

Saskatchewan's independent newsmagazine

Briarpatch

Volume 17, Number 5

June 1988

\$2.00

Special
uranium mining
issue

Saskatchewan and Uranium:



NWT GOVERNMENT LIBRARY



3 1936 00004 890 8

GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED ON FEB 28 1990

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. -37-90 (4) TABLED ON FEB 28 1990



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
CANADA
X1A 2L9

COPIES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

NWT10071-05 (02/85)

Holding death in our hands

Briarpatch

Volume 17, Number 5
June 1988

EDITOR

Adriane Paavo

PRODUCTION

Denise Hildebrand

TYPESETTING

Kathy Walcott

BRIARPATCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Sandy Brighton
- Karen Hennot
- Denise Hildebrand
- George Martin Manz
- Alicja Muszynski
- Adriane Paavo
- Doug Scott
- Mark Stobbe
- Dale Weston
- Terry Witherspoon

CONTRIBUTORS

- Lorraine Beardsworth
- Linda Christie
- J.P. Conway
- Gordon Edwards
- Astrid Egger
- Jim Harding
- Joan Havemann
- Matthew Hudevik
- Bev Johnston
- George Martin Manz
- Brenda Niskala
- Ray O'Brien
- Peter Prebble
- Terry Pugh
- Bob Regnier
- Lillian Sanderson
- Gordon Ternowetsky

INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

- One Year—\$19
- Two years—\$34
- Three years—\$47
- Low-income (one year)—\$10

INSTITUTIONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

- One year—\$27
- Two years—\$44
- Three years—\$60

Protesting intolerance 2
A coalition of Saskatchewan artists protest Premier Devine's homophobic statements and the lack of human rights protection for lesbians and gays.

Provincial by-elections 3
The NDP's convincing sweep of two provincial by-elections means the Conservatives need to look for a new election strategy.

Attacking the ward system 5
Proposed changes to the municipal representation system in Saskatchewan are blatant attacks on democracy, according to provincial coalition and union members.

Understanding unemployment 6
Saskatchewan's "healthy" unemployment rate actually masks growing joblessness and an increase in part-time work.

Selling privatization 8
The minister of public participation and officials of the privatization department are holding a series of promotional meetings in rural Saskatchewan.

URANIUM MINING: A SPECIAL ISSUE

A Saskatchewan uranium mining chronology 9

Going back for more 10
Four new uranium mines soon to be developed in northern Saskatchewan will double this province's uranium production.

Job creation: a history 13
Uranium corporations and the provincial government have been the big winners from affirmative action hiring policies in the mines.

A native perspective 16
Now that the promises of jobs and prosperity have proven empty, the native people of northern Saskatchewan are disillusioned.

Spreading the word 18
Saskatchewan is becoming the international focus for anti-uranium mining organizing, according to two native Saskatchewan women recently returned from a trip to Western Europe.

The deadliest metal 19
Uranium's deadly effects are being felt by miners, school children, and cigarette smokers.

Reviving the opposition 22
Lack of public forums and government cutbacks have produced a lull in organized opposition to uranium mining in Saskatchewan, but the lull is ending.

Organizing the international congress 24
The International Congress on Uranium Mining is the beginning of a global peace and environmental network.

Making Saskatoon nuclear weapons free 25
Saskatoon activists are campaigning to make the city uranium-free and nuclear weapons-free after the next civic election.

Speaking HER peace 26
Helen Caldicott's hold on the peace limelight is slipping, as people and communities move beyond her individualistic, weapons-centric analysis.

Women and disabilities 28

Book review: Voices from Wollaston Lake 34

The prairie notebook 36

Briarpatch magazine was founded in 1973 and is published ten times per year by Briarpatch Inc., an independent non-profit organization. Many of the articles and photographs in Briarpatch are contributed by volunteers. Deadline for the receipt of articles is the first of the month preceding publication. Unsolicited contributions will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Briarpatch board of directors or staff. Briarpatch is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishing Association and the staff are members of RWDSU Local 568 in Regina.

The Briarpatch office is at Huston House, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, S4P 2R7. Phone (306)525-2949. Second Class Mail Registration No. 4171. ISSN 0703-8968. Membership in Briarpatch Inc. is open to groups or individuals upon application and payment of a \$1.00 membership fee.



A Saskatchewan uranium chronology

1947 The main deposit at Eldorado Nuclear's Beaverlodge mine at Uranium City is discovered. Production begins in 1953.

1968 Gulf Oil announces the discovery of a deposit at Rabbit Lake three times as rich as those in the Beaverlodge area.

The French company Amok discovers three ore bodies at Cluff Lake.

1975 The Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation (SMDC) is formed.

1975 SMDC and Uranerz discover an ore body at Key Lake.

The Rabbit Lake mine/mill comes into operation.

1976 Amok announces that it will proceed with a mine/mill at Cluff Lake.

The provincial government announces that it will hold a public inquiry into the Cluff Lake mine/mill and into whether the provincial uranium industry should expand.

1977 All companies planning to spend more than \$10,000 on a uranium project in Saskatchewan are required by law to offer SMDC a 50 percent joint venture, retroactive to holdings acquired after March 1, 1975.

1978 The CLBI recommends that the Cluff Lake development and general industry expansion proceed. The Saskatchewan government accepts the recommendations and a surface lease is signed with Amok providing for northern native employment and training.

Eldorado announces its intention to build a uranium refinery at Warman.

1979 SMDC acquires a 20 percent share in Cluff Lake, in partnership with Amok.

1979 The Key Lake Board of Inquiry is appointed. Anti-uranium groups boycott the hearings because the board can only decide how, not if, the project will proceed.

1980 The Federal Environmental Assessment Review Panel holds public meetings on the proposed Warman refinery, beginning in January. Public opposition is strong and well-organized. In July the panel rejects the refinery.

1981 The Key Lake inquiry approves the Key Lake project.

1982 Eldorado Nuclear shuts down the Beaverlodge mine.

1984 One million litres of radioactive water spill at the Key Lake mine site.

The NDP reverses its pro-uranium mining policy at its annual convention.

People living near Wollaston Lake blockade the road leading to the Rabbit Lake and Collins Bay mine sites.

1986 Amok announces plans to reprocess radioactive waste from the Cluff Lake mine to extract gold.

1987 The provincial government gives approval for the construction of a test mine at Cigar Lake. The rich deposit is jointly owned by SMDC, France's Cogema, and the Korean Electric Power Corporation.

1988 The provincial government approves construction of three mines located in or under Wollaston Lake.



Coming right up: four new mines

by PETER PREBBLE

The Saskatchewan government has recently approved four new uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan, developments which will more than double uranium production in our province.

The first approval came in October 1987 when Saskatchewan Environment gave permission for the construction of a \$50 million "test mine" at Cigar Lake, the world's richest uranium deposit, located 670 kilometres northeast of Saskatoon. The purpose of the "test mine" is to experiment with three potential methods for removing highly radioactive ore before the full-scale underground mine goes into operation.

However the terminology "test mine" understates what is really happening at Cigar Lake. Five thousand tonnes of ore will be removed during the "test mine" stage, making it a very large experiment. Moreover the major shareholder in Cigar Lake, the provincially owned Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation (SMDC), has already made advance sales of \$200 million-worth of uranium from Cigar Lake to the South Korean government with delivery scheduled to begin in 1993. It is very clear that the provincial government has every intention of giving the full-scale Cigar Lake uranium mine approval once the "test phase" has been completed.

On January 6, 1988 Environment Minister Herb Swan approved three more controversial uranium mine projects, all to be located in or under Wollaston Lake in north-eastern Saskatchewan. These three new mines have sparked even more opposition than Cigar Lake because they impose a large pollution risk on a magnificent natural resource. For the first time open-pit uranium mines will be constructed and operated several hundred yards out into a major water body. The uranium mines were approved without public hearing. And while the environment minister has received a large volume of mail in opposition to these mines, he refuses to reveal their contents or number as part of his department's "public review process."

These four new uranium mines pose a major challenge to the anti-nuclear movement in Saskatchewan. Two of the four projects will extend Saskatchewan's uranium mining capability to the year 2010; the province's three existing mines will be exhausted within the next decade.

The new mines also represent higher levels of risk to workers and the environment than do the existing mines. Two of the mines will be large underground operations where risks of radon gas and gamma ray exposure will be more serious than in the three existing open-pit operations.

Finally the Cigar Lake project represents an unprecedented level of involvement in Saskatchewan mining by the nuclear weapons industry. For all these reasons, these four new mines deserve a renewed level of opposition by the peace and environmental movements in Saskatchewan.

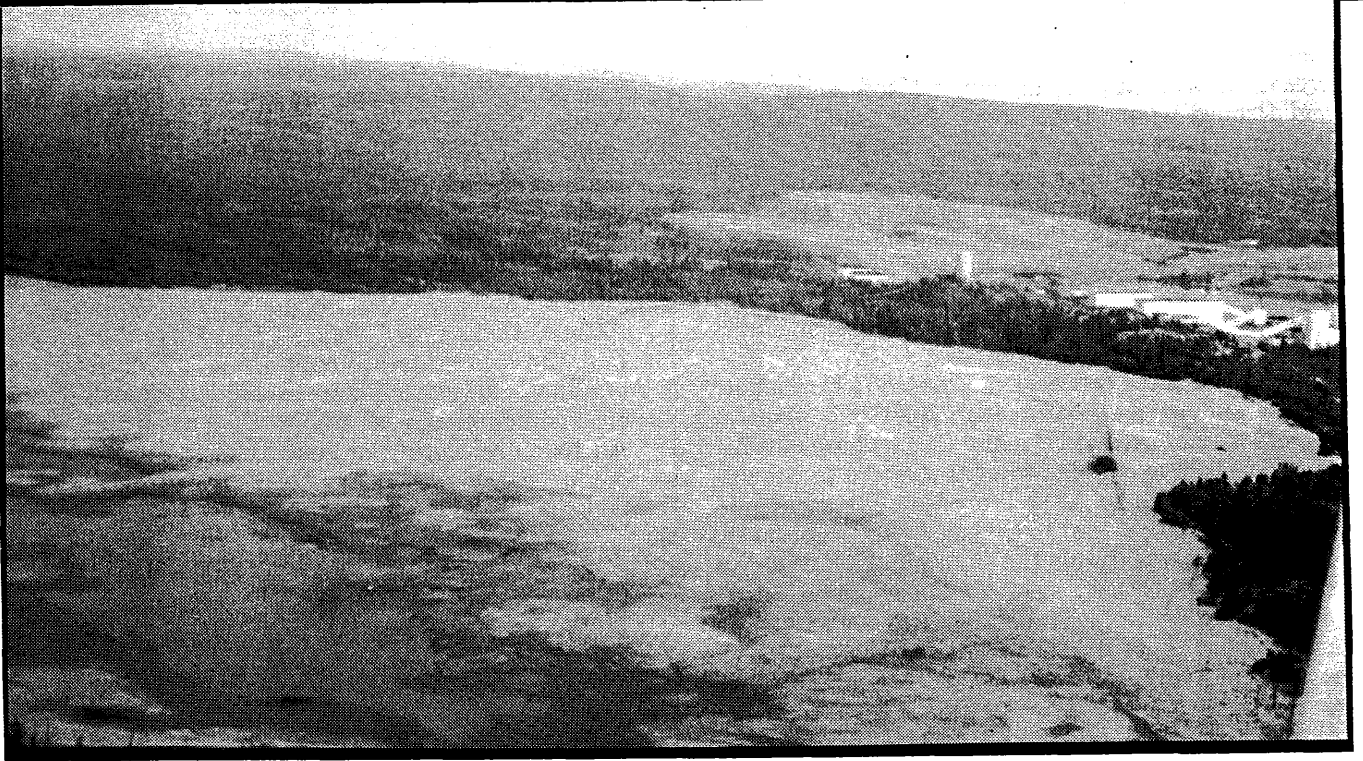
Cigar Lake

The huge Cigar Lake uranium deposit contains 385 million pounds of uranium, making it by far the richest uranium body in the world. (This compares with the 147 million pounds of uranium left to mine at Key Lake.) SMDC holds 48.75 percent of the shares. When SMDC and Eldorado Nuclear merge on July 1, 1988 this equity will be transferred to the newly formed corporation.

SMDC has sunk to a new low in its choice of corporate partners. Its major partner is Cogema Canada Limited which holds 32.625 percent of Cigar Lake shares. Cogema is wholly owned by the French atomic energy commission, the body which tests atomic weapons in the South Pacific and developed the French neutron bomb. The Saskatchewan government is now in a direct partnership with a nuclear weapons company.

SMDC has also sold 2 percent of its equity in Cigar Lake to the Korean Electric Power Corporation, a South Korean government utility. This brings the Saskatchewan government into partnership with a government that has a terrible human rights record and is known to be close to developing nuclear weapons. Although South Korea has signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty — under immense pressure from the U.S. — it is widely believed that the South Korean government is using civilian nuclear power plants (including a Canadian Candu reactor) as a cover for building a small number of nuclear weapons.

Another joint venture partner is Idemitsu Uranium Exploration Canada Limited (12.875 percent), a Japanese company. This foreshadows likely



Radioactive tailings from an abandoned uranium mine near Uranium City.

sales of Cigar Lake uranium to Japan which is now planning to fly plutonium over Canadian territory after reprocessing in Britain. The final 3.75 percent of Cigar Lake will be held by Corona Grande, a wholly owned subsidiary of Cogema.

Radiation levels at Cigar Lake are the highest of any underground uranium mine in the world. Uranium ore levels reach 60 percent in places and average 14 percent throughout the deposit. This compares to ore grades of 0.5 percent to 2 percent in most other uranium mines in the world. Ventilation problems are always serious in underground mines and the high radiation levels resulting from high ore concentrations will obviously pose a health risk to workers. This underground mine will also be dangerous because of very poor ground stability (making it subject to cave-ins) and serious problems with groundwater flows into the mine.

Given the risks to public health that could be involved, Cogema's record in its own country is not at all comforting. Cogema's uranium mines in France have polluted the water supplies of local villages and caused health problems in communities where radioactive dust from its mines has polluted the air. Several French villages have erected signs saying "Off Limits To Cogema." If Cogema cannot be trusted to protect its home environment, what assurances do we have that it will protect Saskatchewan workers?

Collins Bay A-Zone and D-Zone uranium mines

The two new Collins Bay mines will tap smaller uranium deposits owned by Eldorado Nuclear, a federal Crown corporation. Both are to be constructed in a large bay of Wollaston Lake (Collins Bay). Effective July 1 these proposed mine developments will become the property of the newly

merged uranium corporation.

In the case of the Collins Bay "A-Zone" property, Eldorado has received approval from the provincial and federal governments to mine a uranium deposit that extends about 700 feet offshore into Wollaston Lake and is under 45 feet of water. Almost seventeen million pounds of uranium are to be mined with an average ore grade of 5.69 percent.

A little over a mile away Eldorado has approval to construct the Collins Bay "D-Zone" uranium mine. This deposit extends 300 feet offshore into Wollaston Lake in water up to 25 feet deep. The deposit contains 5.6 million pounds of uranium and is 640 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 80 feet thick.

The provincial Department of Environment has given Eldorado permission to mine both these deposits using open-pit mine techniques. Eldorado proposes to mine each one out in a summer during the years 1990 and 1991. The uranium ore will then be processed over a three- to four-year period at the Rabbit Lake uranium mill located only a few miles away.

Eldorado's plan is to build a large dike from the shore around each deposit. Both dikes will be made of circular, interconnected, steel sheet-pile cells and will rise seven feet above the maximum observed water level of Wollaston Lake. Water within the dikes will be removed to Collins Bay, but continual pumping will be necessary to maintain a dry mine operation because of groundwater seepage. Water used in the mining process will be contaminated so Eldorado will pump it to the Rabbit Lake uranium mill for treatment. To get to the ore, workers will have to remove muskeg, lake-bottom sediments, and overburden, and will have to use explosives.

Pollution is a concern for a number of reasons.

There could be major contamination if the dike breaks or when the open pits are decommissioned and flooded again. Both occurrences could damage Wollaston Lake irreversibly.

It is outrageous that any mining company should receive permission to mine in Wollaston Lake. The lake is a very important recreation and fishery resource, as well as an important part of the way of life of native people in the area. The provincial government is failing to live up to its responsibility to protect this valuable resource.

Added to these concerns is Eldorado's inadequate health and safety record. One need only look at miners who worked at Uranium City and are now dying of cancer to wonder what the record in occupational health will be at the proposed Collins Bay projects. Eldorado's record in closing down Uranium City and in badly polluting the environment in the Port Hope and Port Granby areas of Ontario is a disgrace.

In Saskatchewan Eldorado has also been lobbying the provincial government to end monitoring of all aspects of Wollaston Lake other than sampling for water quality. Eldorado has expressed a desire to cease monitoring such things as radionuclide levels in fish, lichen, and soil sediments at the bottom of the lake. The reality is that monitoring only water samples will tell the public nothing about what is really happening to the Wollaston Lake environment.



Eagle Point

Eagle Point actually involves two uranium deposits: Eagle South and Eagle North. Eagle South straddles the shoreline of Collins Bay and is solely owned by Eldorado Nuclear. Eagle North is completely submerged underneath Collins Bay and is a joint project of Eldorado, SMDC, and Noranda Mines. On July 1 Eagle Point will be effectively under the control of the newly merged uranium corporation. The two deposits will be the basis for an underground uranium mine operation with a life of 19 years. One hundred and thirty-three million pounds of uranium will be mined. Instead of a shaft, Eldorado proposes to build a huge ramp near the shoreline to permit the use of rubber-tired vehicles underground. The ore will be processed at the existing uranium mill built during the 1970s for the old Rabbit Lake uranium mine pit a few kilometres away. Eldorado proposes to use the old mine pit as the disposal site for radioactive tailings from the Eagle Point underground mine.

Even on narrow environmental grounds the provincial government's requirements of Eldorado on this project are shockingly inadequate. Not only is the government allowing Eldorado to mine underneath Wollaston Lake, but it has approved the

project without receiving Eldorado's plans for shutting down the mine and for disposing of radioactive wastes. Although Eldorado wants to dispose of radioactive mine tailings from Eagle Point in the old Rabbit Lake pit, it acknowledges that the pit will not be large enough to hold all the tailings.

Most serious of all from an environmental point of view is that there has been no examination of the cumulative impact of Eagle Point, Collins Bay A-Zone, Collins Bay D-Zone, and Cigar Lake. The first three projects are only a few kilometres from one another, yet each is treated independently in the environmental impact studies that have been done. All four drain into the Fond Du Lac water system, but no consideration has been given to their combined pollution impact.



The struggle ahead

If the human and environmental costs of uranium mining are not taken into account, Saskatchewan's uranium mines are now making money. SMDC turned a profit of \$60.3 million in 1987, a 20 percent return on equity. Even with low uranium prices and lagging reactor construction, Saskatchewan's uranium resources are of such high quality that there are still dollars to be made. There is a strong possibility that even more new uranium mines will be announced before 1990. In fact, if the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement proceeds past the next federal election, the provisions for guaranteed access to the American uranium market mean that more new mine announcements in Saskatchewan are a certainty.

The four new mines just approved thus become the major battleground for the anti-nuclear movement in the years ahead. If they are allowed to open, then in effect uranium mining will become a permanent part of Saskatchewan's economy and way of life. If they are stopped, the impact will shake the nuclear power and nuclear weapons industry around the world. Stopping these mines from opening will also immobilize the new uranium corporation that will be created from the merger of SMDC and Eldorado. That corporation has a major stake in every one of the four new mines and will be prepared to devote millions of dollars of public relations money to ensure the projects go ahead.

If Saskatchewan is to become a nuclear weapons-free zone in this century, then Cigar Lake, Collins Bay A- and D-Zones, Eagle Point, and any other new mine proposals that may follow must never be allowed to open. □

Peter Prebble is a member of the Inter-Church Uranium Committee and NDP MLA for Saskatoon University.

Setting the record straight

by MATTHEW HUDIVIK

In February 1977, mainly in response to growing opposition to the nuclear industry in general and its uranium development policies in particular, Saskatchewan's NDP government appointed a three-person commission to "conduct a public inquiry into the probable environmental, health, safety, social and economic effects of the proposed uranium mine at Cluff Lake, as well as social, economic and other implications of the uranium industry in Saskatchewan."

Uranium mining was not new to Saskatchewan. The first large-scale uranium production had started more than twenty years before, with not a whimper of protest, for the purpose of providing material for the U.S. nuclear weapons program. And just a year and a half earlier, in October 1975, a major Gulf Minerals-Uranerz of Canada Limited-owned mine-mill complex at Rabbit Lake began operations without the fuss and bother of public hearings.

But as talk of transforming Saskatchewan into a "Saudi Arabia of uranium" spread, so too did the opposition, mainly among church, environmental, women's, anti-nuclear, farm, and development groups, the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, parts of the extra-parliamentary left, several trade unions and professional organizations as well as segments of the governing NDP itself.

This opposition was rooted in a broad spectrum of concerns — ecological, social, political, and economic. For some, it was the problem of radioactive wastes, the possibility of reactor accidents, or weapons production which led them to oppose uranium mining. For others it was the perception that the uranium industry would jeopardize native northerners' prospects of settling outstanding land claims, decolonizing the north, and democratically determining their future. And many opponents were deeply skeptical of government claims that uranium mining would help to diversify and stabilize the Saskatchewan economy, and concluded that uranium mines and refineries were ecologically dangerous projects which would only help to sustain an unjust social order.

The industry's most visible supporters, outside of the nuclear industry and the provincial government, were regional business groups, the organized working class, especially its skilled blue-collar component, and northern local governments. The anticipated

economic benefits from uranium mining — in the form of profitable investment opportunities, short- and long-term employment opportunities, and royalties — were the main underpinnings of the support.

On May 31, 1978, following six months of hurried hearings, the Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry (CLBI), chaired by Justice E. D. Bayda of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, issued its final report. The inquiry recommended that the government approve the Cluff Lake mine (then owned by Amok, the French mining consortium with corporate links to all facets of the nuclear industry including weapons production) and that the uranium industry be allowed to expand. This expansion would take place only if companies like Amok lived up to certain environmental and worker health and safety standards and provided socio-economic benefits to the population of northern Saskatchewan.

Ten years after the release of the CLBI's final report, it is clear that the corporations and states which invested billions worldwide in the development of nuclear technology and uranium mining, and not northerners, have benefited most from the Saskatchewan uranium industry's expansion.

Promises, promises

The 1976 population of northern Saskatchewan stood at 24,900, of which 37 percent were status Indian, 41 percent Metis, and 22 percent non-native. Most of the young and rapidly growing northern native population resided in 40-odd poverty-stricken settlements while the bulk of the non-native population of the region lived in the prosperous "white settler" communities of La Ronge, Creighton, and Uranium City.

Despite significant, if long overdue, initiatives by the provincial government to improve grotesquely inadequate education, housing, health care, transportation, and sanitation facilities, life in the settlements for most native people still meant numbing poverty, squalid living conditions, phenomenal rates of unemployment, and a litany of related social problems (welfare dependency, illness and disease, violent crime and incarceration, substance abuse, and school drop-out rates which dwarfed the provincial norm).

The CLBI called on the provincial government to share uranium royalties with northern local governments; establish a semi-autonomous northern development board with wide-ranging responsibilities including the power to plan and oversee a comprehensive development strategy for the region; amend the Northern Administration Act to give northern local governments powers and responsibilities similar to those exercised by southern municipalities; and legally obligate Amok and future, but not present, mine/mill operators to employ northerners and purchase supplies and services from northern businesses.

The provincial government, to no one's surprise, agreed that the Cluff Lake project should go ahead and that uranium development should increase. And although it immediately agreed to legally obligate Amok to provide employment and business opportunities for northerners, after many twists and turns, it rejected calls for royalty sharing and a northern development board and introduced legislation which gave northern local governments only a very limited voice in resource activities such as logging, mineral exploration, mining, and the bush economy (hunting, fishing, and trapping).

In September 1978, Amok and the Saskatchewan government signed a surface lease agreement which called on the company to hire and train a certain number of northern workers and to purchase supplies from northern businesses. Specifically, Amok was to ensure that at least fifty percent of the person-years of work performed by its operations-phase work-force of 320 was performed by northerners (a person who has resided 15 years or half of his/her life in northern Saskatchewan).

In 1981, following a recommendation by the much-boycotted Key Lake Board of Inquiry, which could only decide how, not if, the Key Lake mine would proceed, the Key Lake Mining Corporation signed a similar agreement. It ensured that, by the second year of operation, at least sixty percent of the person-hours of onsite work performed by its 480-member operations-phase work-force was performed by native northerners (a native person who has resided 15 years or half of his/her life in northern Saskatchewan).

Counting the benefits

During construction of the two projects from 1978 to 1983, northerners captured about four hundred and fifty person-years of temporary employment, roughly one-quarter of the total available. For the vast majority of native northerners, such employment consisted of arduous and irregular short-term jobs as construction labourers, hardly the stuff for economic self-determination.

Contracts with northern businesses amounted to \$30-\$35 million in total. But only a small number of northern businesses — about two dozen in all — secured work, and the majority of those were owned and operated by La Ronge- and Uranium City-based non-native entrepreneurs. The Federation of Saskat-

chewan Indian Nations' Saskatchewan Indian Nations Corporation (SINCO), which provides transportation and security at the mines, would appear to be the largest single recipient of operations-phase contracts from the mines.

In 1981, the Cluff Lake mine's first full year of operation, northerners captured 41.6 percent of the 317 full-time positions at the mine. At present they make up approximately half of the Cluff work-force of 320.

If the Cluff Lake mine has come close to fulfilling its northern employment quotas, the same cannot be said for Key Lake. As of November 1983, just 28 percent of the 480-member Key Lake work-force were native northerners, not the 60 percent promised. Since then the percentage has remained more or less constant. In 1986 native northerners constituted 27 percent of the mine's work-force, less than half the number called for in the corporation's surface lease agreement.

According to a recent paper prepared for Fred Thompson, NDP MLA for Athabasca and an unflinching supporter of uranium mining, the industry generated some 1,636 Saskatchewan jobs in 1984 — 1,264 in production and 432 in exploration and development. Thompson estimates that 511 of these jobs or 31 percent were captured by northerners, that is, people who continue to live in the north or former residents of the region who now reside in Saskatoon or elsewhere in southern Saskatchewan.

These figures indisputably represent a vast improvement over northern employment levels achieved in previous decades. As recently as 1976 just 2 percent of the 800 positions at the now-closed Beaverlodge mine at Uranium City were held by northern native people.

Building a province with uranium

But why did the Blakeney government reject calls for a northern development board and royalty sharing?

Simply stated, surface leases coincided with the province's uranium development plans, but northern development boards, northern local governments with a voice in decisions affecting megaprojects, and royalty sharing did not.

The overriding objective of the Blakeney government was to diversify and stabilize the fragile, resource-dependent Saskatchewan economy. It sought to accomplish this goal by constructing, within the constraints of confederation, an interventionist welfare state based on the planned expansion of the Saskatchewan resource sector. To this end it launched a variety of initiatives to strengthen the provincial government's capacity to plan, pace, participate in, and benefit from activity in the resource sector.

As part of this larger province-building project, SMDC was established in 1974, several years before the CLBI's appointment. SMDC was to explore for and mine uranium in joint-ventures with foreign and Canadian partners.

By 1977 SMDC all but owned 50 percent of the Key Lake project, would soon acquire a 20-percent share in the Cluff Lake project, and was operating a multi-million dollar exploration program. In the mid-1970s the province also began secretive but, in the face of strong anti-nuclear opposition, ultimately unsuccessful negotiations with Eldorado Nuclear Limited to construct a uranium refinery at Warman, Saskatchewan. Needless to say, Eldorado planned to refine ore from more than just the two mines then in operation; more development was planned.

And in mid-1976, following lengthy consultations with the uranium majors (Uranerz, Gulf Minerals, Amok, and Eldorado) the province introduced a new profit-sensitive uranium royalty structure. It was expected to capture between \$1.5 and \$3 billion in royalties for the province between 1977 and 1990 while also creating, to the extent that the province was able, an investment climate attractive to SMDC's joint-venture partners. (To date uranium royalties have fallen far short of projected levels. Between 1976-77 and 1986-87 uranium royalties totalled about \$200 million.)

The surface lease agreements were one more element of this province-building strategy. They enabled the province to demand, compared to other producing countries, stringent environmental, worker health and safety, and socio-economic standards while at the same time helping to undercut opposition to the industry. How could critics say that mining would provide few social and economic benefits to northerners when jobs were promised in black and white?

However, to view the province's support for the socio-economic provisions of the leases as merely a means to generate support for its uranium development policies would be mistaken. They were also intended, initially at any rate, to break down deeply embedded patterns of structural racism which prevented natives from participating in the paid labour force.

An ounce of prevention

The uranium industry, or at least its more sophisticated representatives, viewed the provision of socio-economic benefits for northerners as a way to maximize the industry's long-term profitability.

As the late Marcel Tabouret, then Amok's managing director, put it in a 1981 speech: "As newcomers to northern Saskatchewan, we consider it very important to be welcomed and wanted. As a resident of the region, we want to see it grow, and do whatever we can to help out. Some of this may sound unbusinesslike, but actually it is very good business in a world where people are questioning the wisdom of major undertakings, especially resource developments."

Tabouret characterized Amok's willingness to give northerners preferential treatment as a form of "preventive medicine" intended to avoid a situation where "a minority gets richer while the majority of the populace becomes relatively more poor, with all

the social and political consequences of frustration and anger."

Whatever the limitations of this proposed solution to the problems of northern underdevelopment, and there are many, it was not acted on. The province got cold feet. It not only failed to implement affirmative action programs in other sectors of the northern economy like mining exploration, forestry, transportation, and tourism, but it also failed to enforce the agreements already in place.

Meanwhile, the majority of Saskatchewan's northern aboriginal population continues to endure devastating levels of unemployment, poverty, and squalor.

The inevitable conclusion is that the uranium industry has reaped the greatest benefit from northern employment programs insofar as they provide a ready justification for the industry's continued existence. Never mind that SMDC and its partners have by and large failed to fulfill the original provisions of their surface leases. Never mind that Saskatchewan uranium continues to find its way into the nuclear arsenals of France and the United States. And never mind that the province has failed to deliver on its promise to facilitate the construction of northern-controlled political, economic, and cultural institutions geared first and foremost to the satisfaction of human needs. Jobs are jobs.

In its 1978 final report, the CLBI argued that if the distribution of the economic benefits from the expansion of the uranium industry was left to "natural market forces and normal government processes," chances were "high" that northerners would benefit only marginally, if at all. At the time of its release, the final report was roundly criticized by industry opponents for its emaciated conception of economic development, its shallow "technical fix" solutions to the ecological hazards of uranium mining, its failure to squarely address the issue of weapons proliferation, and its apparent blindness to the racial oppression experienced by native northerners. But whatever the CLBI's other limitations, on the matter of the probable distribution of benefits and costs, it was essentially correct.

The Saskatchewan Association of Northern Local Governments (SANLG) is an independent body comprised of elected representatives from local governments from 22 of 30 northern, predominantly Metis, settlements. In June 1985 it expressed support for the community of Wollaston Lake which was blockading Eldorado's Rabbit Lake mine to protest plans to construct a \$100 million mine complex at nearby Collins Bay. SANGLA passed the following motion: "SANLG is opposed to uranium mining because we get no benefits from the mines and because of their after-effects on the health and environment of people of the north."

It is a resolution that even the Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry would now have difficulty opposing. □

Matthew Hudevik has extensively researched the history of Saskatchewan uranium mining.



Aboriginal people re-evaluate uranium mining

by LILLIAN SANDERSON

“The government’s joint ownership of the uranium industry could also include native people in northern Saskatchewan in sharing the royalties. People from Alberta get a share of the oil money that comes from their backyards. Why can’t we do the same with the royalties that come out of our backyards?”

— Allan Merasty

Northern Saskatchewan is the land of milk and honey to the exploiters as is the farm land of the south. We have forests, wild rice, furs, gold — and uranium. In the late sixties and early seventies we saw a lot of prospecting activity which brought foreigners to our land. We really did not understand what it was that they were doing but they were friendly. Some of our men were given jobs which took them away from their families but also provided food and clothing. This is the time that things started to change for the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Our way of life was simple; we survived by fishing, hunting, trapping, and gardening. We were self-sufficient. The land provided for us and we provided for the land. The people took what they needed and left what could not be used. Conservation was always respected to balance the life of Mother Earth. We also had a rich culture; English was a foreign language to many children entering the new school

system and difficult to learn. People cared for each other and helped when there was a need. It was a good life.

In 1971 the government of Saskatchewan introduced the Department of Northern Saskatchewan to administer its programs. It subtly tried to assimilate the people of the north. We were promised jobs and training so that eventually native people could work in positions held by non-native people from the south. This sounded great — who would oppose such a plan? But this was not what was to happen. We managed to get clerical positions or labouring jobs but this was usually as far as one could go. There were a few who managed to move up to management positions, but very few. This was very frustrating, since more and more people were moving into the north to take these jobs that were promised to us. Many northern people had no alternative but to go on welfare.

Today most northern communities suffer from unemployment, 90 to 100 percent in some cases. The land doesn't provide as much as she used to. Our rich culture is now only with the elders who dream of the good life. Our language is not being taught to the young and more and more we become ashamed of what we are. We are dependent on welfare and use alcohol to help us cope. Our way of life is slowly eroding and we become the people who are a burden to white society.

In the fall of 1986 I was involved in a research project with Prairie Justice Research at the University of Regina. The research project was to follow up on the uranium inquiries held in the north in the late 1970s. I interviewed people who were involved in the inquiries both pro and anti, native and non-native.

The inquiries were a forum for people to express their concerns about uranium mining. The people at least felt that their concerns were being heard. When the inquiries were over, the recommendations were generally accepted because mining was going to go ahead, there was nothing stopping it. The pro's were happy and the anti's became stagnant. We were again promised jobs.

That was ten years ago.

Today most people are disappointed with the outcome of development. There is a lot of anger and frustration with present conditions. People talk about the problems of poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, physical and sexual abuse, spousal abuse, suicide, loss of culture, language, spirituality, and self-dignity. They also felt that the people had been cheated and lied to because very few people and communities have benefited from mining. But there is sure a lot of activity in the north, more and more strange faces with jobs.

With this present government, the last five years have been pretty hard. Good programs that were in place have been cut. People on welfare are now being forced into government programs that basically make no sense. Our people are doing the slave work for municipalities, small business, and government. Work placements and supposed training last for a short while, long enough to qualify for unemployment insurance. When unemployment runs out they are back on welfare with not enough skills or permanent jobs to further advance in their areas of interest. A vicious cycle.

Environmental issues are also a major concern. There are so many new mines opening up that people can't even keep up with them. The disillusioned people of the north no longer attend inquiries or studies on environmental impact, believing the results are a foregone conclusion. Business and government are raping the land and looking for more. The wildlife that was once so plentiful is becoming scarce with the destruction of huge parcels of land for the profit of companies like Weyerhaeuser. Our land that provides our way of life is being destroyed just for the profit of a few.

There are millions of dollars being made annually from the resources that are taken out of the north.



“We were told that the mining would last for 20-25 years and there'd be a lot of people hired from local communities.... But as I can see there is only one person who is still working from this reserve. There were people working there but they didn't work long enough for them to be on the job steady.... They were good wages but I guess it's not the kind of work for us.

— Solomon Billette

Most of the profits go to multinationals and government coffers. Meanwhile our communities are suffering more and more from the social conditions that have been created as a result of development. We were never prepared and had very little input into the process of determining what our lifestyle would be. The non-native people who believe it is so easy for native people to assimilate should seriously look at the conditions of indigenous people in the north and across Canada. Our problems will not disappear until there is an understanding and respect for our culture.

As native people, we have to start teaching our young our culture and our values, to instill in them the pride we had in ourselves and to give them a solid sense of identity. Until then we will continue to see the same social problems that exist today if not worse for the future. □

Lil Sanderson lives and works in La Ronge.

Exposing nuclear colonialism

by TERRY PUGH



photo: Terry Pugh

Adele Ratt and Faye Ahdemar discuss European trip.

Thousands of Europeans have a far better picture of the devastation unleashed on northern Saskatchewan by the uranium industry than have many people in the southern part of the province, thanks to a recent tour by two Cree women from La Ronge and Prince Albert.

Adele Ratt of La Ronge and Faye Ahdemar of Prince Albert spent three weeks in April touring West Germany, Holland, and Switzerland as part of a delegation of nine indigenous people from Canada, the United States, Australia, and Tahiti. Speaking at more than thirty public meetings, the two women related how the legacy of "nuclear colonialism" has led to a lower quality of life and increased environmental degradation in northern Saskatchewan.

"Millions of dollars change hands in the uranium industry every year," noted Ratt, "but in northern communities just a few miles away from the mines there is widespread malnutrition and a lack of basic amenities like running water and sewers. It is a classic colonial situation, with every major road leading into a mine for the sole purpose of extracting the ore. It is development for the sake of profits, not development for people."

Ratt and Ahdemar learned that

Saskatchewan is emerging as the focal point for anti-nuclear organizations around the world. At the present time the province supplies approximately nineteen percent of the world export market for uranium. That percentage is expected to grow to 39 percent when four new high-grade mines come onstream over the next few years.

"Saskatchewan has the largest concentration of uranium in the world," noted Ratt. "It is the major source of supply for nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons."

The indigenous people participated in a speaking tour organized by two West German environmental organizations. The Association for Environment and Nature Conservation (BUND) and the Society for Endangered Peoples initiated the tour in an effort to educate Europeans about the impact of nuclear development on native people living in areas where uranium is mined and where nuclear weapons are tested.

Meeting and speaking with indigenous people from other parts of the world also helped the two Saskatchewan women understand that the problems confronting natives here are not unique. As Ahdemar noted, "We discovered that people in the U.S., Tahiti, and Australia also have many of the same dilemmas." □

"The uranium industry is a big part of the whole colonial process," added Ratt. "The way the industry is structured affects the social, political, and economic lives of indigenous people. In Canada, the U.S., and Australia the mining of uranium destroys the environment and robs us of the resources we need for survival. The nuclear industry is a violent industry that leaves only destruction in its wake."

High rates of alcoholism, disease, and social dislocation can also be attributed to uranium development, Ahdemar contended. Despite the overwhelming hazards of low- and high-level radioactive wastes emanating from the mines, no baseline health studies have been conducted in nearby communities to determine health risks for northerners.

Ratt suggested that a "state of emergency" should be declared in northern Saskatchewan to allow measures to be taken to alleviate the social and environmental devastation of the uranium industry.

During their tour of European cities, Ratt and Ahdemar called on their audiences to "make a stand to stop the spread of further nuclear contamination."

"West Germany is contributing to the genocide of the indigenous people of northern Saskatchewan and the destruction of the environment through its involvement in uranium mining," they pointed out. One result of the tour, noted Ratt, was a tremendous expression of solidarity by the Europeans. "Many Germans were not aware that companies from their country were so heavily involved in uranium extraction in Canada," she said. "The BUND is doing a lot of good work educating people about the nuclear industry and its effects on people and the environment." □

The deadliest metal

by GORDON EDWARDS

There are only two commercially important uses for uranium: nuclear weapons and nuclear reactors. So the ultimate products of the uranium industry are bombs and radioactive wastes. For this reason alone, uranium merits the title of "the deadliest metal."

But the lethal nature of uranium was obvious long before the first atomic bombs were made or the first nuclear reactors fuelled. As early as 1546, and for centuries afterwards, it was reported that underground miners in Schneeberg, Germany suffered an unusually high incidence of fatal lung disease. In 1979 it was shown that about half of these miners were dying of lung cancer than was found in the general population. The same grim statistic — a 50-percent death rate from lung cancer — was later found among miners in Czechoslovakia. The ores in question were all rich in uranium.

Similar high rates of lung cancer have occurred among iron, lead, and zinc miners in Sweden, in Fluorspar miners in Newfoundland, and especially among uranium miners in all parts of the world. Scientific papers published in the 1930s, even before the outbreak of World War II, clearly indicated that airborne radioactivity in the mines was the most like-

ly cause of these lung cancer epidemics. Radon gas and its solid by-products — the so-called "radon daughters" — are now acknowledged as the principal culprits.

Uranium is a naturally occurring radioactive substance, very widespread in the earth's crust, but concentrated in certain hard rock formations. As uranium atoms disintegrate over billions of years, a host of radioactive by-products are formed: thorium-230, radium-226, radon-222, and the infamous "radon daughters," including lead-210 and polonium-210.

When radon gas is produced inside hard rock, it has little chance to escape. But when the rock is pulverized radon escapes easily. As the miners dig out uranium-bearing ore, they inevitably release large quantities of radioactive radon gas into the mines atmosphere. Radon has a relatively short half-life (3.8 days). Before long, the air in the mine is heavily contaminated with radon daughters which adhere to microscopic dust particles. Miners breathe in these pernicious particles, which deliver a massive dose of alpha radiation to the sensitive lung tissue. The result is an extraordinarily high incidence of

As early as 1546, miners in Germany suffered an unusually high incidence of lung cancer from working with ores rich in uranium.

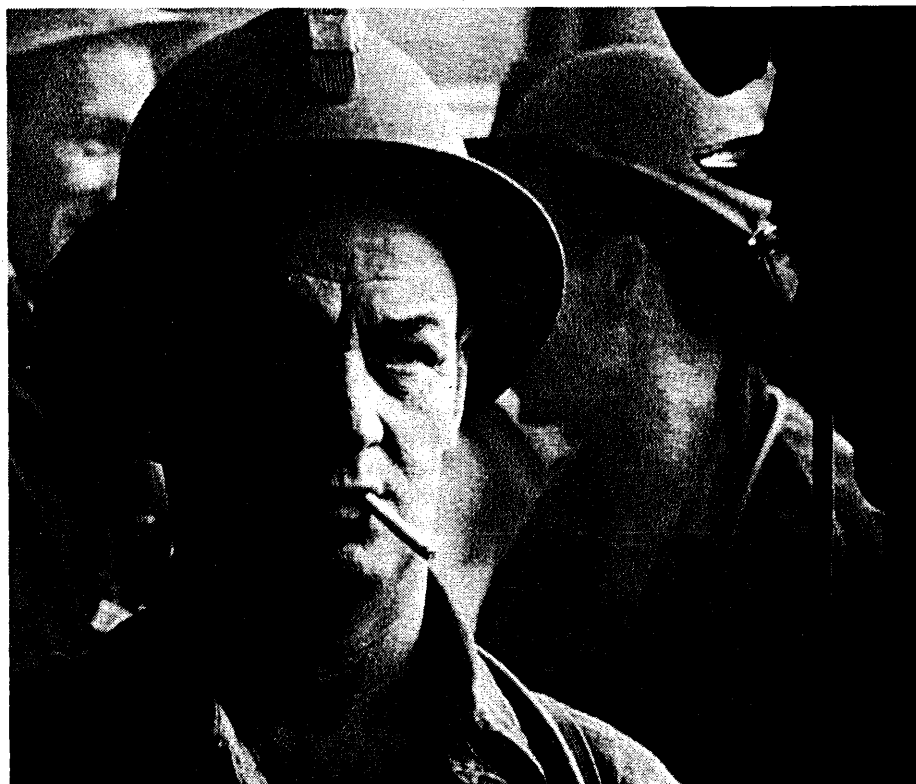


photo: Ovo Magazine

lung cancer, fibrosis of the lungs, and other lung diseases which take decades to develop.

The carcinogenic effects of radon daughters have been studied for many years. The medical evidence is overwhelming and indisputable: radon (with its daughters) is one of the most potent carcinogens known. A study published by the Atomic Energy Control Board in Ottawa in 1982 revealed that workers exposed to the present maximum permissible levels in Canadian uranium mines for a 30-year period would experience about four times as much lung cancer as non-miners. Instead of 54 out of every thousand males dying of lung cancer (Ontario statistics for non-miners), we would have to expect over two hundred out of every thousand miners to die of lung cancer — more than one in five.

Digging up death

In 1974 the Ontario Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines pointed out that Elliot Lake uranium miners had already experienced twice as many lung cancers as expected. In 1980 the British Columbia Medical Association published a hard-hitting report entitled "The Health Dangers of Uranium Mining." It warns of "a gradually flowering crop of radiation-induced cancers" among Canadian uranium miners, adding, "We are aware of no other carcinogen which is permitted at levels close to the doubling dose for humans." A total of 81 Canadian uranium miners had died of lung cancer by the end of 1974. At the end of 1977, the number had grown to 119; at the end of 1981, 174; by October 1984, 274.

At Elliot Lake about a ton of ore is required in order to extract two pounds of uranium. Huge quantities of pulverized rock (called uranium tailings) are left over from the milling process. The tailings contain 85 percent of the ore's original radioactivity: they contain thorium-230, radium-226, and all the other uranium by-products. The tailings also give off at least ten thousand times as much radon gas as the undisturbed ore.

In the southwest U.S. and in Port Hope, Ontario many homes and schools were built using the sand-like uranium tailings as construction material. As a result some of the buildings have levels of radon gas and radon daughters even higher than those permitted in the mines. Similar (though less severe) problems arose in Florida and Newfoundland when phosphate tailings were used for construction, and in Oka and Varennes (just outside of Montreal) when other mine tailings were used for construction. In each case the original ore was unusually rich in uranium, so the tailings gave off unusually high amounts of radon gas — much higher than is normally emitted from the soil.

In 1975, St. Mary's School in Port Hope was evacuated because of extraordinarily high radon levels. Radioactive fill had to be removed, at public expense, from hundreds of homes and gardens. Even today there are over 200,000 tons of radioactive debris lying about the town of Port Hope in open



Tailings disposal at Elliot Lake.

ravines, easily accessible to children. Eldorado Nuclear Limited, the Crown corporation whose radioactive wastes had been generously donated to the eager townsfolk many years ago for construction purposes, has promised — under the prodding of the Ontario Environment Department — to finish cleaning up the mess some time during the next few years.

In 1975, after recognizing that the town of Port Hope had been thoroughly contaminated with alpha-emitting radioactive substances, Canadian nuclear authorities had to make a political decision. What would be an acceptable level for radioactive contamination in a private residence?

And so a standard for an "acceptable level" was set at about 20 times the normal background levels of radon, to guide the cleanup operations at Port Hope. Before long that same standard was being used for the construction of whole subdivisions of new homes in Elliot Lake in the late 1970s. The radon levels in these new homes were so high that fans had to be in-

photo: Paul McKay

stalled under the floorboards to blow the radon out of the house. Sometimes two fans had to be installed to bring the contamination levels down to the "acceptable" level.

In testimony to the Elliot Lake Environmental Assessment Board in 1978, mortality figures published by the Ontario government were used to show that these "permissible" levels of radon contamination in homes would result in an extra 17 lung cancer deaths per thousand people chronically exposed to such levels. In other words, instead of 54 lung cancers per thousand, there would be 71 lung cancers per thousand, a 31 percent increase. In the light of this evidence, the board recommended in 1980 that the radon standard for homes be reassessed. But no such reassessment has taken place.

Since then the B.C. Medical Association has condemned the radon standard for homes "as tantamount to allowing an industrially induced epidemic of cancer." A 1982 report published by the Atomic Energy Control Board estimates a 40 percent increase in lung cancer among those living in homes contaminated to the "acceptable" radon level.

Cancer sticks

Phosphate fertilizers also give off radon gas, since phosphate ores are rich in uranium. When tobacco crops are fertilized with phosphates, radon gas accumulates under the thick canopy of tobacco leaves, and tiny dust particles impregnated with radon daughters adhere to the sticky, resinous hairs on the underside of each leaf. When harvested, the leaves contain unusually high quantities of radioactive lead-210 and polonium-210. Cigarette smokers breathe these radon daughters into their lungs with every puff.

Some of the radioactive particles lodge in the lungs of smokers, as confirmed by autopsies. Others enter the bloodstream along with the oxygen and carbon monoxide; radioactive deposits have been found in the plaque removed from sclerotic arteries. Many researchers now believe that the large alpha radiation doses to the lungs and to the arteries caused by these excessive concentrations of radon daughters are responsible for most of the 135,000 deaths each year in the U.S. from lung cancer, strokes, and heart disease caused by smoking.

Shocking as these premature deaths are, affecting as they do thousands of uranium miners, hundreds of thousands of people living in contaminated homes, and millions of smokers, they still do not capture the full dimension of uranium's lethal legacy. For besides killing many of the people who work there and live nearby, each uranium mine is a "slow bomb," spreading deadly radioactive poisons over vast areas of the earth, as surely as the Chernobyl disaster did, as surely as atmospheric tests of nuclear weapons have done, but at an insidiously slower rate.

On February 25, 1986 the *Wall Street Journal* printed a front-page story in which it portrayed the 220 million tons of uranium tailings in the U.S. as an ecological and financial time bomb. (Here in Canada

we have about 150 million tons of uranium tailings.) Everyone agrees that these materials are too dangerously radioactive to leave on the surface of the earth, yet no one has devised a satisfactory method for permanently containing them. Even at a very modest rate, say \$10 per ton, it will cost billions of dollars to dispose of these wastes.

The tailings will remain dangerously radioactive for millions of years. Thorium-230, itself a by-product of uranium, is an alpha-emitter with a half-life of almost 80,000 years. It continually replenishes all the other radioactive by-products of uranium in the abandoned tailings piles. Radium-226, a bone-seeking alpha-emitting carcinogen which is at least 20 times as harmful as strontium-90, is blown in the wind, washed by the rain, and leached into the waterways from the tailings piles, where it reconcentrates by factors of thousands in aquatic plants and factors of hundreds in land plants. It has a half-life of 1,600 years. When the levels of radium increased in Canadian rivers as a result of uranium mining activities, the nuclear industry obligingly increased by a factor of nine the standard for an "acceptable level" of radium in drinking water.

In addition, the radon gas emissions from the abandoned tailings can cause radioactive contamination on a continental and even a global basis. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has estimated that radon emissions from uranium tailings in the southwest U.S. can be expected to cause over 3,000 cancer deaths per century over the North American continent. Many researchers increase this death toll ten-fold, an estimate which does not include the effect of fallout on leafy vegetation as the radon gas passes overhead, and of the tailings being blown by the wind, washed by the rain, or spread through the food chain, thereby distributing the source of the contamination over a much wider area.

The legacy of uranium is truly a devastating one: miners and smokers dead and dying, vast reservoirs of tailings releasing radioactive poisons into the biosphere, radon daughters accumulating in buildings and in the food chain, and all for the sake of building more bombs and nuclear reactors. The iodine-131, strontium-90, and cesium-137 released into the atmosphere from Chernobyl are the broken pieces of uranium atoms left over from the fission process. Even the extraordinary toxicity of plutonium can rightfully be attributed to uranium, since plutonium is created by the transmutation of uranium through the absorption of neutrons.

Canada, and Saskatchewan, is the world's largest producer and exporter of uranium, yet most Canadians are entirely unaware of our involvement with this deadly metal. If we do not come to grips with the Pandora's box of problems which it spawns, and soon, our children and grandchildren may find that we have left them with a burden too great for them to bear. □

Gordon Edwards is a founder of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility.

Shadows on the wall

by BOB REGNIER



Within the last year Saskatchewan residents have heard stories about the amalgamation and privatization of Eldorado Nuclear and Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation; the free trade agreement which will open and deregulate U.S. borders to Saskatchewan uranium; growing Japanese, Korean, and French investments in Saskatchewan uranium mines; and the opening of three new uranium mine projects.

All these projects call for public debate about the economic costs, environmental safety, concentration of corporate power, and links to nuclear weapons. But while anti-nuclear sentiment in the province remains strong, public opposition has been subdued. The current government's approach to uranium development and to public participation in that development has a lot to do with the silence on the nuclear front.

After the Warman uranium refinery hearings in 1980, both the NDP and Conservative provincial governments severely restricted nuclear-specific public forums. Public forums allow people to ask embarrassing questions and provide legitimacy to opposition strategies. The NDP provided public forums on uranium mining policy by holding the Bayda inquiry, Key Lake hearings, and Collins Bay hearings before they opened uranium mines. By limiting time and resources, funding pro-nuclear speakers, selecting the decision-making members of the inquiries, and defining frameworks, these forums were designed to ensure that the projects proceeded.

The provincial Conservative government has downgraded inquiries and hearings to "review pro-

cesses." These "review processes" give the public only 30 days to examine environmental impact studies (EIS's) as part of mine proposals and to submit written briefs to the Department of the Environment. All public forums encouraging public debate or participation have been eliminated. To investigate, question, and publicly debate uranium mining-related issues, anti-nuclear groups are forced to create their own public forums. Such forums require sustained organization.

Besides downgrading environmental assessment processes, the government has inundated the public with one EIS after another. Last summer the public was given 30 days to respond to the EIS for the two Eagle Point ore bodies on Wollaston Lake. In the fall of 1987 we were given another 30 days to respond to the EIS proposal for Cigar Lake. The government has just called for another EIS to approve the development of a test mine at Midwest. This strategy keeps anti-nuclear opposition overwhelmed with analysis.

Nuclear education

As government public forums are eliminated and limited, the nuclear industry works within established institutions, such as the education system, which are less directly open to public scrutiny. Consultants for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited have identified teaching aids and the training of teachers as the two most critical points for introducing information into schools. The nuclear industry is advised to approach the education system by developing credibility and co-operation with schools by recogniz-

ing established norms and relations to the communities.

SMDC had one of the few Saskatchewan representatives to the first Deliberative Conference on Science and the Curriculum which contributed to the highly touted and influential Science Council of Canada study on science and the curriculum. SMDC has participated in a provincial government science curriculum project (SEEDS), and has prepared and commissioned resources for use in schools. The Canadian Nuclear Association provides material for science classes. Atomic Energy of Canada Limited make presentations to classrooms and provides teachers with tours to mines, including uranium mines. SMDC facilitates meetings of science teachers with nuclear experts, provides summer employment opportunities for students, makes regular appearances at professional development conferences for teachers, and offers bursaries for students.

With its economic strength and with prospects of increased uranium sales to the U.S., the uranium industry is buoyed by encouraging prospects. An extensive federal and provincial infrastructure includes research at universities and at federal and provincial Crown corporations, and work in government departments and private companies to advance uranium industry interests. Furthermore, the industry insinuates itself into civil society by making donations to the arts and social institutions, by assuming roles in economic institutes like chambers of commerce, and by appearing at community and civic events.

Building a movement

Anti-nuclear work requires constant research and development to produce reasonable, grounded criticism, and it requires sustained organization to produce publications, build a base, and publicly present the issues. With government cutbacks throughout the province, those involved in anti-nuclear work have had to absorb increased work loads as well as defend their own positions. Time and resources used in anti-nuclear committees have had to be allocated to deal with other immediate and pressing issues. People have had to make shifts in their social justice commitments and organizations have had to adjust to economic stress.

Although media events may not indicate a continuing public reaction to nuclear initiatives, public opposition to uranium mining remains strong. This dissatisfaction is evident in the ease with which canvassers have been able to collect signatures on the nuclear weapons-free zone petition in Saskatoon (see page 25).

The fall peace conference at Fort San, discussion group in churches and communities, and the recent Oxfam-sponsored conference in Saskatoon on militarization are examples of on-going discussions. The Chernobyl accident has brought many people who did not question the nuclear industry to observe that "There is something wrong with all of this uranium business." National organizations such as Project Ploughshares have recognized that the export

AECL in the schools

Frank Finley, supervisor of Atomic Energy of Canada's public information centre, visited Saskatchewan schools in March to teach students about nuclear energy, which he described as "a gift of nature, one of the better gifts." Radiation is nothing, he said, because even your grandmother is radioactive, because of the radiocarbon in her. Asphalt, jellybeans and Kleenex are radioactive too!

And while on a school tour in New Brunswick, AECL representative Malcolm Harvey noted: "Chernobyl was a great tragedy, but compared to other tragedies it wasn't that bad. Everything possible went wrong and 32 people died. That's just a good bus crash." □

—Joan Havemann

of uranium is militarily strategic and they have called for a halt to its export for military purposes.

Research on links between Saskatchewan uranium mining and nuclear weapons production is just beginning to develop. It was only in 1985, for example, that the fact that Saskatchewan uranium sold between 1953 and 1966 was used in U.S. nuclear weapons was documented in Robert Buthwell's book *Eldorado*. Since then, the use of Saskatchewan uranium in U.S. nuclear weapons was confirmed in a CTV W-5 program. *Exporting Danger* by Ron Finch, *Roots of Peace* edited by Eric Shragge, *France: The Nuclear Renegade*, and *Working in the Fields of the Bomb* by Bob Del Tredici are examples of works which can provide anti-nuclear arguments with information not previously available.

The international uranium congress to be held June 16-21 promises to provide international criticism of the nuclear industry and will serve to bring together nuclear activists and theorists who can imaginatively challenge the nuclear industry. Preparation for this congress, including securing a full slate of impressive presenters, obtaining endorsements from an array of groups in the international community, and hosting the event reflects a high level of organization and preparation.

Strategically, anti-nuclear groups cannot be effective in the public arena if they become caught up in the syndrome of responding to industry initiatives. The result is too little too late. These groups must bide their time for pro-active strategic action rather than constant reaction. It may be that the anti-nuclear movement has had to reconsolidate and it is now prepared to re-enter the public sphere. □

Bob Regnier is a member of the Inter-Church Uranium Committee and teaches in the Department of Education at the University of Saskatchewan.

Congress contributes to global alliance

by JIM HARDING

The first-ever international gathering on phasing out uranium mining, to be held in Saskatoon June 16-21, will be a significant event in nurturing global ecological politics. Groups in Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, West Germany, and the United States are committed to send delegates. Some of these countries import uranium from Saskatchewan, which is now the largest single source of uranium in the world.

There has been an overwhelming response to the call for endorsements and resources for the congress. Over 120 groups from 20 countries have expressed support, including 50 Saskatchewan and 40 other Canadian organizations. Canadian endorsements have come from seven provinces and the Northwest Territories, and include native, labour, women's, student, environmental, development, church, and peace groups.

The congress has been organized on an open, participatory basis. This involved extensive contacts starting last fall with a broad range of groups, national and international, to see if there was support for the event.

Next came the call for papers, performances, endorsers, and support through the worldwide distribution of 9,000 brochures. Groups like World Information Services on Energy based in Amsterdam, the Environment Liaison Centre in Nairobi (with over 200 affiliates in 30 countries), and several West German environmental groups have been extremely helpful. A broad variety of Canadian groups, from the Canadian Environmental Network and Canadian Peace Alliance to the United Church have helped with cross-Canada distribution.

This process has helped create an updated worldwide list of 400 groups or individuals including some of the best resources on the dangers of uranium mining and nuclear energy and weapons.

Some of the better-known Canadians who have been directly contacted and put on the network are David Suzuki, Rosalie Bertell, Thomas Berger, Ursula Franklin, Farley Mowat, and Donna Smythe.

A special effort has been made to involve as many women as possible in the program. Over 50 people are committed as speakers, resources, or performers. Several of these are from northern Saskatchewan including Lil Sanderson from La Ronge (see page 16), George Smith from Pinehouse, and Adele Ratt from Prince Albert. Several people from the Northwest Territories, concerned about the proposed new uranium mine at Baker Lake, will be attending. Other speakers include Ontario investigative journalist Paul MacKay who has exposed Saskatchewan uranium's weapons connection; Ruth Klaassen of the B.C. United Church Uranium Working Unit; Peter Prebble, Maisie Shiell, and Bill Harding, long-time activists from Saskatchewan; Anne Wieser of the Concerned Citizens of Manitoba; John Willis of

GreenPeace; Norm Rubin of Energy Probe; and Gordon Edwards of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility (see page 19).

The list of presenters from abroad continues to grow and includes Miles Goldstick from Sweden, Lilo Wollny of the West German Parliamentary Greens, and Belgian senator Eric Gryp, who will speak on the international scandal linking West Germany, Belgium, and Pakistan in radioactive trafficking. There will be presentations on the false labelling of countries of origin of uranium shipments, on the uranium industry in Namibia, and more.

The program reflects the worldwide response to the call for participation; everyone who responded has been incorporated into the congress. The program will include everything from workshops, keynote speeches, presentations, performances, and other cultural events. It is hoped that out of this varied and open process will come a renewed, stronger, and better informed provincial, national, and international alliance. This could intensify and better co-ordinate activities to phase out uranium mining and create practical, sustainable alternatives which directly benefit northern native people and are sensitive to the lives of future generations.

A key session for this global networking will be the international forum June 20, where people from all countries participating will discuss how to co-ordinate their work to end uranium mining.

It may have been inevitable that personal and political differences were created during past, early work on uranium mining in Saskatchewan. Historical antagonisms between the north and south of Saskatchewan and of the globe; between labour and environmentalists; between genders; and between exporters and importers have all been at play, and were sometimes aggravated to try to weaken the growing global anti-nuclear movement.

In the last ten years our experience, analysis, and vision has deepened. There is a growing recognition that the work to end uranium mining is not a single issue, and that the alternatives to destructive economic growth and militarism lie in moving toward self-reliance through more community-based development. It is encouraging, therefore, that support for the congress has come about equally from energy, environment, peace, and development groups, all of which have something vital to contribute to the global alliance now forming. This alliance will not happen on its own, but requires local action to end the inappropriate and dangerous technologies that have grown throughout the world.

If we are willing and steadfast, a powerful new international initiative can come out of the congress to stop the nuclear energy and weapons industry at one of its main sources — northern Saskatchewan. □

Jim Harding is on the provincial organizing committee for the congress.

Nuclear weapons-free zone campaign:

Criminalizing uranium

by ADRIANE PAAVO

Saturday was a good day for Tom Eremondi. After spending a few hours down at the bus depot, he had collected 330 names on a petition to make Saskatoon a nuclear weapons-free zone.

Over forty volunteer canvassers are taking part in a campaign, organized by the Inter-Church Uranium Committee and Project Ploughshares, to put nuclear- and uranium mining-related issues to the voters during this fall's civic elections.

The campaigners need the names of 5 percent of Saskatoon's voters, or 6,500 names, on their petition to force city council to place the questions on the ballot for the October 26 election (see sidebar.)

Canvassers have also been going door-to-door in some areas of the city. "We've had between 50 and 75 percent sign-up," said Eremondi. "[The response] is very friendly too.

People are actually happy that the canvassers are there and are thanking them.

"They're concerned that Saskatchewan uranium ends up in nuclear weapons and that we play a large part in the nuclear arms race," Eremondi continued.

Saskatoon residents do not seem to be overly concerned about the environmental effects of uranium mining, so the nuclear weapons-free zone campaign is not dealing with environmental concerns.

"It's a Saskatoon campaign and it would be diluting the focus," Eremondi explained. "People aren't so concerned about what's happening up north. That's not to say that we're not concerned."

To date, the campaign has collected 6,200 signatures. Once the petitions are presented to city council at the end of June, Eremondi expects a lot of legal wrangling.

"We're expecting city council to

be against what we're doing because of the monetary ties the city has with the uranium companies," he said, pointing out that companies like Amok and Cogema have their headquarters in Saskatoon and employ Saskatoon residents. "Then there's just the basic belief that uranium brings profits to Saskatchewan."

If the nuclear weapons-free zone bylaws are put on the October 26 ballot and are endorsed by a majority of voters, city council will be forced to enact them. Campaign organizers are expecting the uranium industry to lobby hard to prevent a victory. "We're expecting them to launch an out-and-out ad campaign and to use their vast resources to try to counter the little we can do. I think they'll be using the jobs and profits argument wholeheartedly," Eremondi predicted. □

Nuclear weapons-free zone petition

The Inter-Church Uranium Committee and Project Ploughshares are asking the people of Saskatoon to sign a petition calling on city council to pass bylaws making the city a nuclear weapons-free zone.

The bylaw changes would:

- force the city to post signs on its outskirts informing people that it is a nuclear weapons-free zone.
- force the city to sell all its investments in corporations that research, test, design, or produce nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons components, or mine

and mill uranium.

- amend the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Bylaw to specifically include uranium and its derivatives.
- amend the Fire Prevention Bylaw to state, "No person, company, or corporate body shall manufacture, store, or transport nuclear weapons within the city."
- amend the Zoning and Development Bylaw to state, "No person, company, or corporate body shall use or occupy land and no development permit shall be issued for the

manufacture, distribution, or storage of nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons components.

"Furthermore, no person, company, or corporate body shall construct a nuclear power station or uranium refinery."

- inform the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan that Saskatoon has been declared a nuclear weapons-free zone and express the city's disapproval of cruise missile testing and of uranium mining and milling for other than medical and therapeutic purposes. □

Outgrowing Caldicott

by JOAN HAVEMANN

The standing ovation accorded Dr. Helen Caldicott following her speech in Regina April 9 recognized politely — almost with embarrassment — her past contribution to the anti-nuclear movement.

Some listeners wondered why this pediatrician-turned-media-star was specially imported from Australia by the Canadian Peace Alliance to tour in support of the Canadian Peace Pledge Campaign, especially at \$5,000 a performance. Still attempting to motivate people with fear and not addressing the basic questions, "What kind of world do we want?," Caldicott has been overtaken by the wider movement for peace and justice.

Caldicott's charisma captivated an audience of 1,200 here in 1984 but she had trouble remembering we were Canadian then and in 1988. And to the extent that she succeeded in terrifying people, she also dis-empowered them: she belaboured the message that we had less than a year to save the world, which was doomed if Reagan were re-elected.

Unaware of the "Saskatchewan connection" (uranium mining), she failed to mobilize opposition to it, merely exhorting her audience to use "your democracy," read her books, see "her" film (Terri Nash's "If You Love this Planet") and join "her" organization, WAND, in the United States.

Claiming personal credit for Pierre Trudeau's peace mission (and much else), Caldicott exaggerated Reagan's importance because of her own individualism. Her presentation was both comprehensive and superficial, displaying her grasp of an awful lot of facts and figures and her lack of analysis. That she called peace "a conservative issue" exemplified her single-issue focus.

The new, improved, 1988 Caldicott emphasized the dangers of nuclear power, focused on aspects of Canada's involvement in



Helen Caldicott

nuclear war preparation, and, sharing Australia's experience of being drawn into American first-strike plans, compared Australia with Canada.

But she is still bombing her audience with familiar statistics about the medical effects of nuclear war. She seems to believe we just need to get rid of nukes (admittedly not a modest goal) and ignored biological, chemical, and conventional weapons until challenged by a question from the floor.

Her liberal feminism (women, as 53 percent of the world's population should hold 53 percent of leadership positions and we need a female pope) and continued egotism (she claimed she would collect 15 million peace pledge signatures) work against collective and co-operative group process. Warning against infiltrators, she even asserted that "people you can't work with, or people who mess up arrangements" should be dumped, and stated that groups shouldn't try to reach decisions by consensus. While critical of "masculine thinking," Caldicott apparently has no problems with hierarchical structures and traditional decision-making methods.

Although she obliquely refers to

capitalism and patriarchy, she still has no analysis. She does not talk about building trust and making peace; she deals neither with racism nor with the role played by nuclear and conventional weapons in preserving dominion over sources of cheap raw materials, cheap labour, and markets for the developed world's goods. She overlooks the global arms trade and economic conversion, the peaceful conversion of industries to produce for human needs.

Learning from history

These may be shortcomings of the peace pledge campaign and its facilitators. One hopes that those signing the pledge (to "vote for candidates who will actively work for a new peace policy, which will end Canada's support for the arms race, make Canada a nuclear weapons-free zone, and make Canada an international voice for peace") do not believe that is all they can do for peace, that it is really a matter for politicians, or that a nuclear weapons-free Canada is in itself a sufficient interim goal.

New Zealand's nuclear weapons-free zone campaign bears examination as a cautionary tale: the peace movement was so focused on this single issue that it ignored the neo-conservative agenda of David Lange's Labour government, which has "out-Reaganned Reagan" in its restructuring of the economy.

Canada's peace pledge campaign resembles that of Australia's Nuclear Disarmament Party which ran candidates for the first time in the 1984 elections. Refusing to connect their pro-peace, anti-nuclear stand with other issues such as unemployment and health, candidates even declared they would abstain, once elected, from voting on all other issues.

Canadians should ask: Where would election victories for Liberals and pro-NATO New Democrats get us? □