to be devoted to providing information about the environmental review. Once the people were aware of how the process worked, the environmental review became a powerful tool to influence not only the project under review but also the future course of development in the region.

Almost three months were devoted to building that foundation of understanding, among both the leadership and residents of the communities.

Early Panel Activities

The Panel first met the Northeast leadership to exchange greetings and information on May 7, 1992. The Panel outlined the review process, **workplan** and schedule, and

expounded on the three principles. The leadership responded with their guidance, and the evening concluded with the leadership's endorsement of the Panel's principles, **workplan** and schedule.

With the leadership informed and familiar with the Panel's approach, the work in the communities proceeded well. The band and community council offices offered their full cooperation to the Panel and secretariat: Public Registries were maintained in band offices, meetings with local officials were arranged, and the facilities of the band offices were volunteered to meet the Panel's needs during visits to the communities. The leadership provided the Panel with their fullest cooperation throughout the review, and while the Panel and everyone involved in the review was always cognoscente of the Panel's role as independent arbitrators in the review, it would be no exaggeration to describe their relationship with the communities as a mutual, working partnership. In fact, similar relationships were developed with all participants in the review.

At the community level, liaison workers accepted the largest share of the responsibility for providing the information which people required. Liaison workers who understood local customs and were proficient in Cree and the Island Lake dialect were contracted in the project communities. They had the confidence of their neighbors, were available to provide individual assistance or attend public meetings to explain the environmental review process, and had ready access to the local radio and television stations which serve as the main mediums for sharing information and public notices in the communities. In communities where communication is based on oral traditions, the liaison persons proved to be invaluable to the local leaders, residents and the Panel in preparing for the public consultations which were to follow.

Community Meetings

After almost three months of preparation, the Panel was ready for the first major public test, with community meetings scheduled to begin June 16 in Red Sucker Lake. However, on June 15, a special request was received from the four Chiefs of the Island Lake area, asking the Panel to postpone the meetings that week in their area, out of respect for the death of a respected Elder. The Panel complied.

The community meetings were held in each of the seven project communities, along with four neighbouring

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communities whose hunting, fishing, trapping and resource areas would be crossed by the transmission line. To accommodate anyone unable to attend the meetings in the project and neighbouring communities, a meeting was held in Thompson and written submissions were also accepted.

Meetings followed local customs, always beginning with a traditional prayer by an Elder. The Panel then offered an overview of the environmental assessment process, with an emphasis on the specific history and plans for the review for the North Central Project. In most cases, the local leadership then offered their perspective. Throughout the initial presentations, the audience would sit quietly, taking in everything said in English or translated into Cree or Island Lake dialect. Few would pre-register to make a presentation, but given the opportunity during the meeting, many would come forward with insightful comments and presentations. The Panel was struck by the breadth and depth of the people's observations and by the openness and sincerity of their **feelings**. The meetings ended as they began, with a traditional prayer.

The Panel then released a Working Document, with Chairman's Remarks, Draft Guidelines for the Environmental Impact Statement, tables which summarized the issues people had raised at the meetings, and a compendium of the written presentations which had been received during the meetings. As **a package**, the Working Document assured people that the Panel was listening and responding to the presentations from the community residents, as well as anyone else who made presentations. People could see their concerns recorded in the tables and included in the Draft Guidelines. As an extra effort, the Panel also returned to the communities for a second round of public consultations, to ensure that all local questions and concerns had been heard.

By the time the community meetings and return visits concluded, five months had passed in what was to become an 18-month environmental review process. Those five months may calculate into approximately one-quarter of the time spent on the review. But they equated into much more. They formed the basis of trust which developed between the Panel and various participants in the review. In particular, the communities now knew that they were involved in a process which would be sensitive to their needs and customs. **A trust** had been earned by the Panel. While there were still important tasks and challenges ahead, they would be achievable because the efforts

during the initial stages of the review provided the approach to the work which remained.

Final Guidelines

When the Guidelines were issued in September, the Panel chose to make the announcement in Thompson. The northern media had been very supportive of the environmental assessment. News releases issued by the Panel were used extensively by the northern media, and the journalists appreciated the Panel's decision to hold the news conference in Thompson. All the media offered extensive coverage of the event, and Native Communications Inc., which reaches the project communities with the program, Mikisew News, conducted a half-hour interview in English and native languages with the Panel members.

Plans for Final Phase

Once the Guidelines for the EIS had been issued to Manitoba Hydro, the Panel began to prepare for the next phase of the environmental assessment. By the time Manitoba Hydro delivered the Environmental Impact Statement, plans were well in place to move forward effectively and fairly with the final phase of the review.

Attention was once again paid to keeping the local leadership and residents informed about the environmental assessment, including the availability of the information in the Environmental Impact Statement. The complete **four**-volume set was sent to each band and community council office, and copies of the Executive Summary were mailed to everyone who had made a presentation at the community meetings and return visits. Liaison workers were again contracted in the project area, and the co-executive secretaries visited the communities in May, June and July to provide additional assistance to local leaders and residents.

At the public hearings, it was clear that the local leadership had a much greater understanding of the proposed project than the local residents. But local residents were also much more aware of the Panel and its work compared to their knowledge at the community meetings a year earlier. Just as the environmental assessment progressed in an incremental, step-by-step fashion, the people's appreciation of the environmental assessment progressed along a parallel path, increasing each step of the way. By

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the time of the public hearings, people were well enough informed to provide constructive comments and suggestions to the Panel. The emphasis and commitment to the local people, traditions, and needs was rewarded with the confidence in the Panel which the people expressed at the public hearings.

During the course of the public hearings, it became very evident that we required more information about the inter-relationship of key players in the project. Manitoba Hydro, the government departments and Aboriginal organizations were providing important information, but there was little discussion about how, as a group, they would work together to maximize the benefits of the project for the good of the people in northeastern Manitoba. The Panel concluded that an extra, final day of public hearings would be devoted to hearing from those organizations. We received their full cooperation, and the information provided during the course of day proved valuable, not just to the Panel but also to everyone involved. Issues which had been unresolved and questions which had been unanswered for years were put to rest that day as people came together in a "traditional circle."

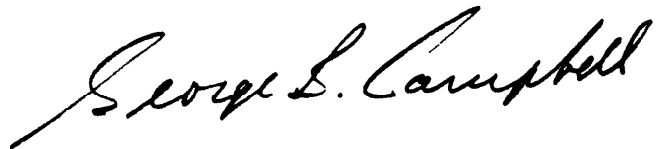
Concluding Observations

As the Panel reflects on the overall **workplan** and schedule, we note that the process and our internal deadlines were met at each stage of the review. Although the initial Terms of Reference indicated 12 months to completion, the Panel advised Ministers early on that a more realistic schedule would require 18 months, and governments and interested parties concurred with that view. All parties

interested in the North Central Project had to move through a learning curve to raise the level and understanding of the project.

A discussion about northern consultation would be incomplete without referring to northern travel. In the northeastern region, we **relied on airlines, chartered flights**, boats and winter roads to reach the communities, to provide people with the opportunity to be treated fairly and equally, in a manner consistent with opportunities for residents of southern communities involved in environmental reviews of projects proposed for southern regions of Canada. The effort and extra expense were worthwhile, with participation rates running at over five percent. By comparison, if an environmental review in Winnipeg were to draw a similar proportion of city residents, the Winnipeg Stadium would be packed to over-capacity.

With this report and the recommendations to the Ministers, the Panel believed it has fulfilled the expectations and confidence of the people. While the environmental assessment provided an exhaustive discussion of the issues by everyone with an interest in the project, the Panel is particularly pleased with the successful effort to involve the local people.



GEORGE B. CAMPBELL
Chairman

Appendix G

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANT FUNDING

The Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Office (FEARO) allocated \$100,000 to assist communities and organizations participating in the review process. The allocation of these funds was as follows:

A) Participant Funding for the Community Meetings

These funds were made available to the recipients to assist them in informing communities about the proposal and consulting with them in order to identify community concerns, as well as in **compiling** information and presenting a report of findings to the Panel during community scoping meetings.

1) Northeast Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee Inc.	\$3,000
2) God's Lake Narrows First Nation	\$4,000
3) Island Lake Tribal Council Inc.	\$1,000
4) Pikwitonei Community Council	\$1,000
5) Wasagamack First Nation	\$3,000
6) Northeast Manitoba Community Futures Committee Inc.	\$9,500
7) St. Theresa Point First Nation	\$4,000
8) Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak	\$4,000
9) Red Sucker Lake First Nation	\$2,500
10) Nikani Group of Companies	\$1,000
11) Garden Hill First Nation	\$4,000
12) Split Lake Cree First Nation	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$40,000

B) Participant Funding for Public Hearings

These funds were made available to the recipients to assist them in reviewing the EIS and preparing a brief to be presented to the Panel.

1) Pikwitonei Community Council	\$ 2,000
2) Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.	\$ 5,000
3) God's Lake First Nation	\$10,000
4) St. Theresa Point First Nation	\$4,000
5) Wasagamack First Nation	\$7,000
6) Oxford House Band	\$4,000
7) Split Lake Cree First Nation	\$7,000
8) Northeast Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee	\$9,000
9) North Central Community Support Agency	<u>\$12,000</u>
TOTAL	\$60,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$100,000

Appendix H

LIST OF PUBLIC REGISTRIES

GARDEN HILL

Band Office

GOD'S LAKE NARROWS

Band Office

GOD'S RIVER

Band Office

OXFORD HOUSE

Band Office

RED SUCKER LAKE

Band Office

ST. THERESA POINT

Band Office

WASAGAMACK

Band Office

ILFORD

War Lake Band Office

PIKWITONEI

Community Council Office

SPLIT LAKE

Band Office

YORK LANDING

York Factory Band Office

MANITOBA ENVIRONMENT

Resource Centre

Bldg. 2, 139 Tuxedo Ave.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3N 0H6

MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK

201-1 28 James Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3B 0N8

**FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT REVIEW OFFICE**

13th Floor, Fontaine Bldg.

200 Boul. Sacre-Coeur

Hull, Quebec

K1A 0H3

THOMPSON PUBLIC LIBRARY

81 Thompson Drive North

Thompson, Manitoba

R8N 0C3

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

200 Vaughan Street

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3C 1T5

**MANITOBA ENVIRONMENTAL
COUNCIL**

Bldg. 3 - 139 Tuxedo Ave.

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 0H6

Appendix I

LIST OF PRESENTERS: COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND RETURN VISITS, 1992

God's Lake Narrows

June 29 & 30 / September 3, 1992

Gilbert Andrews
Jack Chubb
Doug Hastings
Gilbert Hastings
Ron James
Sarah James
Mike Mason
Carl Nassie
David Nassie
Henry Nassie
Bellow Okimow
Ken Spence
Tony Trout
Chief Peter Watt
Bill Wood

God's River

July 1 /September 1, 1992

Chief John Yellowback
Buddy McKay
James McKay
Oliver Okimow
Eddie Ross
Moses Ross
Alex Yellowback
Batty Yellowback
Ernie Yellowback
John R. Yellowback
Jonas Yellowback
Michael Yellowback
Thelma Yellowback

Wasagamack

July 8 / August 31, 1992

Chief Alfred McDougall
Bertha Harper
Edward Harper
James Harper

Jim Bob Harper
Joe S. Harper
Lydia Harper
Morris Harper
Peter Harper
Philip Harper
Sam Harper
Sandra Harper
Saul Harper
Stephen Harper
Tom Harper
William Harper
William Benny Harper
Gerry Knott
A McDougall / C. Flett
Jonas McDougall
Josie McDougall
Ambrose Wood
Jeremiah Wood
Louie P. Wood
Martin Wood
Noel Wood
Violet Wood

St. Theresa Point

July 9 / August 26, 1992

Chief Jack Flett
Clyde Flett
Doug Flett
Howard Flett
Louis Flett
Agness Harper
Donald Harper
Ella Harper
Mike Harper
Paul James Harper
James Knott
Conrad Harper/Carl Flett
Dorothy Harper
Harriet Manoakeesick
George Manoakeesick
Clarence Mason
Eugene Mason
Hubert McDougall
John Gabriel McDougall

Rosa Monias
Paul Taylor
Campbell Wood
Paul Wood

Garden Hill

July 10 | August 25, 1992

Chief Geordie Little
Bailey Barkman
Ernie Barkman
Isaac Barkman
Esaias Beardy
Gordon Beardy
Moses Beardy
Nick Beardy
Josias Flett
Donald Harper
James C. Harper
James C. Harper
Zack Harper
David Keno
James Keno
Edward Little
Alice McDougall
Michael Monias
Michael Monias
Joseph Monroe
Malcolm Monroe
Margaret Monroe
Nora Jane Nattaway
Christopher Taylor
Moyer Taylor
Abraham Wood
Moses Wood

Oxford House

July 13 / September 2, 1992

Chief Gabriel Hart
Eileen Bradburn
Harold Bradburn
Stanley Bradburn
Eric Chubb

William Paul
John Sinclair Jr.
Arthur Weenusk
Wesley Weenusk
Tommy Weenusk
Lillian Wood

Red Sucker Lake

July 13 / August 24, 1992

Chief Fred Harper
Eli Harper
John H. Harper
John Little
Joe Guy Wood

Split Lake

June 22, 1992

Alfred Beardy
Ahab Flett
Andrew Garson
Eli Harvey
John Peter Mayham Jr.
Billy Spence
Abraham Wavey
Jake Wavey

Ilford - War Lake

June 23, 1992

Chief Arnold Ouskan
Douglas Dick
Art Flett
Charles Spence
Lillian Spence
Raymond Spence

Pikwitonei

June 24, 1992

Brian Campbell
Matilda Constant

Bob McCleverty
Cecil Thorne

Cross Lake

June 26, 1992

Chief Sydney Garrioch
Darlene Beck
John McKaron
Alan McLeod
George Mclvor
Donald McKay
Rita Monias
Etienne Robinson

Thompson

July 6, 1992

Cam Elliott
Ken Lacroix
Sydney McKay

Written Submissions

I.W. Dickson
Vice President
Manitoba Hydro

Peter Sarsfield, M.D.
Manitoba Health

P.H. Sutherland
Director General
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

RD. Wickstrom
Habitat Assessment Biologist
Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment Canada

Additional Information

In the fall of 1992, the Panel directed inquiries for additional information to a number of departments and agencies, and received written responses from all of those contacted.

Ralph Abramson
Director
Treaty and Aboriginal Rights
Research Centre of Manitoba Inc.

O. N. Buffie
Regional Director General
Employment and
Immigration Canada

John Carlyle
Deputy Minister
Manitoba Education and Training

Boris Hryhorczuk
Deputy Minister
Manitoba Highways
and Transportation

Brenda Kustra
Regional Director General
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

David Tomasson
Deputy Minister
Manitoba Northern Affairs

Ed Wood
Lands Commissioner
Island Lake Tribal Council Inc.

Appendix J

MITIGATION OF PROJECT IMPACTS: EXCERPTS FROM THE EISSUMMARY

The following is excerpted from Manitoba Hydro's Summary of the Environmental Impact Statement.

1. Land, Plants, and Water

PROJECT EFFECTS

Most adverse biophysical impacts are expected to be prevented entirely, or reduced to within acceptable limits.

As clearing and construction will take place during frozen ground conditions, these activities are expected to result in minimal damage to the land, soil, vegetation, and shorelines.

Transmission lines require cleared rights-of-way 55 metres (180 feet) wide; cleared distribution line rights-of-way will be 37 metres (120 feet wide). In total about 2,450 ha (6,054 acres) of land will be cleared for NCP rights-of-way and stations. This represents less than one-hundredth of one per cent (<0.01%) of the boreal forest habitat of the north-central region. Fish spawning areas have been avoided during line routing, as have rapids and stream mouths. Special precautions will be taken at shorelines of rivers and lakes to ensure that erosion or damage to fish habitat will not take place.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Land Resources: During both construction and operation, Manitoba Hydro will implement its environmental protection measures, using existing proven techniques.

Usable Timber: During clearing of transmission and distribution line rights-of-way within 10 km of the communities, usable fuel wood will be made available to residents who express interest in having it.

Rare Plants: Manitoba Hydro will ensure that rare or unusual plants are not unduly damaged or destroyed during construction and later maintenance activities.

Medicinal and Culturally Important Plants: During start-up activities and centerline surveys, Manitoba Hydro will consult with local gatherers of medicinal and culturally important plants to confirm that planned rights-of-way and

structures will not interfere with significant local sources of these plants.

Vegetation Control: Manitoba Hydro does not anticipate the need to use herbicides to control growth of vegetation on rights-of-way, but expects to use herbicides at station sites.

Herbicides will not be used on reserve land without the permission of the Band Council.

2. Wildlife, Fish and Harvesting

PROJECT EFFECTS

Rights-of-way clearing and construction activities will not have a significant adverse impact on regional wildlife populations given:

- a) the small amount of available habitat affected;*
- b) the generally continuous nature of the cleared portion of the right-of-way;*
- c) the limited period of construction per line segment; and*
- d) the fact that construction will take place in winter, when wildlife migration, breeding and rearing activities are minimal, and when terrain impacts will be minimized.*

Transmission line rights-of-way are not expected to receive heavy use by trappers and hunters. The alignments generally cross rather than follow land contours and, therefore, are not conducive to long-distance overland travel in winter. Most treaty hunters (who harvest most of the animals in the area) use aircraft to reach remote hunting areas in the fall and early winter when conditions are unsuitable for land travel.

At most, trapping may be somewhat disrupted over one to three seasons because of the noise and movement associated with winter clearing and construction.

Nearly all commercial and domestic fisheries, and sensitive spawning habitat have been avoided during routing.

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increased harvesting of fish resources as a result of the project is not expected to be a major problem.

Noise from line operation is not expected to have a significant effect on wildlife populations in the vicinity of the proposed routes.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Wildlife Disturbance: Manitoba Hydro and its contractor(s) will implement an environmental information program to discourage or restrict construction workers from approaching, feeding, hunting trapping, or otherwise disturbing wildlife.

Resource Harvesting: Manitoba Hydro will put in place a program to compensate local trappers, fishermen, and other wildlife resource users for any damages resulting from the project. The Corporation's proposed guidelines and a program proposal will be presented to all potentially affected resource users before the start of clearing and construction.

Operations and Maintenance: To protect fish habitat and the aquatic environment during operations, Manitoba Hydro will take the following precautions:

- During routine inspection of the line, areas of project-induced erosion will be identified and appropriate steps taken to restabilize the sites.
- All revegetated shoreline areas will be inspected and, where unsuccessful, remedial action will be taken.
- Use of all-terrain vehicles for inspection will be restricted to designated access routes and rights-of-way.

3. Visual Effects

PROJECT EFFECTS

The North Central Project will add to the numerous clearings for winter roads, cutlines, and other trails that already exist in the area. At particular locations, however, the NCP right-of-way clearing, structures, and related human activities, if not properly designated or effectively controlled, could detract from the scenic qualities important to area residents, and from the "wilderness experience" sought by

canoeists, kayakers, sport fishermen, and other visitors.

Adverse impacts on the physical beauty of the region, especially at water crossings, will be unavoidable. In recognition of the aesthetic quality of much of the area, Manitoba Hydro will attempt to minimize the visual impact of its facilities on the area's scenic landscapes.

The four stations will be located at least 300 meters from the nearest house. They often cannot be completely hidden from view, however. Station structures will consist mainly of treated wood poles (although steel structures may be used), transformers coloured in a neutral sage green, and chain link fencing.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Scenic Landscapes: Wherever possible, Manitoba Hydro will optimize the location of transmission and distribution structures such that their visibility, especially in relation to streams, lakes, shorelines, and canoe routes, will be minimized. Wherever possible, structures will be:

- located 30-50 m from the shoreline where the line parallels a water body (except along the Haye's River where a 100 m buffer is required);
- hidden by a buffer zone containing, where available, tall timber stands or other vegetative cover;
- located well away from rapids, falls, campsites, and scenic outlooks;
- set back from significant natural features, such as high-walled river channels, high vegetated banks, and river bends, and
- situated and/or screened to obscure them from canoe route users.

Stations: Whenever natural vegetation permits, a wooded buffer will be retained around the cleared and fenced site to screen the stations from shorelines.

Similarly, efforts will be made to hide stations from the main access road. Wherever possible, Manitoba Hydro will retain natural treed buffers during construction and will plan the road in consultation with community authorities. Landscaping is not expected to be required or employed at any site.

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4. Heritage Resources

PROJECT EFFECTS

Provincially-registered heritage sites, known areas of local cultural importance, and new sites identified during field studies along the proposed rights-of-way have been avoided during the route selection process. Particularly sensitive areas of potential historic or archaeological importance along the routes have been identified for special care during construction. These include the Hayes River crossing near Oxford House, other waterways of historic importance, suspected encampments in the Island Lake area, and possible artifacts found in area gravel pits.

As much of the work will be undertaken during the winter period, it is unlikely that heritage resources will be adversely affected. Potentially **significant** impacts to such resources could still occur during clearing and construction, however, if insufficient precautions were taken in areas that could contain as yet unidentified heritage resources or if sites were to be damaged accidentally, vandalized or looted.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Cultural Resource Protection: Precautions will be taken to ensure that cultural resources are not damaged during construction and, if discovered, that they are properly **preserved**:

- Known heritage sites will be carefully marked on field maps, with instructions from Manitoba **Hydro** to all contractors, work supervisors, and employees to avoid these areas when establishing temporary access roads, work camps, and storage locations for supplies and equipment.
- During clearing and construction activities, Manitoba **Hydro** will instruct all contractors, work supervisors, and employees to be vigilant when operating in untested but representative areas that could contain heritage resources. Should an artifact or other item be uncovered, personnel will be instructed to stop work, report the find to appropriate authorities, await an on-site investigation by a heritage specialist, and ensure protection of the object and its site until appropriate action is taken.
- Where possible, Aboriginal artifacts will be turned over

to local First Nation authorities for exhibiting in the communities.

- Graves that may be discovered during clearing or construction will be carefully marked and precautions taken to leave the site undisturbed.
- Whenever possible, and practicable, aggregate operations will be limited to existing borrow pits that have no known archaeological resources. In the event that new borrow sites are required, operations will be limited to those that have no suspected archaeological significance. On-site contractors, supervisors, and workers will be instructed to examine extractions for palaeontological fossils and human remains.
- The importance of preserving local heritage will be stressed to NCP workers as part of an environmental information program to be implemented by Manitoba **Hydro** and its contractor(s). **Hydro** employees **will also** be advised that any vandalism or looting of cultural sites **will be** reported to enforcement agencies and that appropriate action will be taken in the event of misconduct that is detrimental to the Corporation's interests.

5. Traditional Way of Life

PROJECT EFFECTS

The project is expected to be generally neutral in its impact on area hunting, trapping, and fishing, i.e. the traditional economy.

The NCP is not expected to divert the local labour force from traditional economic pursuits. Because much of the construction will occur in the winter months, the project will complement, not conflict, with commercial fishing, guiding, and other tourism-related employment available during spring, summer and fall.

In the case of commercial trappers who normally work their lines in winter, employment on the project may be attractive — and indeed, may provide some temporary economic relief — if fur markets continue to be depressed.

Many people, including seniors, appear to welcome the conveniences and comfort that will be possible with land line power. It will be up to each community to provide for

their elders and ease their transition. While we cannot predict the specific ways in which those now pursuing a more traditional lifestyle will adapt to these changes, their basic lifestyles need not be lost or irrevocably altered in the process.

Households may become more dependent on the wage economy and consumer market-place to obtain and maintain desired electrical conveniences. To this extent, the NCP may increase pressures on **traditional Aboriginal values**. **Affordability** also may become a concern for some.

The NCP will not subject North Central residents to unfamiliar technologies. In this regard, the project will differ from the introduction of electrical power 20 or more years ago. That event not only brought various benefits to the study area, but also paved the way for greater exposure to non-Aboriginal influences.

Lifestyle adjustments to land line power, especially for older people, will not be problem-free. It is anticipated, however, that the overall impact on community lifestyles will be gradual, positive, and desirable.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Lifestyle Adjustments: Manitoba Hydro is prepared to work with the communities on public education programs related to specific lifestyle adjustments that the NCP may entail.

In association with the communities, Hydro will put in place a locally-based monitoring program to identify any project activities that adversely affect traditional pursuits and lifestyles.

6. Construction Contracts, Employment, and Training

PROJECT EFFECTS

Short-term economic and job benefits created by the NCP will accrue to North Central communities to the extent that:

- the community-owned Wapanuk Corporation, in association with a recognized transmission line

contractor(s), and other local construction companies and businesses, negotiate major project contracts with Manitoba Hydro;

- local suppliers provide goods, services, and/or equipment to project contractors and Hydro;
- local people successfully complete pre-employment and on-the-job training;
- local residents are employed on construction of the proposed transmission and distribution system; and
- secondary business and employment benefits are realized during the project development period.

The NCP is expected to result in about **64,000 person-days** of employment during the development period. Peak employment will take place during Years 2 through 4.

Local workers should be able to fill virtually all entry-level "unskilled" jobs and significant percentage of semi-skilled jobs. It is unlikely at this time that many "skilled" jobs will be filled by local people with the necessary qualifications.

It is expected that local trades people and contracting companies, insofar as they have the required expertise, will benefit from business and employment opportunities in spin-off building conversion and electrical upgrading work. This will produce a significant and ongoing long-term demand for plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and other trades people.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Direct Business Opportunities: The Corporation has offered the First Nations, through Wapanuk Corporation and its joint venture partner(s), access to three major "set aside" or "sole source" contracts, i.e.:

- clearing of all transmission and distribution line rights-of-way;
- construction of the 138 kV transmission line; and
- selected civil construction work on the four transformer stations.

In sufficient time before construction, Hydro will identify and determine the distribution of work packages and

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decide whether subcontracts will be available on an **open-tender** basis or negotiated with individual Bands or businesses.

Training: Manitoba Hydro does not contribute to the funding of pre-employment training, which is the responsibility of the federal and provincial governments. Manitoba Hydro and its contractors do provide on-the-job training. Manitoba Hydro will continue to provide information and advice, as requested to Wapanuk and the North East Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee (NEMTCC) throughout the project planning and pre-construction phases.

Local Employment Preference: Manitoba Hydro and its contractors **will give** employment preference to job-qualified candidates in the following sequence:

1. Northern Residents from the affected communities.
2. Northern Residents of Aboriginal Ancestry.
3. Northern Residents not of Aboriginal Ancestry.
4. Persons other than Northern Residents who are normally resident within the Province of Manitoba.
5. Residents of other provinces.

7. Long-Term Employment and Economic Development

PROJECT IMPACTS

The viability and operating costs of local businesses, new development initiatives, and modern public services (e.g. piped water and sewage disposal) will no longer be constrained by supply limitations and high full cost diesel rates.

Longer-term, secondary impacts on North Central businesses will possibly result from construction and operation of:

- new water and sewage systems; new or expanded service and repair enterprises; new or upgraded tourist accommodations;

- new food production and processing operations;
- and new extraction or processing industries.

These developments will be aided, once the land line is operational, by the dramatic reduction in power rates and costs to commercial customers now paying full-service rates. These "full cost" customers will see their rates fall from 32.4¢ k Wh to an average of 5 to 6¢ k Wh (as of April 1992) after land line service is operational.

Post-project employment prospects for area residents over the long term will depend on:

- the capacity of the local economies to provide jobs in the existing resource-based, service, and government sectors;
- the extent to which additional opportunities will be created through new businesses or resource development and entrepreneurial initiatives; and/or
- worker's willingness and ability to seek employment outside their region.

There will be a small net loss of two full-time and six part-time Manitoba Hydro positions once the NCP is operational. This impact should be more than offset if the project results in an increase in long-term non-Hydro job opportunities within the communities.

Manitoba Hydro will continue to employ the same number of full time District Operations staff as at present at Gods Lake Narrows and Garden Hill.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Small Business and Commercial Development: Prior to and following NCP construction, Manitoba Hydro will provide commercial customers, upon request, with relevant energy cost and energy conversion information and will offer Power Smart assistance.

Hydro Employment: Manitoba Hydro is considering developing a full- or part-time District Serviceman position at five communities — Oxford House, God's River, Red Sucker Lake, St. Theresa Point, and Wasagamack.

8. Transportation and Communication

PROJECT IMPACTS

New electrical transmission facilities pose additional air navigation hazards in the North Central region. While significant risks have been avoided during the route selection process, other unavoidable risks are considered acceptable and mitigable through compliance with existing regulations and procedures.

Proposed transmission line routes and sites also avoid or minimize potential conflicts with possible future airport development. No conflicts are apparent with operations at existing and proposed float and ski plane bases.

There is no evidence to suggest that the project constitutes a threat to continued building of the winter road system for many years to come.

Travel along some NCP rights-of-way or temporary accesses for access to traplines, fishing or hunting areas, or wood supplies is neither intended nor authorized. Use of Hydro rights-of-way by unauthorized persons, therefore is strictly at the individual's risk.

Proposed NCP power lines and stations have been located such that their operation will not cause interference with communications towers and other communications facilities, e.g. MTS networks, Native Communications FM transmitting facilities, of communications equipment operated by the Bands, police authorities, nursing stations, and private citizens.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Air Safety: Manitoba Hydro will conform to all requirements of Transport Canada's Civil Aviation Branch. After the Branch's assessment of the safety needs at all water crossings, those spans identified as requiring aircraft warning markers, coloured towers, and/or strobe lights will be so marked.

Power Line Rights-of-Way: During construction and maintenance, Manitoba Hydro will make best efforts not to leave high snow banks along the rights-of-way where they intersect trapline trails. As a safety precaution, Manitoba Hydro will also flag guy wires with yellow "guy shields" and

mark anchor sets within a 10-km distance from all communities and at trapline trail intersections.

Manitoba Hydro will cooperate with the communities in providing a public safety program that includes information about the dangers of unauthorized travel along the rights-of-way.

Electromagnetic Interference: In the unlikely event that NCP facilities affect television and/or radio reception in the communities, Manitoba Hydro will correct its facilities.

9. Community Facilities and Housing

PROJECT IMPACTS

The NCP will provide North Central communities with a sufficient power supply base to improve public infrastructure, particularly in terms of water, sewer, and fire protection services. The project also will open up opportunities for initiatives in education recreation, and social services.

To achieve maximum benefit from the North Central Project, the communities will have to bring house electric systems up to standard and improve the energy efficiency of their housing units. The full extent of needed work will not be known until a comprehensive assessment is made of the existing housing stock.

Existing and future federal and provincial government facilities in the communities will benefit from significant savings due to dramatically lower rates. Annual savings are estimated to be about \$2 million for Canada and \$440,000 for Manitoba.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Community Planning: Manitoba Hydro will continue to work closely with community authorities and planners to ensure that the NCP remains compatible with, and maximizes opportunities for, long-term physical and socio-economic development, as planned and implemented by the local governments.

House Upgrading: Manitoba Hydro will perform all

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distribution system upgrading work up to the customer service entrance at no charge. After completion of the NCP, Hydro's normal charges for service extensions to new residences will apply.

Hydro will inspect electrical work within buildings to ensure that new wiring has been installed in a proper and safe manner.

Manitoba Hydro for many years has attempted to negotiate an arrangement that would provide the security needed to offer the Corporation's existing and future financial assistance programs for house upgrading and modernization to First Nations and individual status Indians living on reserve. This effort is continuing.

Improving Energy Efficiency: Manitoba Hydro personnel will be available on request to provide advice to community leaders, residents, and contractors concerning building assessment, rewiring, and renovation work required to prepare the existing housing for land line power. Hydro personnel will also continue to be available to provide information and present programs to residents on Power Smart grant and rebate programs, other energy conservation and home improvement initiatives, and safe practices. Efforts will be made to encourage participation in these programs, especially in the use of timers, energy-efficient light bulbs, automatic shutoffs, controlled thermostats, and other energy conservation devices.

IO. Consumer Issues and Cost of Living

PROJECT IMPACTS

North Central residents in each community will "exchange" their limited but independent electrical supply and distribution system for an improved but interdependent electrical system. Reliability of the new system is expected to be high, but power disruptions will still take place.

Community residents who choose unlimited service, will face increased capital and operating costs when new central supply is installed. An initial capital cost will be incurred for any needed upgrading of the electrical service and internal wiring of each home or business. The second

is the cost of acquiring new electrical appliances and equipment.

Once new equipment is installed and operational, residents will experience a substantial increase in monthly electricity bills, up to two to three times their existing bills. This will occur, not because of any increase in base rates at the time, but because of their increased use of electricity. It is expected that the number of households acquiring and operating high energy use appliances, e.g., hot water heaters, electric heaters, dryers, ranges, freezers, refrigerators, etc. will increase substantially in future years.

North Central residents' present use and cost of electricity are limited by the existing "restricted" service. Once the NCP is in place, the onus to control consumption and monthly costs will shift to individual households and the First Nation governments. For those who install electric heat, adjustments will be even more imperative. Improvements to energy efficiency and conservation in the home will be essential to reduce the financial burden on residents and the Bands.

At the same time, the project's financial impact could be offset to the extent that other more expensive energy sources, such as fuel oil and propane now used for heating, cooking, and other purposes, are phased out. Energy substitution may have comfort, convenience, health, and environmental benefits as well.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Financial Impact: Before completion of NCP construction, Manitoba Hydro is prepared to help community leaders educate residents about the many uses of electrical power, how much more electricity people are likely to consume with their new energy supply, how much this will cost, how to understand rates and billings, and how households can economize and budget after connection to land line power.

Manitoba Hydro will work with Canada, Manitoba, and the First Nations to prepare residents for the increased monthly billings they will face. The Corporation will deliver all applicable Power Smart and future programs in the communities to improve energy conservation and efficiency in electricity use. These include incentives for individual and community action on home and facility improvements, purchase of energy-efficient appliances and tools.

11. Health and Safety

PROJECT IMPACTS

The new power supply has the potential to provide the basis for, and contribute to:

- *improved nutrition, due to the increased capability of stores and **households** to stock more fresh and frozen foodstuffs **from both commercial and domestic sources**;*
- *reduced indoor air pollution, fumes from heating fuel, and danger of accidental burns or fires, as reliance on oil burners and old wood stoves for home heating and cooking is lessened;*
- *a more comfortable living and working environment, and perhaps reduced susceptibility to respiratory ailments, as a result of improved heating, temperature, and humidity control; and*
- *the potential for better dental health, and reduced incidence of skin diseases, gastroenteritis, and other ailments.*

Residents need to be well informed about proper use and maintenance of the new power supply and about the safety precautions to take in their homes, workplaces, recreational areas, and in the vicinity of Hydro facilities.

Potential health and safety impacts during facility operation will be very modest. Risks, including potential exposure to chemicals and other contaminants, are considered manageable and can be reduced to acceptable levels with the use of existing and proven technology.

While sensitive to public concerns regarding possible health effects from electric and magnetic fields, Manitoba Hydro believes there is at present, no scientific evidence to justify modification of existing practices or facilities for the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Electric and Magnetic Fields: *If ongoing research provides scientific evidence that indicates a need to modify existing practices, Manitoba Hydro will take whatever prudent measures are required to protect public and employee health and safety.*

Safety Education: *Manitoba Hydro will work closely with community leaders in preparing and delivering safety and public awareness programs, including the Youth Safety Program and Hazard Board Program.*

Accident Prevention: *Manitoba Hydro and its contractor(s) will take all possible precautions to ensure that vehicles and equipment used at work sites, both within and outside the communities, are operated and maintained safely during all phases of development.*

Workplace Safety: *Manitoba Hydro will take all steps needed to protect the safety and health of project workers during all phases of development.*

Presence of 'Hazardous Substances': *Manitoba Hydro and contractor crews will be required to implement appropriate precautions regarding the transportation, storage, handling, and dispensing of dangerous materials, such as fuels and lubricants.*

11. Community Environment

PROJECT EFFECTS

Should the communities maximize their employment opportunities, contact between outside workers and community residents is expected to be manageable. The potential does exist, however, for tensions to rise and resources to be strained if a larger than anticipated number of outside workers are brought in to construct the project. With proper preparation, no significant adverse social impacts are anticipated.

During construction in different seasons and for varying lengths of time, North Central residents will experience temporary disruptions to their normal lives. Inconveniences will be due to increases in vehicular traffic, noise and dust. The degree of disturbance will vary according to the extent of work required in each community.

For project purposes, Hydro will not be establishing any recreational facilities within the communities. Instead, Hydro proposes to make arrangements with appropriate Band and Community councils to enable its outside workers to use existing recreational facilities and centres, and to participate in local sporting events, such as hockey and

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baseball games. This may produce some new demands on community facilities.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Outside Worker-Resident Interaction: As needed and in association with local community leaders, Hydro will implement information and training programs for outside workers designed to facilitate positive interaction between them and local residents. Hydro management and on-site foremen will work closely with community leaders throughout the construction period and will make best efforts to avoid and resolve problems that may arise.

Leisure Activities and Use of Recreational Facilities: Manitoba Hydro will be guided by community preference in its instructions to workers and subcontractors. For project purposes, Hydro will not be establishing any recreational facilities within the communities. Hydro proposes to make arrangements with local authorities for the establishment of outdoor recreational guidelines that respect traditional ways of life and Aboriginal rights.

Hydro and its contractor(s) will inform their employees of local hunting and fishing rules and regulations in the work area, in conjunction with local authorities and the provincial Natural Resources Officers in the region. Non-Aboriginal employees will be informed of, and will be expected to respect, local rights, traditional resource use practices, and the activities and property of local resource users.

Manitoba Hydro and its contractor(s) will prohibit employees from possessing a firearm in construction camps or on any company property.

Traffic: Manitoba Hydro, in consultation with the Bands and the contractor(s), will take precautions as required to minimize conflicts between project-related vehicles and local traffic within communities.

Road Upgrading and Maintenance: Manitoba Hydro will ensure that any damage to roads within the communities due to project construction is repaired, with the roads affected put back at least to their pre-construction condition.

Manitoba Hydro will make arrangements for maintenance and snow clearing of the station access road.

12. First Nation Land and Finances

PROJECT EFFECTS

Manitoba Hydro's standard land acquisition or land use policies, used throughout the province, will be applied to the NCP. For the Wasagamack Station, the only NCP station located on reserve land, Hydro will pay the First Nation an amount based on 100% of the site's market value.

For transmission line rights-of-way throughout the province, Manitoba Hydro pays 75% of the market value of the land required. On this basis at the present time, Hydro intends to enter into discussions with the God's Lake and Wasagamack First Nations to obtain rights of use and access to all needed property within reserve boundaries.

No payments are made by Manitoba Hydro for use of, or access to, property used for 25 kV distribution lines, feeder lines, distribution networks, pole locations, station access roads, or ancillary facilities that are located within reserves or communities.

Arrangements for community distribution systems are varied under an existing agreement with each community.

Pursuant to **The Manitoba Hydro Act**, the Corporation does not share revenues with its customers. The only "royalties" paid by Hydro are in the form of water rental payments to the Province of Manitoba.

MANITOBA HYDRO'S COMMITMENTS

Treaty Land Entitlement: Should a First Nation claim lands on which NCP or existing Hydro facilities are located, the Corporation will require that any transfer arrangement provide that Hydro's right to access, use, and maintain the facilities and properties is permanently retained.

Hydro will request all parties to establish a process for resolving any disputes that may arise if Crown lands needed for project facilities are selected by First Nations to satisfy treaty entitlements.

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Hydro Use of Reserve and Traditional Lands: *The Corporation will make best efforts to respect the rights, interests, and natural and socio-cultural environment of the Aboriginal peoples.*

Payment for Use of Reserve Land: *Manitoba Hydro will seek to negotiate agreements for use of reserve property with affected First Nations before completion of the environmental review process.*

First Nation Finances and Administration: *Manitoba*

Hydro will pay for any local services received from the communities necessary for the operation of the power distribution system.

First Nation Ownership of Project Facilities: *The North Central First Nations in the past have indicated an interest in owning regional transmission, distribution, or station facilities, and in developing and owning local generation facilities. Manitoba Hydro is prepared to consider any technical and financially feasible proposal the Bands may in future wish to make.*

Appendix K

RESPONSES RECEIVED RELATED TO THE REVIEW OF THE EIS

Chief Peter Watt
Chairman
Northeast Leadership Group
May 31, 1993

Chief Peter Watt
God's Lake Narrows First Nation
June 15, 1993

Victor Spence
Environment Agency
Split Lake Cree First Nation
June 11, 1993

Brenda Kustra
Regional Director General
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
June 14, 1993

B. M. Burns
Director General
Conservation and Protection
Environment Canada
June 8, 1993

P.H. Sutherland
Director General
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
June 14, 1993

Dr. Jerry Shaw
Regional EARP Coordinator
Health and Welfare Canada
June 15, 1993
Dr. Shaw forwarded information from:

- Dr. Gordon Josephson
Health Protection Branch
Health and Welfare Canada
June 7, 1993
- Dr. Judith G. Bartlett
Medical Services Branch
Health and Welfare Canada
May 19, 1993

Robert Sopuck
Manitoba Sustainable Development Coordination Unit
June 15, 1993

Dan McNaughton
Technical Advisory Committee Chairman
Manitoba Environment
June 15, 1993
Mr. McNaughton forwarded information from:

- Joe Morrisseau
Manitoba Northern Affairs
June 4, 1993
- Joseph Romeo
Manitoba Highways
June 3, 1993
- Doug Fogwill
Manitoba Energy and Mines
May 4, 1993
- K. David McLeod
Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship
May 28, 1993
- Bob Clarkson
Manitoba Natural Resources
June 15, 1993
- Floyd Phillips
Manitoba Environment
June 1, 1993
- David Olinyk
Manitoba Environment
May 31, 1993
- Kathy Fisher
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
June 3, 1993

David Young
Symbion Consultants
April 21, 1993

Appendix L

RECOMMENDATIONS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

A number of government departments contributed to the environmental assessment of the proposed North Central Project. The Panel received comments and recommendations from federal and provincial departments, both during the 60-day review of the Environmental Impact Statement and during the public hearings. What follows are recommendations made by the government departments.

FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) recommended that:

- the Environmental Protection Worker (EPW) to be hired by Manitoba Hydroconsult with Manitoba Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch, to determine specific local sensitive aquatic habitat and for advice on specific mitigation, as required;
- any new borrow sites to be developed be located 100 meters away from any active stream channel, and that DFO's draft *Guidelines for the Use of Explosives in Canadian Fisheries Waters* (February, 1993) be followed in order to determine appropriate mitigation measures, such as set-back distances from water bodies;
- adherence to the general recommendations on design, construction and maintenance of stream crossings as specified in the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources publication *Recommended Fish Protection Procedures for Stream Crossings* in Manitoba be adopted ;
- **grading** of stream banks associated with the installation of bridges or ice dams should be minimized. Branches, sawdust, soil and other **organics** should not be used as bank or bridge fill. Only snow and ice should be used to form slopes or to fill and maintain bridges and road beds at stream crossings;
- bridges and ice dams at stream crossings be removed before spring thawing occurs in order to avoid flooding or impeding fish movement;
- winter construction employ interim slope stabilization methods until revegetation is successful and the transport of eroded materials controlled;
- wood poles treated with pentachlorophenol be located well away from water bodies;
- no refuelling activity or storage of petroleum products occur within 100 meters of bodies of water. Spilled fuels or lubricants located near waterbodies should be burned ~~or where~~ inappropriate to burn on site, materials should be removed for burning elsewhere. Construction personnel be aware of applicable guidelines and contingency plans for the use, storage, handling and cleanup of fuels, lubricants and other hazardous products;
- information regarding the type of herbicides, application rates, and analysis of potential effects on aquatic organisms be provided ~~prior to~~ their use for right-of-way maintenance;
- applications of herbicides should be made in accordance with the Pest Control Products Act of Canada, provincial regulations and specific instructions detailed in any work permits, and mixing/handling procedures outlined in the product label;
- buffers around waterbodies (lakes and wetland areas adjacent to or connected to open water, streams and rivers) be 50 m for ground application and 100 m for aerial application. Weather conditions must be appropriate to minimize drift. Wherever possible, manual clearing techniques should be used near wet or lowland areas; and
- Manitoba Hydro to indicate what access controls currently exist in the NCP area and any additional controls which will be implemented during the construction phase of the project to reduce impacts on fishery resources.

DFO concludes that Manitoba Hydro has made a commendable effort to select a route that limits potential impact to important aquatic resources.

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Health and Welfare Canada recommended that:

- estimated values of electric field strength and magnetic flux density at full load (1 m above ground) could be offered and compared with International Radiation Protection Association's exposure limits; and
- herbicide spraying be minimized, and label directions followed.

Environment Canada recommended that:

- a clearer statement of responsibility for monitoring and mitigating unexpected impacts on wildlife be provided; and
- cumulative effects could be expanded.

PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS**Manitoba Natural Resources recommended that:**

- Manitoba Hydro have a clear policy prohibiting Hydro employees from hunting or having firearms at construction sites;
- transmission lines across major rivers be clearly marked, for the safety of aircraft flying in the area;
- Manitoba Hydro work with the Northeast Integrated Resource Manager Team to initiate a monitoring program to ascertain the actual short-term impacts on animals, trappers and other resource harvesters during construction;
- Manitoba Hydro work with the Northeast Region

Integrated Resource Management Team to identify ways of obtaining longer-term baseline data and to develop mitigation activities; and

- preference be given to metal towers. If wooden poles are to be used, then only poles treated with **chromated** copper arsenate, rather than with chlorophenol, be used in wetland areas.

Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship recommended that:

- the Manitoba Historic Resources Branch, which is part of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, be contacted if human remains or heritage resources are found during construction.

Manitoba Environment recommended that:

- transformer stations could be constructed with containment systems to control possible spills of transformer oil; and
- areas of loss of vegetation and habitat disruption were too small to cause the project to be stopped.

Manitoba Highways and Transportation recommended that:

- safe minimum clearances of power lines be maintained where the transmission line coincides with winter roads; and
- special attention be given to transmission lines in the vicinity of airfields, in order to meet safety requirements and allow for future runway extension.

Appendix M

LIST OF PRESENTERS - PUBLIC HEARINGS, 1993

Thompson

July 19 and 20, 1993

Bill Shanks*
Division Manager, Northern Region
Manitoba Hydro (Thompson)

Andy Miles*
Environmental Policy and Planning
Manitoba Hydro
(Winnipeg)

Ken Erickson*
Customer Service Section
Manitoba Hydro
(Selkirk)

Don Epstein
Epstein and Associates
(Consultants to Manitoba Hydro)

Don Cooke*
Associate Regional Director
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(Winnipeg)

Mayor Bill Comaskey*
City of Thompson

Chief Alfred Beardy*
Split Lake Cree First Nation

Victor Spence*
Manager
Environmental Agency
Split Lake Cree First Nation

Robert F. Roddick
Counsel
Split Lake Cree First Nation

Henry Majewski*
Impact Assessment Biologist
Fish Habitat Management Division
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
(Winnipeg)

Cam Elliott*
Regional Wildlife Manager
Manitoba Natural Resources
(Thompson)
Dan McNaughton*
Environmental Approvals Section
Manitoba Environment
(Winnipeg)

Stewart Hill*
Manager
Mapping Group and
Natural Resources Secretariat
Manitoba Keewatinowi
Okimakanak (MKO) Inc.
(Thompson)

Joe Guy Wood*
Interim Coordinator
Interim Community Supported
Agency
(Winnipeg)

Bob Sopuck*
Executive Director
Manitoba Sustainable Development
Coordination Unit
(Winnipeg)

Bob McClaverty*
Representative for the Community
Council of Pikwitonei

Mark Munroe
Representative
Garden Hill First Nation

God's Lake Narrows

July 20 and 21, 1993

First Nation

Chief Peter Watt*
Gilbert Andrews, Councillor
Tony Trout, Councillor
Peter Wood

Morley Duck
Roland Kanabee
Ernest Monias (Cross Lake)
Rita Monias (Cross Lake)
Charlie Osbourne (Cross Lake)
Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)

Community Council

Mayor Earlen Bland
Councillor Jeff Brightnose
Lesley Anderson*
Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)

Oxford House

July 22 and 23

Deputy Chief Dennis Grieves
Harold Bradburn, Councillor
Stanley Bradburn, Councillor
Joseph Bradburn, Councillor
John Bradburn
Eric Chubb, Councillor
Thomas Chubb, Councillor
Ross Colin, Councillor
Thomas Crane
William Grieves
Ernest Monias (Cross Lake)
Rita Monias (Cross Lake)
Charlie Osbourne (Cross Lake)
Stan Robinson
Stan Sinclair
Wesley Weenusk
Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)

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God's River**July 26**

Chief Roger Ross*
 Lawrence Kirkness
Phillip McKay
 Joseph Okimow
 Oliver Okimow
 Alexander Ross
 Daniel Ross, Councillor
 Moses Ross
 Sandy Wood
 Alex Yellowback
 Ernie Yellowback
 J.R. Yellowback
 Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
 Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
 Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)

Red Sucker Lake**July 27**

Chief Fred Harper*
 Neamiah Dan
 Eli Harper
 Solomon Harper
 Cornelius Little, Councillor
 John Little
 Larry Hogan*
 (consultant to First Nation)

Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
 Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
 Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)

Garden Hill**July 28 and 29**

Chief Georgie Little*
 Isaiah Beardy
 Joe Ross Beardy
 Victoria Beardy
 Douglas Bloomfoot
 Jack Flett
 Joe Allen Harper*
 Victoria Harper

Alex Keno
 David Keno
 Charlie Knott
 Morris Knott, Councillor
 Charles McPherson
 John McPherson
 McCall Monias
 John Munroe
 Joseph Munroe
 Margaret Munroe
 Mark Munroe
 Moses Wood
 Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
 Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
 Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)

Wasagamack**August 3 and 4**

Chief Alfred McDougall
 Edward Harper
 Elijah Harper
 Epstein Harper
 Jonah Harper
 Joseph Harper
 Lydia Harper
 Peter Harper
 Sam Harper
 Saul Harper
 Silas Harper
 Steven Harper
 Tommy Harper*
 Elijah Knott
 Jonah McDougall
 Wilfred McDougall, Councillor
 Louie Wood
 Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
 Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
 Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)
 Joe Morrisseau (Northern Affairs)
 Brian Blunt (Manitoba Environment)

St. Theresa Point**August 5 and 6**

Chief Ken Wood*
 Carl Flett'

Clyde Flett*
 Douglas Flett*
 Joe Flett
 Louie Flett
 Lance Harper
 Ralph Harper*
 Gilbert Knott
 Harriett Manoakesick*
 Matthew Mason*
 John G. McDougall
 Hubert McDougall*
 Jimmy Monias
 Michael Monias
 Paul Taylor
 Campbell Wood
 Cornelius Wood
 Daniel Wood
 Eddy Wood, Councillor
 Georgie Wood
 John Wood
 Mark Wood
 Solomon Wood
 Walter Wood
 Philip Wood*
 Andy Miles (Manitoba Hydro)
 Ken Erickson (Manitoba Hydro)
 Don Epstein (consultant to Hydro)

**Conclusion of
Public Hearings****St. Theresa Point
August 7**

Chief Ken Wood*
 St. Theresa Point First Nation
 Chairman
 Island Lake Tribal Council

Chief Peter Watt*
 God's Lake Narrows First Nation
 Chairman
 Northeast Leadership Group

Bill Shanks*
 Division Manager
 Northern Region
 Manitoba Hydro
 (Thompson)

M

Arun Dighe*

Director
Funding Services
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(Winnipeg)

Andy Miles
Environmental Policy and Planning
Manitoba Hydro
(Winnipeg)

Ken Erickson
Customer Service Section
Manitoba Hydro
(Selkirk)

Don Epstein
Epstein and Associates
(Consultants to Manitoba Hydro)
(Winnipeg)

Jack Flett*
Executive Director
Wapanuk Corporation Inc.
(Winnipeg)

Elaine Cowan*
Training Coordinator
Northeast Manitoba Training Coordinating Committee
(Winnipeg)

Eli Harper*
Representative, Red Sucker Lake First Nation

Chief Roger Ross'
God's River First Nation

Councillor Thomas Weenusk*
Oxford House First Nation

Joe Guy Wood
Interim Coordinator
Community Supported Agency
(Winnipeg)

Joe Morrisseau
Senior Analyst
Native Affairs Secretariat
Manitoba Northern Affairs
(Winnipeg)

David Borutski
Land Administration Services
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(Winnipeg)

Martin Egan
Environmental Section
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(Winnipeg)

Patsy Turner
Funding Services
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
(Winnipeg)

. An asterisk indicates that the presenter also included a written copy of the presentation.

Written submission

Patrick Harper (Wasagamack)
Kenneth Emberly (Winnipeg)

Appendix N

NORTHEAST LEADERSHIP GROUP SUBMISSION BY CHIEF PETER WATT

Because Chief Watt was speaking on behalf of the Northeast Leadership Group, and summarized the issues of primary importance to the community leadership and made several recommendations in a written presentation, the following section is adapted from Chief Watt's presentation.

1) Project activities must respect our traditions, culture and future

Recommendations:

- a) that the Panel direct Manitoba Hydro to report back to the Panel no later than August 31, 1993, as to the status of the negotiations concerning the environmental protection workers and the liaison committees; and
- b) that Manitoba Hydro employees who will be actively involved in this Project be provided with cross-cultural training that would include at least one week in an NCP community.

2) A true partnership must be established on all aspects of the North Central Project

Recommendations:

- a) that the Panel direct Manitoba Hydro to produce a more detailed workplan outlining those specific ongoing activities it proposes to implement with regard to incorporating traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) information into project planning and implementation; and
 - b) that Manitoba Hydro provide an update on the Action Plan.
- 3) The environmental assessment review must address all aspects of the project**

Recommendation:

- a) that the Panel continue its extensive review of all aspects of this project and not limit its mandate.

4) The impact of the delay in approving the project

5) The need for help in fully researching all project impacts

Recommendation:

- a) that the Panel err on the side of caution if it finds itself forced to choose between conflicting viewpoints on specific issues.

6) The need to fully understand the potential for economic development and training

7) Consideration of a submarine cable crossing at God's Lake Narrows

Recommendations:

- a) that the Panel direct Manitoba Hydro to provide God's Lake Narrows with more complete information on the costs and reliability of the submarine cable crossing at God's Lake Narrows; and
- b) that the Panel direct Hydro to provide the God's Lake Narrows First Nation with funding that will enable them to have an independent engineer review and comment on Hydro's material related to a submarine cable crossing.

8) Protection of treaty and traditional use of land

Recommendation:

- a) that the Panel ask Manitoba Hydro to enter into immediate discussions with the First Nations in the North Central Region to review more appropriate policies for the purchase of and guaranteed access to both reserve and traditional use lands. The objective should be to finalize those discussions and structure them into formally negotiated agreements before the review Panel formulates its recommendations to the Ministers.

9) The use of herbicides on NCP sites

Recommendation:

- a) that the Panel recommend that herbicides be barred from use on the North Central Project right of way and station sites.

10) Fair and equitable and appropriate compensation for resource users

Recommendation:

- a) that the Panel direct Manitoba Hydro and representatives of the First Nations and Community Councils to cooperatively review existing compensation guidelines, policies and programs to determine their suitability to the North Central Project. The Panel should be prepared to play a role in helping to reconcile any outstanding differences of opinion as to the appropriateness of Hydro's compensation program.

11) Need to upgrade houses for new electrical service.

Recommendation:

- a) that the Panel direct NCP funders, Manitoba Hydro

and the leadership of the region to immediately enter into discussions to identify funding for house upgrading programs. Those parties should be directed to seek to remove any discriminatory provisions of Hydro and government programs that may act as barriers to on-reserve residents having full access to those programs; and

- b) that the Panel direct Manitoba Hydro to enter into negotiations with the First Nations to accommodate expansions of the internal community distribution systems at no cost to the individual or First Nation as long as community land is utilized for those extensions.

12) Impact of increased hydro cost due to expanded service.

Recommendation:

- a) that the Panel ask Manitoba Hydro, the federal and provincial governments and the leadership of the communities to cooperatively review loan and subsidy programs that would allow individuals and businesses in the North Central Project communities to take advantage of the latest energy efficient technologies.

Appendix 0

KEY DOCUMENTS

1.0 Documents Produced During the Review Process

Hydro, 1993. *North Central Project. Route/Site Selection and Environmental Assessment. Volume 1. Summaries: Environmental Impact Statement.*

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2.0 Reference Documents

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