



By ALF STONG
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We need to maintain a constant and reliable supply of energy for Ontario, while keeping costs as low as possible.

This may well necessitate reliance on nuclear-generated power for the short-term, but our major commitment must be to energy conservation and the development of our renewable energy sources.

In this way, we can minimize costs, create employment and provide safe options for solving our energy problems.

Greatly expanded research is necessary into renewable energy sources, such as solar space and water heating, wind, water and solar-generated electricity, and biomass production of methane from energy crops, wood shavings, garbage and other wastes.

Ontario could become a world leader in such research, at the same time initiating and sustaining renewable energy and conservation industries.

The latest renewable energy technology could be incorporated into any new buildings constructed by the province or built with provincial funds, such as schools and hospitals.

Solar energy equipment installed in houses could be exempted from property tax assessment.

Ontario Hydro has proposed a massive expansion program over the next few years, planning to spend \$25 billion by 1985 — two-thirds of this on nuclear projects.

Leaving aside for a moment all the arguments about whether nuclear generation is safe or not, what has to be realized is that this expansion program would commit us to an irreversible course and to enormous expense.

Since 1971, Ontario Hydro's Budget has tripled, and its long-term debt is up by 153 per cent over the same period. About 25 cents of every dollar on our electric bills goes toward paying off this debt load, incurred mainly to finance power plants and hydro corridors.

Presently planned corridors, which would go through some of Ontario's best farmland, have the potential to provide some 70,000 to 80,000 megawatts, whereas today's over-all needs for the entire province are only something like 12,000 megawatts.

There has been a great deal of public opposition to these planned Hydro corridors, which would take over many acres of prime agricultural land, and would facilitate the provision of an excessive amount of hydro-electric power to the Toronto and Golden Horseshoe areas, encouraging increased industrialization and intensifying the over-centralization of this region.

Recently, Liberal Leader Stuart Smith called for a public inquiry into soaring construction costs at Ontario Hydro's Bruce nuclear-generating plant.

The costs are already \$100 million over budget and increasing every month.

Ontario Hydro President Robert B. Taylor admitted that the figures quoted by Stuart Smith are correct.

At present, the first of the two Bruce heavy water plants is scheduled to go into operation in January, 1980, a year behind schedule; while the second is slated for completion in July, 1981, two years beyond the target date.

On the subject of nuclear-generated power, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has protested that "Nuclear power is synonymous with large-scale, centralized, heavily guarded, technology. Individual generating stations are so fantastically expensive that only the biggest of private corporations or government will be able to finance them."

Only the most advanced technocrats can operate these generators. Since the consequences of political sabotage of a nuclear station would be disastrous, tight security is always required."



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