

Progress

in

Power

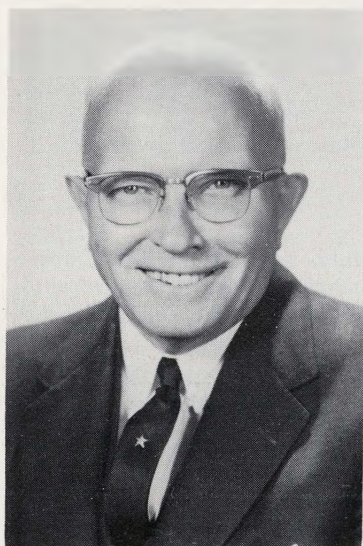
LINDSAY HYDRO-ELECTRIC COMMISSION



J. G. BALDWIN

Commissioner — 1938-1967

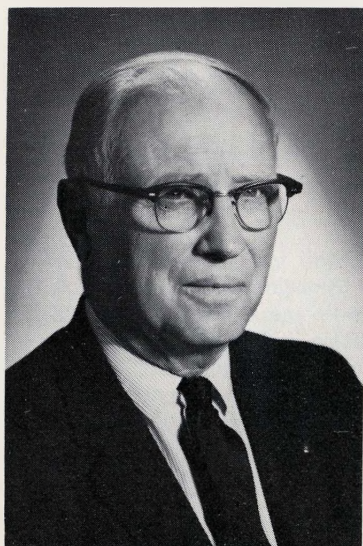
Chairman 1939, 1941, 1946, 1951, 1955, 1960, 1964. President Eastern Ontario Municipal Electric Association, 1956 and 1957.



L. A. WADDELL

Commissioner — 1949-1967

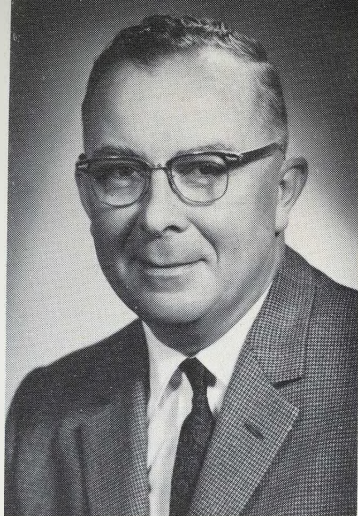
(Deceased October 3, 1967)
Chairman 1950, 1954, 1958, 1962, 1966.
President Eastern Ontario Municipal Electric Association, 1965.



H. H. BROWN

Commissioner — 1959-1967

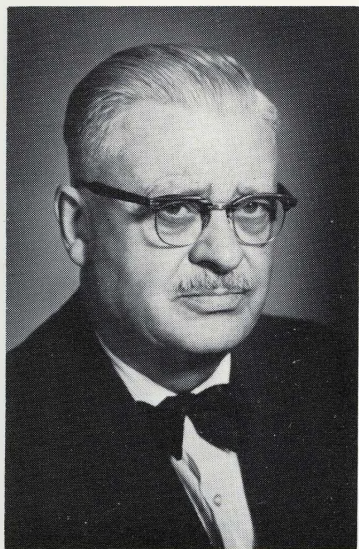
Chairman 1963 and 1967.



EARL KENNEDY
Commissioner — 1964-1967
Chairman 1965



JOHN F. EAKINS
Mayor — 1966-1967



J. LIGHTBODY, P.Eng.
Manager — 1945-1967

History of

LINDSAY HYDRO-ELECTRIC COMMISSION

Compiled by Boyd L. Graham, Ford W. Moynes and J. Lightbody, P.Eng.

Preserving the past and saluting the future, Lindsay Hydro-Electric System is observing Canada's Centennial Year in a handsomely renovated headquarters that has an intimate link with the community's social and economic history.

In general terms, Lindsay's electrical progress parallels closely the annals of development in many of the 350 or more municipalities that now hold partnership in Ontario's renowned, publicly-owned hydro enterprise.

Incorporation as a town in 1857 was a significant indication of Lindsay's emerging status as a lumbering centre and a railway terminus. But it was not until 1880 that civic pride created a demand for street lighting.

Victoria County Centennial History, published in 1921 by Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, a distinguished Canadian author and educationist, recalls that "citizens who walked abroad at night did so in imminent peril from mud, thugs and drunken drivers."

And so in November that year the town fathers, throwing financial prudence to the winds, purchased six coal-oil lamps and placed them all at strategic locations.

The cry for municipal improvement continued. Less than a year later, the Lindsay councillors, contracted with the newly-formed Gas Company of Lindsay to install 23 gas lamps along the principal streets. (It is worth noting here that the gas company had established its new plant in a one-storey red brick building at the southeast corner of William and Wellington Streets; and it is this same solid structure — now altered and modernized beyond its builders' dreams — that symbolizes Hydro in Lindsay).

Gas soon yielded its supremacy to electricity. In 1884, Lindsay citizens had their first exposure to this magical new force during a Barnum and Bailey circus. Details of the circus demonstration are understandably hazy, but one account of the display surmises that a steam engine operated a generator which activated a number of arc lights.

This incident apparently sparked the imagination of a prominent local citizen, Samuel George Parkin, who established a small steam generating plant at his lumber mill on the town's northern outskirts.

Growing public interest in electric power led B. F. Reesor, of Newmarket, to establish the Lindsay Electric Light Company in 1890. Armed with a municipal franchise for street lighting, Reesor built a steam generating plant at a local button factory. A rival organization, the Victoria Electric Light Co. Ltd. was immediately formed by Mr. Parkin and his brother, Alfred, who bought up the local Consumers' Gas Company, dismantled the gas manufacturing equipment and set up an electric power station.

Historical research by Dr. Kirkconnell prompted this observation in his county history: "Competition between the two electric light companies was keen, and both gave service at a loss — to the great benefit of the public but to their own embarrassment."

Financial aid for Mr. Reesor from two local citizens, Thomas Sadler and William Needler, soon enabled him to acquire the competing Parkin interests, resulting in the incorporation of the Light, Heat and Power Company of Lindsay, Ontario.

The new company moved to the present site of the Lindsay office, supplying power for carbon arc street lighting and arc lamps in the majority of the stores along Kent Street, Lindsay's main thoroughfare. Beams supporting the verandahs, which fronted most of these commercial premises, also carried wiring for the lighting services — an arrangement that presumably would have caused extreme and justifiable consternation among the modern-day electrical safety experts.

In the dying years of the 19th century interest in the advantages of developing hydro-electric power was spreading. Mr. Reesor was successful in securing power rights at Fenelon Falls, north of Lindsay, and in 1899 started the construction of a \$75,000 generating station and transmission line.

This pioneer installation — pre-dating by some seven years the establishment of the now world-renowned Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario — created an understandable stir in Canadian electrical circles.

Principal components were two Sampson turbines, a 400-kilowatt generator and an 11-foot flume. Three-phase electric power was developed at 500 volts, stepped up to 11,000 volts and delivered to Lindsay over a 15-mile wooden pole transmission line.

Inauguration of the little station on May 31, 1900, coincided with the British

Empire's official rejoicing over the surrender of Pretoria in South Africa — an important climax of the Boer War.

In an appropriately holiday mood, therefore, 150 dignitaries and local citizens stepped aboard the steamer, *Crandella*, for the trip to Fenelon Falls where the launching ceremonies concluded with a gala banquet.

Local approval of the operations of the Lindsay electric company was not necessarily unanimous. Rates for power customers, ranging from \$20 per horsepower per year for hydro-electric power and \$25 per horsepower for electricity from other sources, were termed exorbitant by town fathers.

Municipal encouragement was provided for the formation of two further gas ventures, both of which ended in financial disaster.

These events effectively silenced opposition to the Lindsay electrical enterprise which was absorbed by the Seymour Power Company in 1910. Six years later, Ontario Hydro acquired the Seymour assets. The provincial organization operated the local distribution facilities on behalf of the corporation until 1928 when Lindsay citizens approved formation of a municipally-owned system and completion of a "power-at-cost" contract with Ontario Hydro.

With the late Walter E. Reesor, a son of B. F. Reesor, as manager and secretary, the first commission assumed office in 1929. The new commissioners, including Mayor R. I. Moore, John McCrae, Frank Maunder, Keele Gregory and W. E. Baker were immediately confronted with one of the most critical periods in Canada's economic history — the Great Depression.

Lindsay, at that time had a population of approximately 7,300 and the infant electrical system was supplying some 2,200 customers.

Reflecting the financial crisis that gripped the entire North American Continent, Lindsay's population immediately began to drop causing decreases in electrical load, customers and revenue for Lindsay Hydro. Nevertheless by careful administration and stringent operational economies, it was possible to introduce lower electrical rates, almost immediately.

Under the privately-owned system, residential and commercial customers had paid 10 cents per kilowatt-hour for electrical service. In 1933, the average cost for all classes of customers was averaging 2.02 cents a kilowatt-hour. Progressive rate reductions have continued virtually without interruption since the inception of the municipally-owned Hydro system. By 1967, despite phenomenal postwar advances in labor, material and operating costs, Lindsay customers were paying an average of 1.01 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Cognizant of the dynamic importance of electric power in the business and social life of the community, many Lindsay citizens have rendered valued public service as Hydro Commissioners.

Their names and years of service follow: R. I. Moore, 3 years; John McCrae, 11; Frank Maunder, 9; Keele Gregory, 6; W. E. Baker, 7; Eric

Stewart, 1; Samuel Alcorn, 2; John Armstrong, 2; P. E. Pickering, 1; M. E. Dickerson, 1; C. G. Frost, 1; Dr. H. D. Logan, 2; Dr. L. V. Shier, 5; Alex Morgan, 2; A. T. Claxton, 8; E. N. Gregory, 4; Charles Lamb, 19; R. J. Morris, 6; K. B. Sylvester, 2; C. V. Sleep, 10; H. S. Johnston, 7; A. E. Hick, 4; Lloyd Burrows, 3; J. C. Holtom, 6; R. A. Cozens, 9; and A. J. Brennan, 4.

The 1967 commission comprises Mayor John F. Eakins, Chairman H. H. Brown; Vice-Chairman Earl Kennedy and Commissioners J. G. Baldwin and L. A. Waddell.

Three Lindsay commissioners, the late Charles Lamb and two members of the 1967 body, J. G. Baldwin and L. A. Waddell, have been honored by long-service presentations from the Ontario Municipal Electric Association. Mr. Baldwin, an honorary vice-president of the OMEA and a past president of the Eastern Ontario Municipal Electric Association, has an outstanding record of 29 years' unbroken service with the Lindsay commission. Mr. Waddell, another EOMEA past president, has served continuously as a Lindsay commissioner since 1949. Mr. Brown is now in his ninth consecutive year while Mr. Kennedy is serving his fourth year.

A well known professional engineer, John Lightbody, succeeded Mr. Reesor as manager-secretary in 1945 and has guided the local utility during its greatest period of growth.

A pioneer lumbering hamlet in its early stages, Lindsay has progressed steadily from a major agricultural and railway centre to a flourishing industrial community.

Its strategic location at the gateway to the Kawartha Lakes and Highlands of Haliburton tourist regions has also stimulated a wide range of commercial activity in the immediate and surrounding areas.

A pronounced quickening of Lindsay's economic pulse is reflected since the Second World War, in a rapid jump in population — from 7,700 in 1946 to some 12,000 in 1967. Customers served by Lindsay Hydro have increased from 2,700 to 4,350 in the same period.

Improved standards of living are also indicated by the record of electrical usage among Lindsay residential customers. Two decades ago, local householders used an average of only 179 kilowatt-hours per month. By 1967 their average electrical consumption had spiralled to 639 kilowatt-hours.

Continuous increases in electrical energy demands — from approximately 11 million kilowatt-hours in 1946 to more than 82 million in 1967 — have necessitated unprecedented system expansion and improvement programs in recent years.

A striking indication of the success of Lindsay's venture into public ownership lies in the fact that its yearly power bill from Ontario Hydro is currently five times the purchase price of the system. An investment of \$130,000 four decades ago has, moreover, advanced in value to \$1½ million.



Mrs. Ernie Blewett, Mrs. H. F. Lewis

—Photo courtesy Mr. J. E. Blewett
and Ontario Hydro News

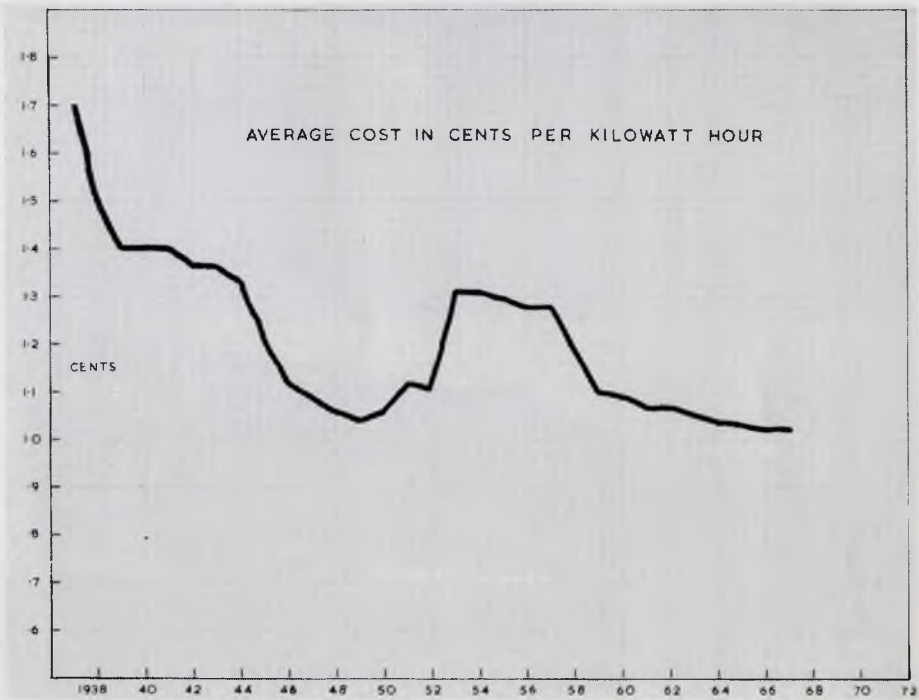
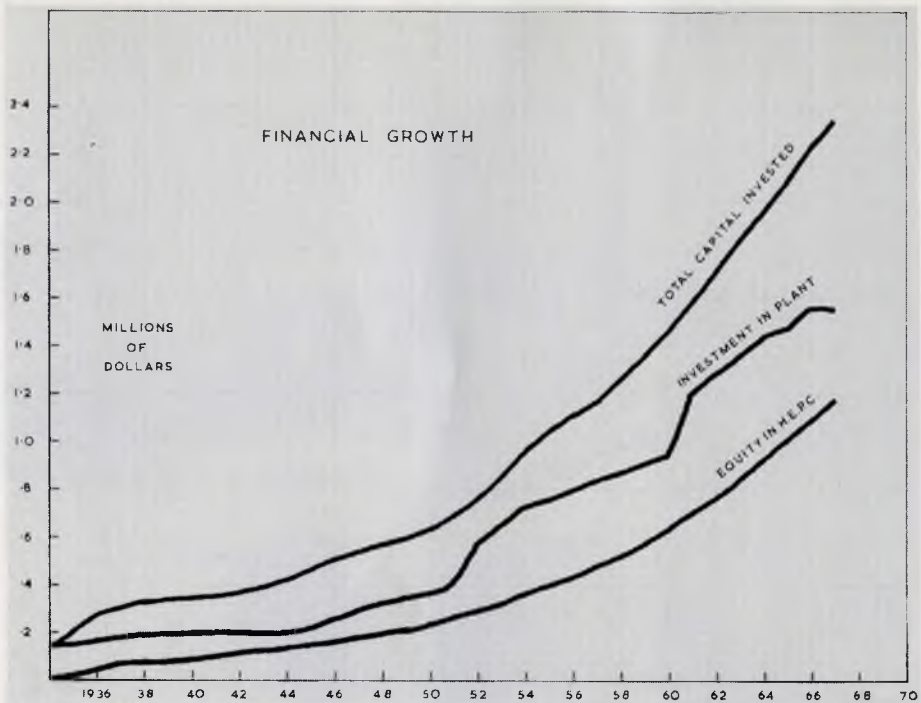
Light, Heat and Power Company office in 1911

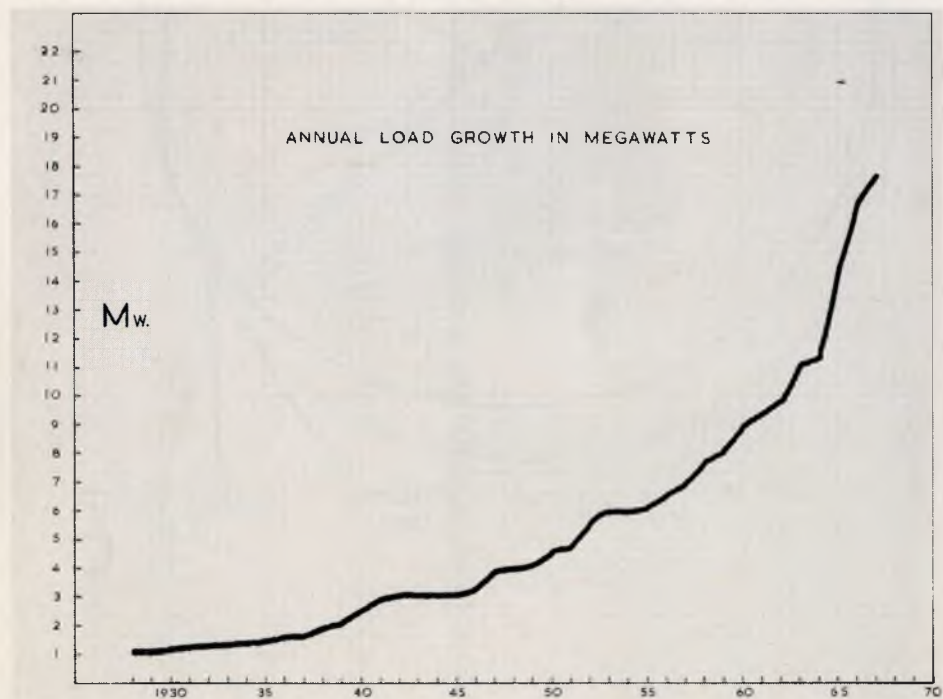
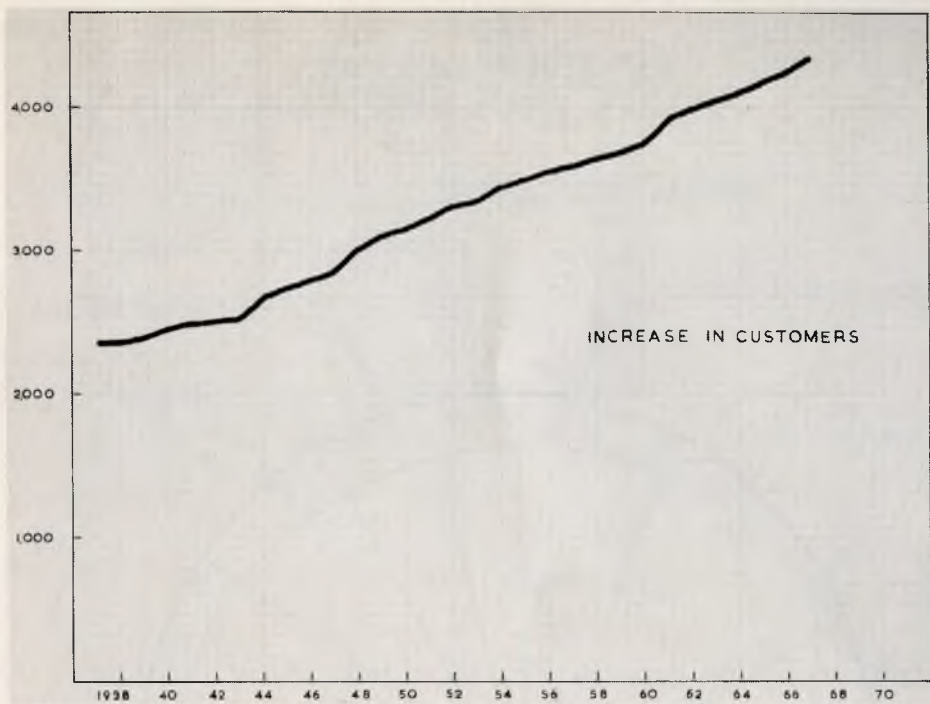


Commission's Office in 1967

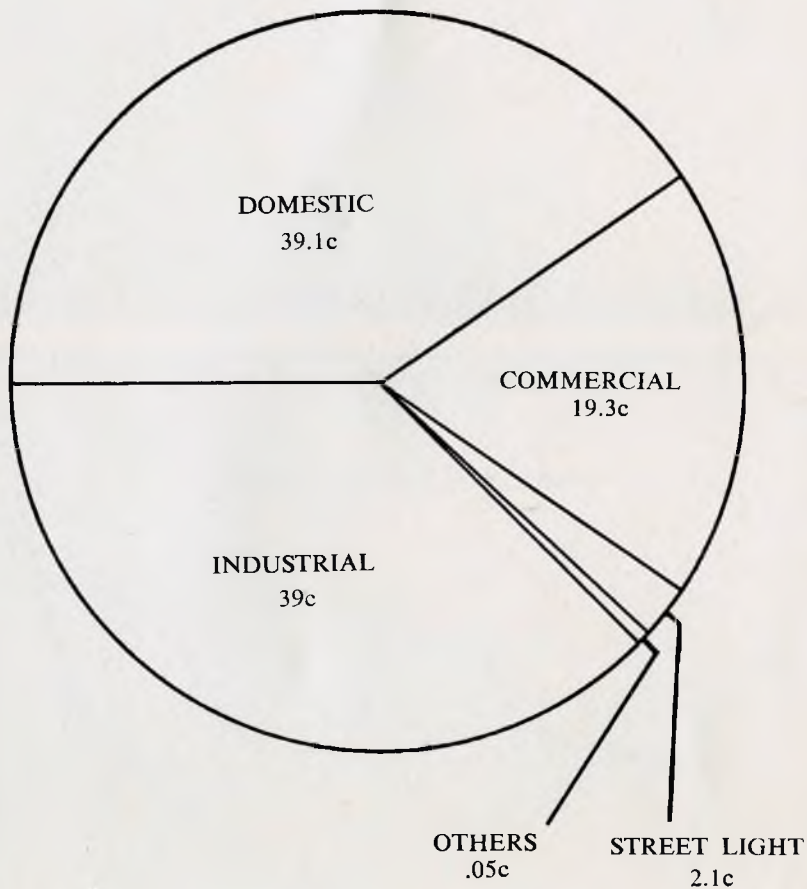
Commission's Office from 1928-1966



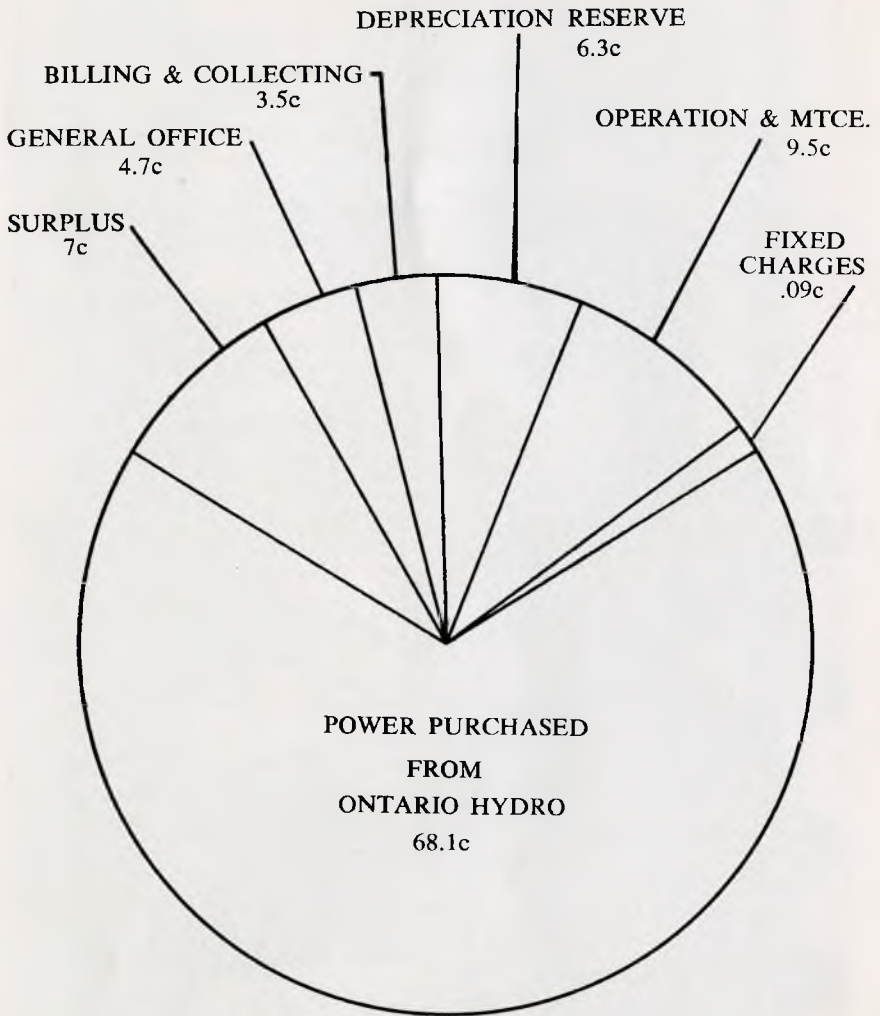


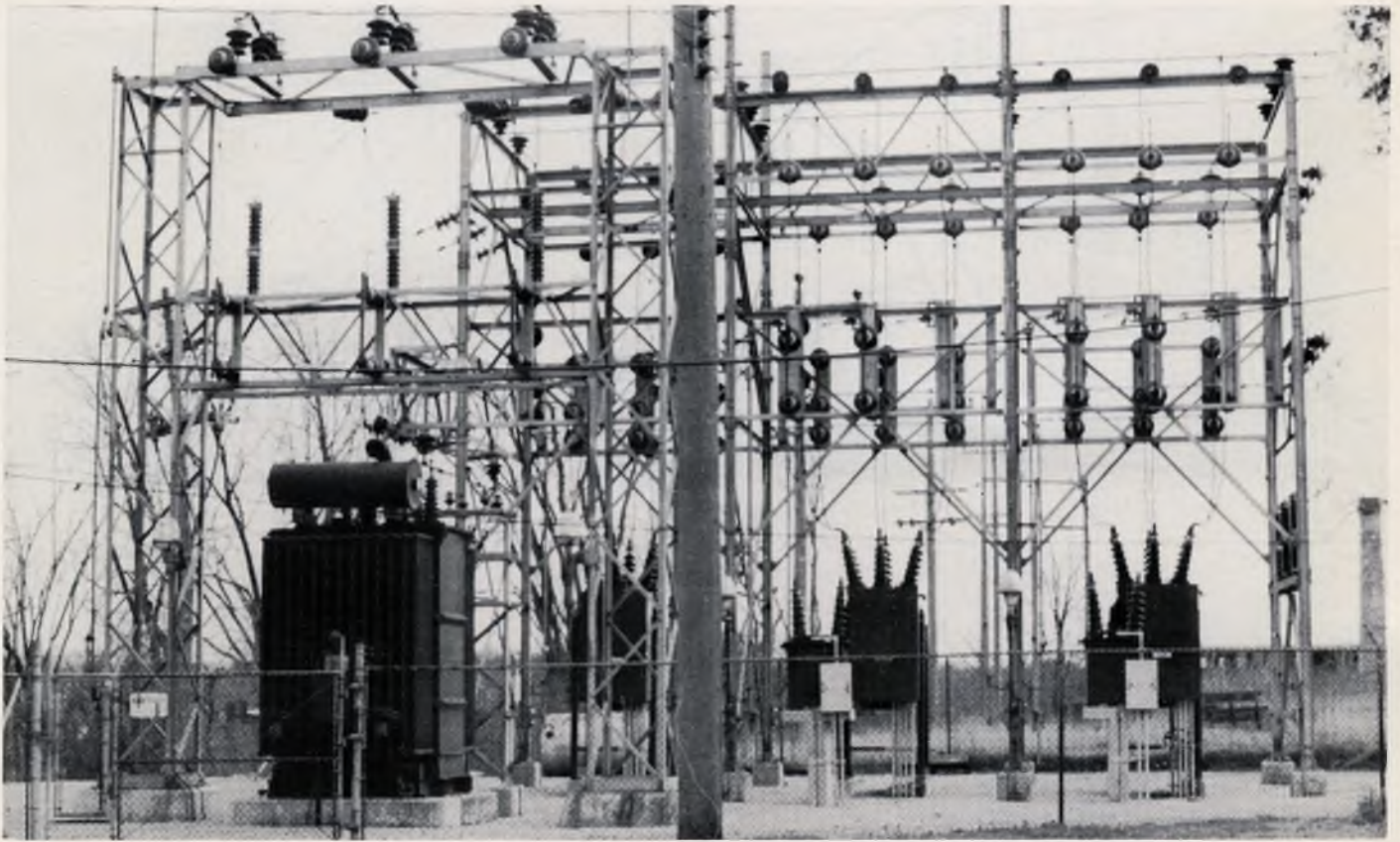


1967 REVENUE DOLLAR

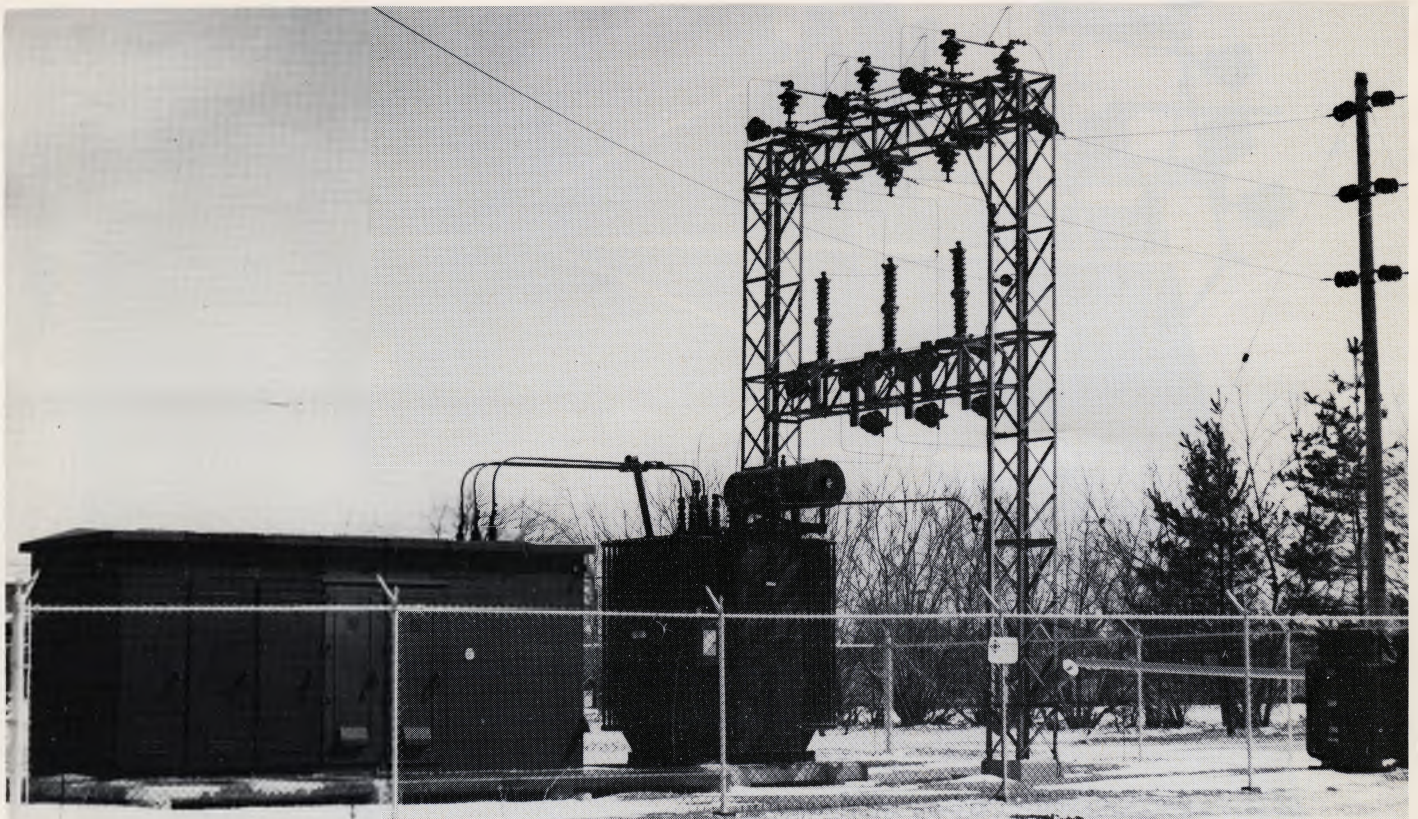


1967 EXPENDITURE DOLLAR

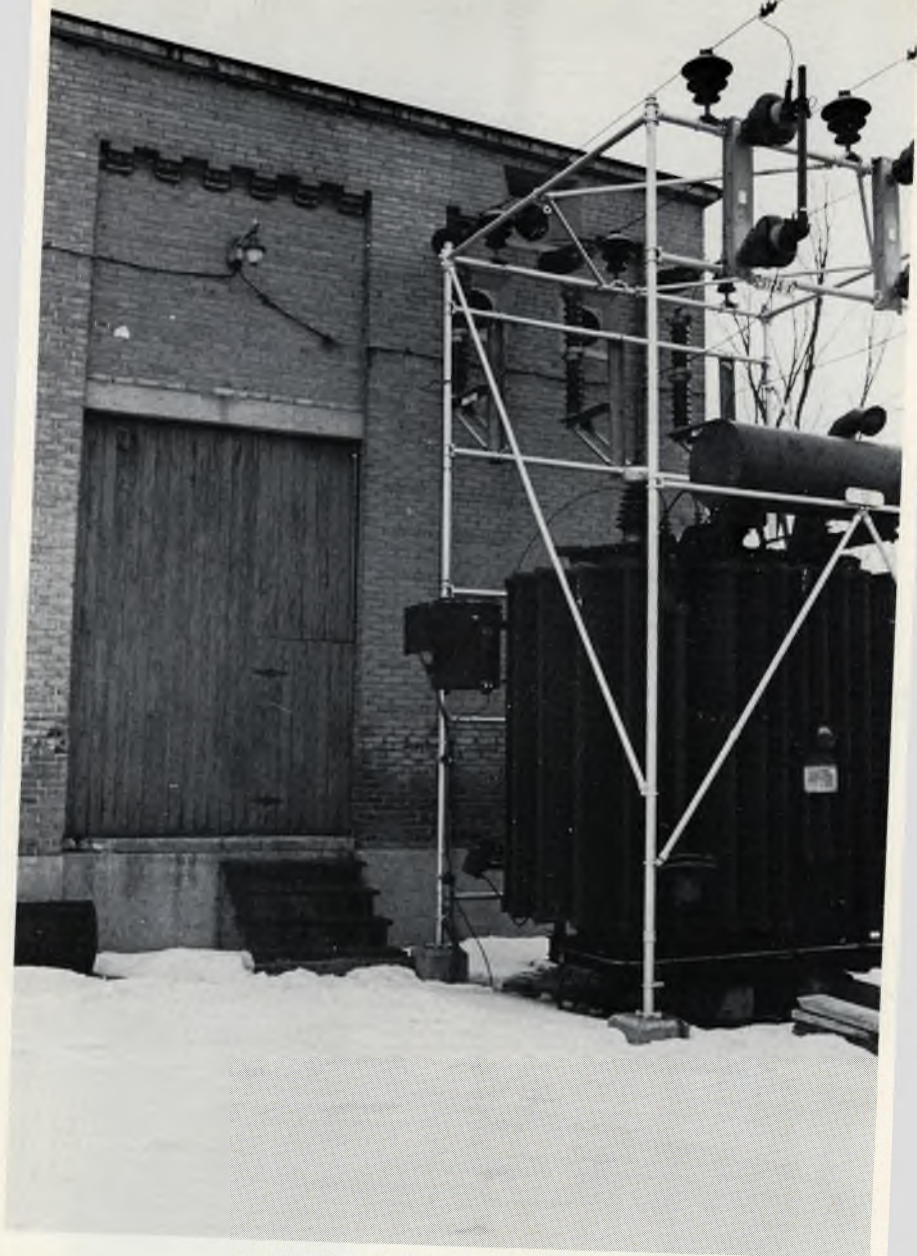




Distributing Station M.S. No. 1



Distributing Station M.S. No. 2



—Photo courtesy Ontario Hydro

Distributing Station M.S. No. 3

