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BRIEF TO THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Presented by :

Conservation Council of New Brunswick

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## ENERGY

Energy matters are at last receiving the level of priority which is necessary if we are to continue to meet the demands of society from the limited world resources of fuel of one kind and another. This having been recognized, there is still considerable confusion on the directions which will emerge from all the activity. It is necessary for this matter to be fully discussed in the public forum, and for the necessary steps to be taken to guide policy planning perhaps to the end of the century.

In this spirit we address our attention to the decision making process for energy and related matters in the Province of New Brunswick. Our concerns are : (1) with energy demand - whereas we can expect an increase in demand from increasing population, increasing per capita use, commercial developments and industrial growth, we must not be wasteful. An energy conservation policy should be kept before planners, architects and the public, (2) with energy supply from various sources - the right balance must be achieved among oil, coal, hydro, nuclear and tidal sources, all with their varying impacts on the environment, and with different advantages and disadvantages, (3) with the means by which the energy policies are arrived at and implemented. At the present time a single government agency carries out the forecasting, the planning, the plant construction, the plant operation and the sale of the energy so generated. This whole operation has such a vast impact on our way of life and on the environment, that we believe that the time has come to separate some of these responsibilities.

Recommendations:

- (1) - development of energy strategy to ensure adequate supply of electricity and other forms of energy in the province.
- (2) - energy conservation : more efficient design standards for heating and lighting, and elimination of waste of energy.

Nuclear power

The N.B.E.P.C. has a requirement for additional capacity by 1980 to the extent that it is considering generating 1,200 megawatts with a nuclear plant. New Brunswickers would be concerned with a proposal of this magnitude whatever the fuel, but a nuclear plant poses particular hazards which we are most concerned about.

Radiation emissions are uppermost in peoples minds. Harm or death to men and women and other living things are well known to the public, as is the fact that low levels of radiation over a long period of time threaten particularly insidious forms of sickness. What makes this even more worrisome is the continuing debate among experts from academia and the nuclear industry over what are safe levels with regard to exposure of people. This casts an ominous cloud over the whole subject and is not helped by the great exposure nuclear power has been receiving in the N.B. press recently indicating without reservation an overwhelming assurance of infallibility. All this from industry and government spokesmen intent on only one purpose - operating a nuclear plant in N.B. as soon as possible.

The processes involved in selecting the site and licensing the reactor have not been explained with the result that the public does not

know where it stands. What type of impact study will be carried out? Who is doing it? What type of public hearing will there be? Lack of knowledge and understanding of these subjects leads to considerable discontent.

Three areas are of particular concern:

- safety precautions used in the storage and transportation of spent fuels, and perhaps eventually their use.

- protection from major radiation leaks caused by accidents in-plant such as the loss of coolant as a result of human error, defective material or engineering, or caused by some deliberate act in this age of sabotage and desperate people.

- thermal pollution from the cooling water and its effect on the marine biology of the Maritimes.

Proponents of a nuclear power plant in New Brunswick, members of the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission, pursue their theme relentlessly. It is time the public was shown what the alternatives are - the alternatives obviously dismissed so hurriedly by the Power Commission.

#### Recommendation

We therefore request that the Government hold full and open public hearings on the environmental and economic implications of the proposed nuclear plant, these to be followed by a free and open vote in the legislature by, hopefully, informed, elected members of the House, before any firm decision is taken on a nuclear generating plant in New Brunswick.

LAND USE

Land is a very finite primary resource. The soil component of land especially in New Brunswick must be considered an unrenovable resource; therefore, every effort must be made to conserve the soil and make the best use of all our land for the common good. Land suitable for agriculture has special requirements; not only must it have special physical and chemical properties but it must also be geographically located in an area that has favorable climatic conditions for plant growth.

Due to the present world food shortages (for example, two months grain supply as of March 15, 1974,) and to the loss of 40,000 acres of arable land in Canada every year to urban development, most from the top 5% where the climate and soil are both conducive for agriculture, we must get over the myth of Canada having an inexhaustible supply of farm land and of being the bread basket of the world. We have in Canada between 140 and 160 million acres of arable land, (N.B. has 1% of this) about 25% of that contained in the United States but with a more severe climate. In many parts of the United States more than one crop can be grown per year but rarely in Canada. Canada is exporting 1.4 billion dollars worth of food per year and importing 1.1 billion dollars worth leaving a net export of 0.3 billion dollars.

The other sectors of natural resources have special requirements for land and these must be satisfied also. In New Brunswick we consider that, by and large, lands used for agriculture, forestry, recreation and wildlife are interchangeable in use if they have the proper soil, topography

and climatic parameters for that use. The use of land for urban development and infrastructures permanently removes them from these uses.

In planning the future land area required for various purposes some reserve must be put aside to take care of lands that wear out due to man's use and must be replaced. We are thinking here primarily of agricultural lands damaged by soil erosions and, as we live in an area of violent rain storms and run off, we cannot prevent soil loss even under the best management now known. Construction and development projects may cause large amounts of soil materials to be lost from the site (up to 1,000 tons/acre/day) which causes clogging of sewers, silts lower areas and places a heavy sediment load on the streams. Forestry also causes severe erosion and silting of streams but this will be discussed more fully in the sections on Forestry and Water.

The coal mining in the Minto coal field has posed a problem to conservationists for some time. With renewed activity in the open cast mining of coal stimulated by the "energy crisis" this problem will be intensified. We believe that this land should be rehabilitated at the time of mining (as it is now being operated by a Crown company whose responsibility is to the taxpayer). In the past the low price of coal was used as an excuse not to rehabilitate the mined area. Today this is no longer true. We are aware that a revegetation program and a put and take fishery is being carried on at the taxpayers expense and that the area may be of some use as a wild life area but more should be done.

In New Brunswick we have approximately 1.5 million acres of arable land or about 2 1/2 acres per capita. This is probably minimal for feeding our present population. Nevertheless, this land is being seriously eroded in a number of ways. We are losing considerable amounts of land due to the highway construction with urban development. This not only takes the land these occupy now but within a few years these no longer can serve the purpose for which they were built and must be relocated starting the cycle again. The mixing of farm and non-farm population can cause many problems as some farm practices cause annoyance to non-farm populations such as smells and noise. The non-farm population will also cause problems for the farmer in crop damage, etc.

We have seen some of the problems arising from our present policies. What must now be done to ensure that sufficient suitable land for the various requirements of future generations will be available. This is not that far in the future.

Before any serious long term land use planning can be done, these questions must be answered and the quality of life that our people desire ensured, to the extent that this is possible. We must start with the realization that land is not a renewable resource. Therefore, it must be held in trust for future generations and passed on to them in a state of quality and quantity that will satisfy their needs. All land must be put to the best sustained use, social not necessarily economic, for which it is suited and required.

We should recognized that each parcel of land has a limited carrying

capacity in terms of population and income, and work towards a population policy that will be realistic in terms of the productive ability of our land. What will be Canada and New Brunswick's role as a supplier of food and other products of our land to the rest of the world and what is our moral responsibility as citizens of a world community?

#### Recommendations

1. Both long and short term land use planning is essential. This should be done by a team of experts in the various fields of natural resources assisted by sociologists, economists, educators, demographers, municipal planners and transportation engineers.

This would assume that the land base would be allotted to the use to which it was most suited and ensure that the required amounts of such resources are provided for the future. That the infrastructure and municipal development would be so designed as to cause the least possible disruption of the most essential natural areas and be most aesthetically pleasing to the majority of the people.

2. Governments, at one or all levels, should supply all land for development, thus assuring orderly development, relatively cheap land especially for non-commercial use and that any profits would accrue to the people as a whole who are the true owners of all natural resources. All levels of government as well as the individual citizen must be involved. The roles as we see them now are :

Federal: Resource inventory; research policy on Canada's role as a renewable resource provider for the world; establish population policy for Canada in relation to national resources; financing; and the setting of



national policies with the appropriate supportive legislation.

Provincial: Provide provincial and regional plans; set regional and provincial goals; correlate interregional, regional and municipal and intramunicipal plans; legislate zoning and regulations, implement and enforce them; finance.

Municipal: Municipal plans; legislate; enforce.

Citizen: Life style desired; lobby legislation, implementation and enforcement.

3. Ownership is probably not as important to society as a whole as the use to which a particular parcel of land is put.

In retaining land for agriculture or other designated uses, at least three possible methods could be used:

- (1) The land remain in private ownership, zoned and allocated to the designated use and taxed accordingly.
- (2) Private ownership but with compensation where restrictions for usage remove capital gain and speculative income returns.
- (3) All designated land when put up for sale would be purchased by the Crown and rented to the user on a long term lease that could be inherited with safeguards written into the lease to prevent misuse and destruction of the land.
- (4) To control ribbon development we recommend that all main arteries and feeder roads be designated limited access except for those houses already there. All roads on new locations would be so designated unless built specifically for housing or industrial areas.
- (5) We recommend that agricultural areas be kept separate from housing or industrial areas due to the incompatibility mentioned above.

(6) We recommend that all land subject to strip mining should be brought to a condition that will permit it to be used for other commercial uses such as forestry or agriculture. A surcharge of 30 to 40 cents a ton would go a long way to rehabilitating these areas and making them of some economic use. This is no new concept as most other provinces and countries have such requirements. These areas may make good wild life areas in the future but our aim in this province should be multiple use.

#### FORESTRY

The C.C.N.B. is strongly in favor of stricter enforcement of rules and regulations governing the protection of streams during forest operations in New Brunswick. We draw especially to your attention the deplorable custom of timberjack operators to cross and drive through small streams an unnecessarily large number of times.

The construction of the new road running from Millville to the Napadogen road is an example of what is happening all over the province. A large number of prime trout and salmon streams are silted in and in many instances poor construction of bridges and culverts causes washouts every spring (Howard Brook, Middle Brook and very likely now Lakebrook, Manzer Brook and others).

We recommend that strict supervision be exercised in stream crossing and construction of hauling roads. The siltation of a great number of streams in one region will have disastrous effects on water quality and fish. We realize that clearcutting is an acceptable forestry practice but detrimental effects of clearcutting should be kept at a minimum. In its optimum

use clearcutting could be used to enhance esthetics (scenic views, varying heights of trees in landscape, tec.) and productivity of wildlife and fish.

We are, however, concerned by abuses of the system. We are concerned about the size of clearcuts allowed and the close proximity of these clearcuts, such that often separate clearcuts in reality form one huge one.

We recommend that clearcuts should not be larger than 100 acres, and preferably smaller; that they should be distributed in such a manner that they promote reforestation, and create favourable conditions for wildlife. Too many large clearcuts in any one region play havoc with natural revegetation, leave no shelter for wildlife, encourage run off and erosion, and spoil too many streams in one area thus preventing repopulation of these streams from unaffected ones in the neighbourhood by plants, insects, fish, etc. after the source of pollution has ceased.

The manner in which clearcutting is executed is a further cause of concern. If mechanization is pushed to extremes, such as tree harvesters and chippers, it may help pulp companies to keep down their labour costs. The consequences of such mechanization are many and often detrimental to our future forest and the benefit of present day forests to the people of New Brunswick.

Mechanization is only efficient if clearcuts are large. Mechanization further results in soil compaction, detrimentally affecting run off, erosion,

reestablishment of vegetation and stream conditions. It further affects the employment of New Brunswick woodworkers. Most of the large automated machines are produced elsewhere, and they replace New Brunswick workers. The wealth that the forests produce largely by passes the people of N.B. and goes to foreign owned companies.

The forest of N. B. should be used to create direct and indirect gainfull employment for the people of N. B. not for creating employment elsewhere.

The government of N. B. is to be commended for committing to trial a few measures designed to alleviate some of the problems. The change in land tenure system proposed for N. B. pulp companies and experimented with in the Nepisiquit water shed near Bathurst gives the government a tool to control this phase of the woods operations. Concomitant with this programme, however, an education programme should be set up to prepare small harvest contractors to gear up to fill in the gaps in harvest potential left by pulp and paper company woodlands divisions which will find it very difficult to harvest wood at a profit with other mechanized methods. A system of low interest loans to small harvest operators should also be implemented to allow them to take their place in the new scheme of things.

We want to stress the importance of proper land use planning and management on a province wide scale. What N. B. needs is a unified plan for cutting and other forest operations over the whole of N. B. Efforts, for example, to control the budworm by cutting overmature forests and other

measures are doomed to failure if only executed on a regional basis. The large mechanized methods of cutting presently used will not easily mesh with the new programme of designated cutting directed by government management foresters.

It seems imperative in this respect that rules and regulations regarding forestry operations should be made compulsory with suitable penalties provided for, on both Crown and privately owned land. It is more and more a general feeling of the public (and this should be encouraged) that ownership of land does not include a right to abuse this land but that the use of this land is only for one's lifetime with an obligation to turn it over in as good a state as it was obtained. It should thus become more and more acceptable that private land should fall under those regulations. Application of land use planning and management should include the application of ecological principles in any efforts of reforestation. We would like to caution in this regard against the planting of one species forests or forests composed mainly of exotics or ecological exotics. This practice which is encouraged by the preferences of some companies, creates dangers for impoverization of soil and creates conditions for easy propagation of insect pests, fungi, and other disease organisms. Specified cutting practices can and should be designed to arrive at a landscape of varied species and age distribution.

We recommend that the government encourages the study of all silvicultural methods to further all aspects of forestry including multiple use.

THE ATLANTIC SALMON

The Atlantic salmon may well be one of New Brunswick's most valuable natural resources. It provides hundreds of thousands of hours of enjoyment to resident and non-resident anglers; it provides a substantial addition to the incomes of many New Brunswickers involved in the operation of sport fishing camps; and, when restored to adequate numbers, can contribute significantly to the commercial fishing industry. Perhaps most importantly, Salmo Salar symbolizes all that is best about our environment. As a fish tolerant only of clean, free-flowing streams, the salmon's success will be indicative of the health of our waters and the land around them.

The Federal Minister of Fisheries and Environment has acknowledged the value of our salmon resource with a controversial and expensive ban on Atlantic Salmon fishing in New Brunswick estuaries, international negotiations on restrictions on salmon fishing, and funds committed to salmon propagation and research here in New Brunswick.

These actions are highly commendable and have in recent years resulted in an increase in the number of mature salmon returning to the rivers of New Brunswick to spawn. However, the future of the Atlantic salmon in our province is far from secure; despite the increase in the number of mature fish, the total number of fish has declined. Two areas in particular pose special concern for the provincial government, (1) environmental quality and (2) illegal fishing.

While New Brunswick is making significant strides in water quality protection legislation, implementation of these regulations continues to lag. Reports of industries polluting our streams continue as do reports of questionable and sometimes illegal lumbering practices such as cutting near streams and the operation of heavy equipment in streams.

1. It is therefore recommended:
  - 1.1. That water quality standards for all streams be established and that a system of monitoring these standards be implemented on a frequent and regular basis.
    - 1.1.1. That such supervision be conducted by trained fish and game wardens.
  - 1.2. That all possible pressures be invoked and the sanctions in the Clean Environment Act be implemented against any agent or agents contributing to an unacceptable level of water quality.
  - 1.3. That forestry practices such as streamside cutting and operation of heavy equipment in streams be closely supervised and any practices damaging to the water quality or the salmon or trout be halted.
  - 1.4. That no substantial alteration to a stream be made by either a public or private group without the explicit approval of a licensing body of the Department of Environment following a thorough investigation and that no major alterations to a salmon river be made until an impact study in conjunction with public hearings has been conducted.

Commercial fishing restrictions and the increased numbers of large salmon entering the rivers has, unfortunately, been accompanied by an apparent increase in poaching activities. Reports abound of salmon being

jigged, netted and dynamited and wardens being threatened and beaten. Apparently the demand created by the restrictions on commercial fisheries has been irresistible to many thoughtless and greedy people. Much poaching activity appears to be carried out, not by the individual seeking a meal or two for his family, as was the case in the past, but by well-equipped groups seeking large quantities of salmon for commercial sale.

At the same time, it is evident that the current protection measures are sadly inadequate. Wardens are poorly paid, poorly equipped and largely untrained. The job is hazardous and usually unrewarding; weapons are being used to threaten wardens with increasing frequency; fish and game wardens face not only physical danger, but often an unsympathetic community. When they are successful in making a conviction, penalties imposed are often minimal, representing far less than a poacher could earn in a single successful night. Finally, the apparent bureaucratic conflicts regarding the administrative responsibility for fish and game protection has resulted in poor supervision, low morale and the very likely possibility that the warden will find himself unemployed in the off-season. The consequence has been a high turnover rate on the warden staff which means that each year a high proportion of inexperienced men find themselves pitted against experienced, knowledgeable poachers.

Poaching is a serious business. It represents large-scale stealing of a valuable public resource. Hundreds of anglers are being deprived of a fine sporting opportunity, the successful operation of sporting camps is being threatened, and the federal and provincial governments' efforts at conserving the salmon are being thwarted.



2. To counteract this problem, the Conservation Council of New Brunswick recommends the following:
  - 2.1. That increased numbers of fish and game wardens be employed whose primary responsibility is the protection of New Brunswick's fish and wildlife resources.
    - 2.1.1. That such wardens be employed year-round on a full-time basis at salaries comparable to the RCMP.
    - 2.1.2. That said wardens be given police powers.
    - 2.1.3. That the wardens be given a well-planned training program with frequent in-service training opportunities.
    - 2.1.4. That wardens be supplied with adequate equipment and expenses to carry out their duties effectively and safely. This includes uniforms, transportation, communication equipment and weapons.
      - trained dogs could be of great assistance to wardens and should minimize the use of weapons.
  - 2.1. That the Justice Department exert more pressure upon the courts to assign more severe penalties to the poacher within the existing legislation.
  - 2.2. That action be taken to regulate the sale of Atlantic salmon, including the maintenance of records by sellers and buyers of quantities handled, price, and source of supply.
  - 2.3. That no out-of-province angler shall ship salmon from the province, but shall be permitted to take with him from the province a maximum of six fish.
  - 2.4. That licence fees for all anglers be re-established and that such fees be applied to the protection and improvement of angling in the province.
  - 3.0. That, whereas the salmon is a natural resource belonging to all the people of New Brunswick, the province should not permit the further sale lease, or renewal of private fishing rights on any body of water and should not permit the transfer by sale, gift, or inheritance of existing riparian rights, and should make every effort to purchase such rights whenever possible.  
Such purchases or compensation could be handled property by property over a long period of time to reduce the financial burden of the program.

G E N E R A L

There are several other matters that should be brought to your attention.

One is the change in ownership of Fraser Co. in Edmundston. This would be the appropriate time to have their mill cleaned up. The newspapers a few months ago published the figure of 7 million dollars net profit for the Company last year.

Recent floods, particularly those of last year, have drawn attention to the need for more information being made available in flood risk areas so that people do not unsuspectingly buy properties which may be flooded. There is also an increasing need to protect the flood plains from further unnecessary development, since continued construction not only increases the burden of flood damage claims on the taxpayer (most of whom avoid floodable areas) but also restricts the flood channel and thereby increases the severity of flooding. Development of farms on some of the Province's best farm land should not, of course, be discouraged.

Uncontrolled development is also occurring in many watersheds which are public water supply sources and also have recreational or residential value. The rapid increase of cottage development in a small watershed can have a very substantial effect on the water quality of the lake or river and will sooner or later reduce the recreational benefits obtained from the area. There is here again an urgent need for wise planning.

These and other concerns mentioned in this Brief such as sedimentation of brooks and alterations to streams are symptoms of the need for better management of our water resource. The water resource is vital to all life and activities in our environment and water management is a major part of environmental management. At present there are numerous agencies both Federal and Provincial with responsibilities in Water Management, and many of them may be involved in a single programme such as stream alterations. The Saint John River Basin Board Plan will be completed this summer and it is hoped that it will include detailed recommendations on improving the management of water in the Province and on resolving many of the overlapping responsibilities of different agencies. The Council hopes that the Government will give a high priority to reviewing the Board's recommendation and to implementing them as soon as possible. The Council feels that although the Board's programme has been beset with many of the common difficulties such a program encounters the two Governments should be commended for making a genuine attempt to determine the views of the public concerning the future they would like to have in the Basin. The Council hopes that the principle of public involvement will be extended to all major areas of planning.

There has been representation to the Premier and Mr. Stairs concerning the establishment of natural areas in the Province. These are areas set aside to maintain a natural plant and animal community for posterity. They may be used for scientific study or other uses which will not change the community in any way. We would hope that when legislation is introduced into the House you will support it.

It is proposed that the Province develop a broader parks program. At present the emphasis seems to be on small roadside picnic areas and on the large resource park. There is a whole range of possibilities between these, which could be developed to provide a diversified and more accessible system of parks for residents and visitors alike. One example is the wild river park concept, consisting of a stretch of river with a narrow strip of land on each side. This type of park does not require a lot of land and could be accomplished by zoning. Another example is a hiking trail system, utilizing historical or other routes of interest.

The Government in the form of the N. B. Liquor Control Board is one of the Province's foremost purveyors of glass in the Province. Many of these bottles seem to find their resting place along our highways and byways. We would like to see the Liquor Control Board initiate a program that would see all the bottles returned to the Liquor store. This might be accomplished by charging an amount such as 25 cents per bottle. The Liquor Control Board should be responsible for recycling all glass liquor containers. We are pleased with the Throne Speech announcement of New Procedures for Assessing the impact on the environment of development projects and the holding of public hearings. We hope this legislation will soon be enacted, proclaimed and put into effect.