

DROWNED:
ANISHINABEK ECONOMIES AND RESISTANCE TO HYDROELECTRIC
DEVELOPMENT IN THE WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, 1873-1975

BRITTANY LUBY

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ABSTRACT

In 1893 the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company planned the first hydroelectric generating station on the north shore of Lake of the Woods (near present-day Kenora, Ontario). Approximately fifty years later, federal officials seeking employment for Canadian veterans turned to Northwestern Ontario and its “underutilized” water resources, envisioning a manufacturing hub on the Precambrian Shield. Between 1950 and 1958, the Hydroelectric Power Commission of Ontario remodeled the Winnipeg River drainage basin to produce power for federally-sanctioned peacetime industries, namely pulp and paper production. To redesign the Winnipeg River drainage basin, however, hydro officials needed to encroach on Anishinabek lands: both federally-recognized reserves and unrecognized, but heavily occupied, ancestral territories. This dissertation tells the story of how Anishinabek families used a diverse array of strategies – adaptation, cooperation, and passive resistance – to manage environmental change caused by Whitedog Falls Generating Station.

Anishinabek families worked to stabilize their communities in an era of imposed environmental and economic change. Historians have long argued that hydroelectric development is necessarily at odds with Indigenous culture and subsistence economies. This dissertation provides a counter-narrative, arguing that cultural and economic damage, although linked to environmental damage, correlated more strongly with Anishinabek exclusion from resource negotiations. Moreover, this work complicates historical representations of a uniform Indigenous response to development. Given limited negotiations between the Hydro-Electric Power Commission and local First Nations, Anishinabek families did not respond to industrial incursions with one representative voice. The process of development itself, I argue, prevented a unified community response. As a result, Anishinabek communities fractured in response to hydroelectric development.

DEDICATION

To my ancestors who lived and died by the Winnipeg River –
Your stories flow through me and, without them, this work would not have been possible.

To the many children yet to be born along its banks –
May you sing of the future that your ancestors envisioned.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Drowned has followed me across the country and across continents. Without the encouragement of many loved ones – both friends and family – this story may have remained untold. To all of the people I cannot list here, I am grateful for your support. *Miigwech*.

In Toronto, I extend my thanks (an insufficient word) to Dr. Carolyn Podruchny and Dr. Colin Coates. I have had the honour and the privilege of knowing you both for almost ten years now. In all that time, you never lost faith in me – even when I lost faith in myself. Thank you for your unwavering support.

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Dr. Boyd Cothran, thank you for breathing fresh life into *Drowned* during its late stages. Your feedback stimulated new thoughts, new questions, and new conversations. For enlivening the process, *miigwech*.

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research, coursework, and administrative duty with laughter. No matter the load, it is a pleasure working with you. *Miigwech*.

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Lori Nelson and Lynn Riddell at the Lake of the Woods Museum, thank you for detailed responses to my innumerable questions, for digging up and recommending primary sources (both textual and material), and for providing me with a desk to work from. Over the years, you have gifted me with resources and friendship. At the Kenora Public Library, I would like to thank Lori Jackson for teaching me how to work a microfilm reader. Lori, *miigwech* for sharing your time and your skill with me. You treated each question, however small, like it mattered. This project is better for it.

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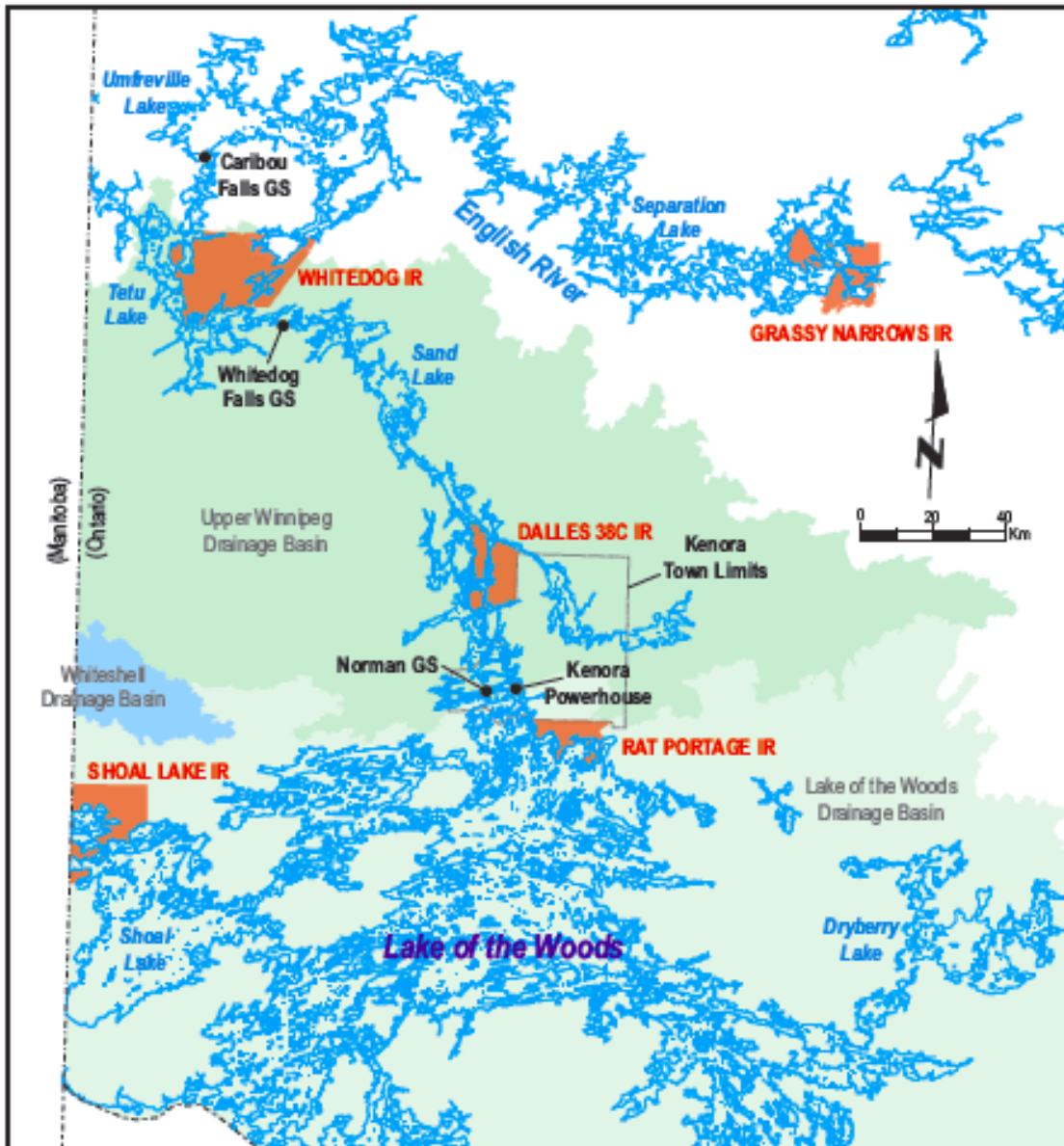


Figure 1: MAP OF THE UPPER WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN

This map depicts the Upper Winnipeg River drainage basin and features the three (3) primary dams – Kenora Powerhouse, Norman Dam, and Whitedog Falls Generating Station – featured in this dissertation. Dalles 38C, Grassy Narrows, Rat Portage, Shoal Lake #39 and Whitedog Indian Reserves – the five Anishinabek communities who contributed written resources and/or oral testimony to this project – have also been featured. My research focuses primarily on Anishinabek responses to hydroelectric development at Dalles 38C and Whitedog; however, communities interacted and strategized across federal boundaries. Kenora, the settler-colonist community discussed throughout this dissertation, is located in the region of the Kenora Powerhouse.

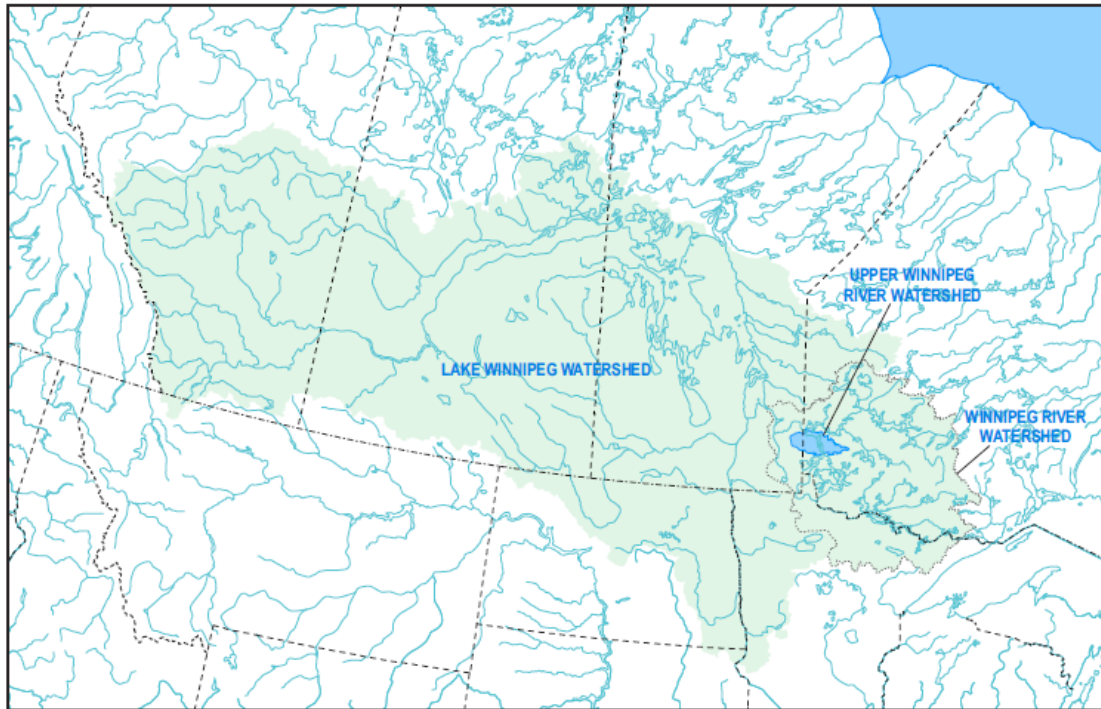


Figure 2: MAP OF THE UPPER WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN IN THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

This map locates the Upper Winnipeg River drainage basin in the larger Canadian context. The Upper Winnipeg River drainage basin crosses the Ontario/Manitoba border. This dissertation, however, focus on Anishinabek responses to environmental change east of the Manitoba border.

INTRODUCTION

"ENCHANTINGLY AND SUBLIMELY GRAND": THE UPPER WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, ITS PEOPLES, AND ITS ECONOMIES¹

When I close my eyes, I can still see the place of my birth: Lake of the Woods. This place is located about 180 kilometres east of the longitudinal centre of what is now known as Canada. It straddles three borders, laying claim to parts of Ontario, Manitoba, and Minnesota. If you examine the map, you will notice a town named "Kenora" at the north shore of Lake of the Woods. Kenora, my natal home, is known for its jagged, granite shoreline. It is known for islands of varying size, memorialized in verse as "jade-like gems."² "Jade" is a testament to the jack pine, birch, and poplar that somehow thrive on these rocky outcroppings. Kenora, however, is most famous for its waterways: Lake of the Woods drains into the Winnipeg River and flows northwards towards Lake Winnipeg, Nelson River and, eventually, Hudson Bay. Water is the lifeblood of Kenora's economy. It is by water that my ancestors, the Anishinabek, inhabited this place.³

¹ A Canadian poet once mused that "[t]here is not in the whole of this great Western land a scene [as] enchantingly and sublimely grand as Lake of the Woods" in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. See: Robert Nairn, "Lake of the Woods," *Poems and Addresses* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), 7-8.

² Evelyn Gunne, "The Lake of the Woods," *The Silver Trail* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, The Gorham Press, 1906), 36.

³ A note on terminology: Anishinabek (formerly known as Ojibwa) is used to identify the distinct socio-cultural and political group of Treaty #3 First Nations under study. "Indigenous" and "First Nations" are used interchangeably to maintain flow and to avoid repetition. Collectively, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples constitute the Indigenous peoples of what is now known as Canada. As a term, "First Nations" tends to exclude persons of Inuit descent. I have adopted "Indigenous" as the preferred collective term, as it acknowledges that the Anishinabek (and other Indigenous peoples) originate from and belong to their distinctive territories. "Indian" is still a legal term in Canada and is therefore used in reference to legal documents. I recognize that the term has problematic racist connotations.

"Euro-Canadian" is commonly used as an identifier for "White people." However, I do not believe that this term accurately reflects Anishinabek perceptions of non-Indigenous newcomers. "Euro-Canadian" normalizes Canada as the nation state. It suggests that "Euro-Canadians" are inhabitants of a legitimate sovereign territory (Canada) and descended from European immigrants. Anishinabek living in Treaty #3 did not recognize (and continue to challenge) Canada's claim to land in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Much like Canada reduced the Anishinabek Nation to "Indians," the Anishinabek did not recognize traders, government officials, or settler-colonists as "Canadians." They similarly rejected non-Indigenous claims of sovereignty by using language to identify White political outsiders (the *waiâbishkiwedig*). In recognition of

Controversy dominates the story of our origins. Place names suggest that we, the Anishinabek, originated here – or at least 70 kilometres to the northwest at *Manitou Ahbee* (“Where the Creator Sits”). It is likely that *Gitchie Manitou* (The Great Creator) first envisioned man there.⁴ First Man, travelling, perhaps by foot, made his way to Lake of the Woods where he would learn to fish, to trap, and to harvest *manomin* (wild rice). Archaeological evidence suggests that Indigenous peoples occupied Lake of the Woods since approximately 8,500-7,000 BCE.⁵ Archaeologist Paddy Reid claims that the antecedents to the Lake of the Woods Anishinabek followed the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier.⁶ Competing oral accounts suggest that members of the Anishinabek Nation migrated to northwestern Ontario from “somewhere along the shores of the Great Salt Water [Atlantic Ocean] in the East” around 800 ACE.⁷ Edward Benton-Banai, an Anishinabek cultural educator from Wisconsin, suggests that my ancestors moved in

the Winnipeg River drainage basin as an Anishinabek homeland, I have identified newcomers to Anishinabek territory accordingly: the *waiâbishkiwedig*.

⁴ Courtney Milne claims that “Original Man was lowered by rope from the sky to become the first inhabitant of Turtle Island” at *Manito Ahbee*. She further suggests that First Man received sacred teachings at this site to “guide the [Anishinabek] in caring for the earth” (Courtney Milne, *Spirit of the Land: Sacred Places in Native North America* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1994), 22). Edward Benton-Banai does not identify *Manito Ahbee* as an origin site. He suggests that *Gitchie Manitou* used the earth to create First Man. Upon completion, *Gitchie Manitou* lowered First Man to the earth at an unidentified site. Benton-Banai suggests that our origins are revealed by our name, *Anishinaabe*. *Ani* means “whence.” *Nishina* means “lowered” and *abe* refers to “the male of the species.” Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press with Indian Country Communications Inc., 1988), 3.

⁵ Local literature suggests that “People have occupied the Lake of the Woods since about 8,500 BC[E]” (Lake of the Woods Museum and Aulneau Adventure Tours, *The Explorers’ Guide to Lake of the Woods* (Kenora: Lake of the Woods Museum, 2000), 20). Archaeologist Paddy Reid claims that, “The oldest recorded site around Kenora is on Tunnel Island and dates back 7000 years.” He found evidence of Paleo-Indian activity around Rainy River, southeast of Kenora, dating back to 8,000BCE. For further information, see Rick Vandervliet, “Paddy Reid and Archaeology in Kenora and NW Ontario,” *Lake of the Woods Vacation Area*, accessed 1 September 2015, <http://lakeofthewoods.com/stories-from-the-lake/paddy-reid-archaeology-in-kenora-nw-ontario/>.

⁶ Vandervliet, “Paddy Reid and Archaeology in Kenora and NW Ontario.”

⁷ Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book*, 94.

search of *manomin*.⁸ *Manomin* is a complex carbohydrate that flourished locally before the post-1945 infrastructure boom. However my ancestors arrived – whether by divine intervention, by foot as the glaciers retreated, or by canoe in search of aquatic plants – what is certain is that Lake of the Woods and its outflow channels provided sustenance. Each of these otherwise conflicting origin stories reveals that the Anishinabek lived by and relied on the water. By the 1820s, my ancestors – associated with what is now known as Dalles 38C Indian Reserve – occupied a territory that extended roughly from Rough Rock Lake (near present-day Minaki, Ontario) in the north and Muskeg Bay (near present-day Warroad, Minnesota) in the south. My dissertation explores the effects of hydroelectric development along this stretch of the Winnipeg River drainage basin: an Anishinabek territory, a homeland, whose boundaries traverse Euro-North American conceptions of space (Canada/United States, Ontario/Manitoba).

Amateur historian Duane R. Lund, who composed one of the few histories of Lake of the Woods specifically, identified the natural resources that attracted my forebears to this territory. Lund writes that Lake of the Woods “with its thousands of miles of irregular shoreline, provides ideal spawning ground for the propagation of all sorts of fish.”⁹ For generations, these fish nourished my family. For example, I was always told stories about Kawitaskung (1820-1914), who netted *adikameg* (whitefish) in the fall, consumed *ogaa* (walleye) during the cold of winter, and ate *ginoozhe* (northern

⁸ Ibid., 100. The Kenora Centennial Committee also argues that the Anishinabek migrated to Lake of the Woods, but unlike Benton-Banai, the Kenora Centennial Committee does not date this migration. The Committee suggests that the Anishinabek moved to Lake of the Woods “as the white man displaced the Indians in the East.” The Committee further argues that the Anishinabek displaced other Indigenous groups, becoming the primary occupants of Lake of the Woods by 1800. For further information, see Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway* (Kenora: Bilko Press, 1981), 9, 55.

⁹ Duane R. Lund, *Lake of the Woods Yesterday and Today* (Staples, MN: Nordell Graphic Communications, 1975), 9.

pike) during the spring – *ginoozhe* tastes best when the water is cold and its flesh is firm.

During the summer, trader accounts suggest that Kawitaskung may have feasted on *name* (sturgeon).¹⁰ His wife, Jane Lindsay (birthdate unknown-1916), taught Ogimaamaashiik (my paternal great-great-grandmother, 1885-1974) how to prepare these fish.

Ogimaamaashiik roasted egg sacs like sausages and simmered whitefish bouillon. Times changed, but fish remained an essential component of our family diet. By the time of my father's birth (1958), fishing provided Anishinabek families with opportunities to work for pay. Dad, Allan Luby (Ogemah), led American tourists to prime fishing locations on the Winnipeg River in exchange for spending money. He would later, wearing goggles, plumb the depths of the river, searching for lost fishing tackle to incorporate into his own collection, while continuing to fish for home consumption. Despite having provided sustenance for generations of Anishinabek occupants, physicians working in-and-around Kenora recommended that Anishinabek families not consume fish caught on the Winnipeg River years before my birth (1984).¹¹ Hydroelectric development on Lake of

¹⁰ Written evidence of large-scale fishing by the Anishinabek in the region west of Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg – a region that includes Lake of the Woods – extends back to 1660 when trader Pierre-Esprit Radisson claimed to see over 1000 sturgeon being dried on the south shore of Lake Superior (Tim Holzkamm and Leo Waisberg, "Native American Utilization of Sturgeon," *Sturgeons and Paddlefish of North America*, eds. William Beamish, Greg LeBreton, and Scott McKinley (New York: Springer US, 2004), 29-30). Sturgeon formed part of the local diet at what is now Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, as evinced in Major Stephen H. Long's published account. Reflecting on his traverse of the Dalles Rapids, Long wrote, "While we were resting on one of the islands, an Indian came up in his canoe with his family and supplied us with fresh sturgeon and with dried huckleberries" (*Narrative of an expedition to the source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, &c., &c* (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1824), 106). Sturgeon was eaten fresh, but also made into a product like bison pemmican "consisting of a special blend of sturgeon oil and dried and pounded sturgeon meat packed into sturgeon skin bags," making it a valuable resource throughout the year (Holzkamm and Waisberg, "Native American Utilization of Sturgeon," 28).

¹¹ As early as May 1973, Dr. A. Bernstein informed Anishinabek women that "mercury [in fish] will cause improper growth" in developing fetuses. He advised pregnant mothers to moderate fish consumption and to undergo a physical examination at Winnipeg General Hospital to determine their level of risk. "Mercury Pollution Endangers Unborn Babies," *Treaty #3 Council Fire* 2, 5 (May 1973): 3.

the Woods and the Winnipeg River that occurred between 1898 and 1958 contributed to the increased mercury content of family meals.

Anishinabek families relied on more than fish. Lund identified other incentives to settle near Lake of the Woods. He noted that, “[s]heltered bays yielded thousands of acres of wild rice [*manomin*].”¹² According to cultural educator Edward Benton-Banai, *manomin* is a “sacred gift” from the Creator to the Anishinabek. Anishinabek families defined their territorial boundaries, in part, by *manomin* growth. Where there was *manomin*, there were Anishinabek to harvest it.¹³ This was true for many generations. Ogimaamaashiik believed that *manomin* provided her people with sufficient energy to carry out their day-to-day activities. *Manomin* fuelled trappers – like her grandfather Kawitaskung – as they trapped for food and furs. Ogimaamaashiik taught her daughter, Hazel Martin-McKeever (b. 1927), that *manomin* was the most effective cure for constipation. Martin-McKeever knew to “put the wild rice, herbs, and lots of water in the big kettle and let it boil and simmer for a long time.” Martin-McKeever knew to strain the mixture and drink the remaining fluid. Experience revealed that water beget water.¹⁴ Family records of what we ate and how we healed reveal that Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River were at the heart of Anishinabek household economies. Unfortunately, during my father’s growing-up years, *manomin* cropping on the Winnipeg River collapsed. The Norman Dam and Whitedog Falls Generating Station caused major water fluctuations that drowned hectare upon hectare of *manomin*. Today, I purchase *manomin*

¹² Lund, *Lake of the Woods Yesterday and Today*, 9.

¹³ Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book*, 100-01.

¹⁴ Hazel Martin-McKeever, *The Chief’s Granddaughter* (Charleston, SC: n.p., 2013), 23.

in small quantities from the grocery store. And, I know that “Shoal Lake Wild Rice,” packaged on Lake of the Woods, includes grains imported from distant lakes.¹⁵

The collapse of Anishinabek household economies is also a story of industrialization in Ontario. The natural resources in the Winnipeg River drainage basin drew others. The waterways, the highways of my ancestors, were “sheltered by high bluffs and tall forests.”¹⁶ The *waiâbishkiwedig* (White people) moved inland along the waterways. And, given that many of these waterways were protected, travel inland was relatively easy. Trappers and the fur traders came first. Shortly after Kawitaskung was born (1820), the Hudson’s Bay Company established a post on Old Fort Island on the Winnipeg River.¹⁷ But, neither party competed for water access – there was more than enough water to share. Gold miners and loggers followed. Unlike the trappers and the traders, miners drew water from Lake of the Woods for industrial use. The sharing of water resources between invaders and Anishinabek riverine users was soon to change.¹⁸

¹⁵ Journalist Elsie Neufeld reported that Shoal Lake Wild Rice buys grains “from as far east as Marathon and as far west as the Saskatchewan/Alberta border to assure a stable supply.” Neufeld quoted Ben Ratuski, owner-manager of Shoal Lake Wild Rice Ltd.: “We wouldn’t have a supply if we relied on this area.” Neufeld, “Another Wild Rice Season Draws to a Close,” *Saturday Miner and News* (28 October 2000), 10.

¹⁶ Lund, *Lake of the Woods Yesterday and Today*, 10.

¹⁷ *Through the Kenora Gateway* claims that “[t]he first business establishment in the area that is now Kenora was the Hudson’s Bay Company post on Old Fort Island in 1836.” In 1861, the Hudson’s Bay Company relocated from Tunnel Island to Rat Portage (now Kenora) proper. The Kenora Centennial Committee locates the 1861 site at the northeast corner of present-day First Street South and Main (43). See also Lake of the Woods Museum and Aulneau Adventure Tours, *The Explorers’ Guide to Lake of the Woods*, 21.

¹⁸ According to *The Explorers’ Guide to Lake of the Woods* conflict surrounded the discovery of gold (and subsequent rise of the mining industry) on Lake of the Woods: “Some report that in 1872, during a preliminary survey of the Canadian Pacific Railway, workers found gold-bearing quartz in the Northwest Angle area. Others credit Frank Moore with the first discovery in 1873 at Yellow Girl, again while a survey party was running test lines westward for the railway” (22). Author John Kelly of the Treaty #3 District posits that resource sharing decreased sharply in the 1870s. To explain the inequitable division of resources, Kelly employs an analogy of a White Man and an Indian sitting on a log. The story begins when a White Man requests “a little place on the log so that he might rest from his awful journey.” Kelly proceeds “The Indian willingly shared a piece of his log with the white man. But the white man felt like stretching himself and asked for a little more room. The Indian let him have a little more of his log.” The Indian continued to share his resources “[l]ike a decent host.” As their relationship developed, “the Indian

In 1879, John Mather opened up the Keewatin Lumbering and Manufacturing Company, establishing the first sawmill on the north shore of Lake of the Woods. By 1890 seven large sawmills operated near Kenora.¹⁹ Lumbering became the primary industry for settler-colonists on Lake of the Woods. And, to fuel this industry, lumber barons like Mather turned to water power. Between 1893 and 1895, the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company installed the Norman Dam on the Western Outlet of Lake of the Woods. According to some estimates, Norman Dam raised the levels of Lake of the Woods by 0.9 to 1.8 metres.²⁰ When Mather dammed the Western Outlet, he blocked an artery in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Circulatory flow changed. And, when flow changed, Anishinabek labour practices and household economies – based on and around Lake of the Woods and Winnipeg River – also changed.

The effect of early hydroelectric development on Indigenous communities in what is now known as Canada is understudied.²¹ It is difficult to reconstruct the history of

[became] cold and hungry and barely holding on to the end of the log.” The White Man, by contrast, took control over their shared resources. By the 1870s, the White Man had pushed the Indian off the log, suggesting “that the Indian could sit on a stump further in the bush.” John Kelly, “We Are All in the Ojibway Circle,” *From Ink Lake: Canadian Stories*, edited by Michael Ondaatje (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990), 579-80.

¹⁹ Lake of the Woods Museum and Aulneau Adventure Tours, *The Explorers’ Guide*, 23.

²⁰ Lund, *Lake of the Woods Yesterday and Today*, 95. *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 61, suggests that the Keewatin Lumbering and Manufacturing Company never constructed a powerhouse. Instead of using Norman Dam to generate electricity, Ontario used this property to control water levels on Lake of the Woods.

²¹ In *Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987), Michael Bliss associates the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in the 1880s with the rise of capitalism in Canada. He nodded to hydroelectric development during this early period, noting that Herbert Holt used his business acumen (developed with the CPR) to work with local gas and electric companies in later years. Similarly, Holt’s associate William Mackenzie “became interested in the street railway situation in Toronto and put together a syndicate to get the franchise to electrify the system” (325). Bliss also noted the formation of the Electric Development Company at Niagara Falls in 1903. This company harnessed the power of Niagara Falls “to transmit power to Toronto to supply for the light and streetcar companies” (333). Once again, Bliss highlights a budding interest in domestic utilities in Canada. His goal, however, is not to detail the development of hydroelectricity in Canada. Bliss addresses the replacement of private power companies by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission after 1906. The “world’s first large state-owned integrated electricity company” brought power from Niagara Falls to Toronto at a cost. The main focus of this section, however, is on the socio-political debate about public and

hydroelectric development in Ontario before 1906 when the Hydro-Electric Power Commission (the HEPC) was established by the *Power Commission Act*. Before the Ontario Legislature passed the *Power Commission Act* (1906), industrialists developed hydroelectric generating stations independent of the state. Consider that the HEPC initially developed transmission lines to transfer electricity generated by private

private ownership. A similar trend is seen in Peter A. Baskerville and Graham D. Taylor, *A Concise History of Business in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 264-74. There is no sense of competing Indigenous interests at Niagara Falls in either text.

In the 1990s, American historians like Richard White were also silent on the Indigenous experience(s) of hydroelectric development. In *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*, Richard White argues that human and natural systems are intertwined, inseparable even. On page xi, White writes, “[t]he boundaries between the human and natural have existed only to be crossed” (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995). I expand on his argument by breaking down the concept of ‘human system.’ I feel that White’s reference to “human” is often a signpost for “Anglo-American.” This writing habit is not dismissive of Native Americans. It does, however, reflect White’s central interest: how Anglo-Americans knew and interacted with the Columbia River. I am interested in exploring the diverse approaches to working with water (i.e. the Winnipeg River) as determined by gender, labour, and cultural group.

A historiographical shift away from economic and environmental analyses towards post-colonial analyses laid the foundation for my work. James Waldram’s 1988 study, *As Long as the Rivers Run: Hydroelectric Development and Native Communities in Western Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press), alerted the Canadian reading public that the provision of cheap power oftentimes required the expropriation of Indigenous lands. While the Manitoba Legislature passed the Electric Power Transmission Act in 1919, the earliest public project studied by Waldram was conceptualized by Manitoba Hydro in 1957. In 1999, Jean Manore’s work did for Ontario what Waldram had done for Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Her study – which begins in 1912 when the Northern Canada Power Company began supplying power to Hollinger Consolidated Gold Mining Company – examines how the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario (the HEPC) took over private power producers. The HEPC’s attempts to wrest power from private companies specifically led to its dismissal of Indigenous interests more generally (Jean Manore, *Cross-Currents: Hydroelectricity and the Engineering of Northern Ontario* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1999).

A notable exception in acknowledging Indigenous involvement in discussions over such developments is Christopher Armstrong and H. V. Nelles’ *Wilderness and Waterpower: How Banff National Park Became a Hydroelectric Reservoir* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2013). In Chapter 3, readers are introduced to the struggle between the privately owned Calgary Power Co. and Nakoda Indian Reserve. To meet rising electric demands, Calgary Power Co. sought permission to develop Kananaskis Falls in 1911. To proceed with construction, Calgary Power Co. required over 200 acres of Nakoda land. Band members actively rejected corporate rights of expropriation and threatened violence upon trespass. The Department of Indian Affairs undermined Nakoda resistance, however, when “J. D. McLean, the acting deputy superintendent general... agreed [that Calgary Power Co. could develop Kananaskis Falls], provided that an agreement to compensate the Nakoda could be worked out later” (43). Armstrong and Nelles here reveal the state as a “handmaiden to capitalist development” (50). The importance of this chapter lies in the identification of competing territorial claims and of their (potentially) violent defence by Indigenous peoples. There was nothing “natural” about the development of Kananaskis Falls; it was a contest of vision, of use. And it seems that insider dealings rather than a lack of initiative limited the effectiveness of Indigenous territorial claims. While the time period covered in this chapter follows centralization in Ontario (1906), it predates the formation of Alberta’s Public Utilities Board in 1915.

companies. Evidence of the early histories of dam development is scattered among company, municipal, and provincial archives, as well as private collections. Anishinabek communities generally maintain an oral record of their histories. To reconstruct an Indigenous history of hydroelectric development before 1906 requires community engagement; experiences that have not been catalogued by the HEPC or private companies can be uncovered through oral testimony. In Part 1 of this dissertation, “The East Direction,” I examine how changed water use by settler-colonists impacted Anishinabek riverine users *before* 1900. While testimony has been removed from Chapter 2 due to ongoing negotiations with Canada and Ontario about early hydroelectric flooding on Winnipeg River, Elder interviews shaped my archival search. Community engagement thus fostered my work, which is one of the first studies of hydroelectric development on Indigenous lands to offer a sustained examination of mobility and riverine change at the turn of the twentieth century.

By the mid-1900s, it became increasingly important for Canada to suppress expressions of Anishinabek discontent about industrial water use. Lumber and hydroelectricity attracted more settler-colonists to Lake of the Woods. By the 1920s, pulp and paper replaced lumbering as the primary industry in Northwestern Ontario. In Kenora, property sales marked the transition from lumber to pulp: E.W. Backus purchased the Norman Dam from the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company in 1919.²² In 1924, the Backus-Brooks paper mill produced its first roll of newsprint. Shortly thereafter, the Backus-Brooks Pulp & Paper Co. built a powerhouse at Norman Dam to expand operations. The paper mill quickly became the biggest employer near Kenora.

²² Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 61. Lake of the Woods and Aulneau Adventure Tours, *The Explorers’ Guide*, 24.

The mill demanded more and more water to produce more and more electricity to meet growing demands for newsprint (and to sustain employment). Water, the lifeblood of Kenora's economy, had become heavily linked to the survival of Kenora, a settler-colonist community at the north shore of Lake of the Woods.

After 1945, competition for water resources on Lake of the Woods increased exponentially. Leslie Frost became Premier of Ontario in 1949. Frost, much like his predecessor George Drew, emphasized better water resource management for Ontario. Frost desired provincial energy security.²³ While Anishinabek families had long considered water vital to community health, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission now identified water in its Northwestern Division as vital to national growth.²⁴ Between 1950 and 1958, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission constructed a 68-megawatt station on the Winnipeg River. This station is known as Whitedog Falls Generating Station. The ripple effects of post-war riverine change – including mercury methylation and food insecurity – did not reveal themselves until the late 1960s and early 1970s. In examining the installation of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, this dissertation considers the precedent that facilitated development, negotiating strategies that produced environmental inequalities, and Anishinabek attempts to manage riverine change over the short-term (e.g. wage labour circa 1955) and over the long-term (e.g. relocation circa 1970). This dissertation argues that Anishinabek families engaged in a continuous struggle to maintain the territorial integrity of their communities, despite riverine change.

²³ Edward Whitcomb, *A Short History of Ontario* (Dutton Crescent, ON: From Sea to Sea Enterprises, 2007), 59.

²⁴ The *Kenora Miner and News* described the Northwestern Division of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario as an area extending “98,000 square miles [and running] from Marathon, in the east, to the Manitoba border in the west.” “Progress Scenes at Whitedog-Caribou Falls,” *Kenora Miner and News* (4 September 1957), 4.

By looking at the history of water development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin from 1873 to 1975, this dissertation illuminates the multivariate responses – adaptation, cooperation, and passive resistance – developed by Anishinabek families to manage riverine change (including right of access, flooding, and pollution). In so doing, it challenges common narratives of Indigenous experiences and resistance in twentieth-century Canada.

CLAIMING SPACE: A DISCUSSION OF HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTRIBUTIONS CONCERNING POST-WAR CANADA

Historical studies of Canada after 1945 tend not to be closely connected to historical studies of Indigenous peoples; nor have they been driven by a focus on First Nations territories or their economies.²⁵ Instead, until very recently, a desire to locate and describe a response to the atrocities of World War II in the rise of economic modernization, infrastructure capacity building, and, most importantly, growth economics

²⁵ Two notable exceptions include John Lutz' *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008) and Mary Jane Logan McCallum's *Indigenous Women, Work, and History 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014). Lutz examines Indigenous contributions to industries like fishing and logging. He suggests that paid work fuelled a "moditonal economy." The term moditonal economy refers to a hybrid system wherein Indigenous workers combined subsistence activities with work for pay (and, in later years, social assistance). Lutz argues that Indigenous workers in the mid-twentieth century used paid work to help ensure socio-economic stability. Lutz seeks to revise Robin Fisher's argument in *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), that Indigenous peoples became economically irrelevant after the gold rush (which coincided with reduced settler interest in fur trading). McCallum also takes issue with the historical emphasis on fur trade economics. She charges, "until recently, fur trade economics and a desire to locate and describe a response to capitalism in the collapse of the fur trade have been the context for the bulk of Aboriginal labour history" (5). *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2004), edited by Brian Hosmer and Colleen O'Neill, discusses American Indigenous economies in the twentieth century. In the introductory chapter "Rethinking Modernity and the Discourse of Development in American Indian History," O'Neill argues that "American Indians transcended the rigid categories [traditional like trapping and modern like work for pay] and created alternative pathways of economic and cultural change that were not merely static renditions of some timeless past or total acceptance of U.S. capitalist culture" (3). Taken together, these works – American and Canadian – suggest that other historians have conflated the concepts of capitalism and modernity. These authors reveal that Indigenous peoples participated in (and adapted) Western economies in distinctively indigenous ways after World War II.

have been the context for the bulk of Canadian post-war studies.²⁶ These works attempt to explain a decade of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity in Canada. The literature generally centres on the debate over whether state funding was altruistically or politically motivated, whether politicians funded change for the “common good” or the good of their respective party.²⁷ In many ways, *affluence* is the topic of Canadian history after 1945. What is missing is a sense of how wealth distribution was shaped by perceptions of race.²⁸

²⁶ For example, in *Canada and War: A Military and Political History* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1981), Desmond Morton argues that “war has been a catalyst for every kind of political, social and economic change, from female suffrage in 1917 to post-1945 affluence.” In *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War, 1939-1945* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton suggest that World War II was “worth it.” These sentiments were echoed in “The War Changed Everything,” a joint article published in *Canada Remembers* (Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services, Government of Canada, 1994). Granatstein and Morton suggest that wartime atrocities – both massive and indiscriminate – prompted Canadians to reevaluate whom the state served and which services the state offered to its citizens. Granatstein and Morton conclude that “Canada loosened up, lightened up, and became a kinder, gentler place” as a result of World War II.

²⁷ For example, in *Planners and Politicians: Liberal Politics and Social Policy, 1957-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), Penny Bryden argues that Canada’s welfare state was founded, in part, on political self-interest: the Liberal Party proposed Canadian welfare programs to compete with John Diefenbaker’s working-class appeal and to return their party to power. Bryden thus offers an interesting counterpoint to the works of Desmond Morton and J. L. Granatstein discussed above.

²⁸ I do not discount post-World War II studies that acknowledge the uneven distribution of wealth by gender, sexuality, or perceived ideological standing. In *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity and the Gendering of Canada’s Welfare State* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), Jennifer Stephen argues that federal recruitment policies during World War II were not intended to boost female employment in the long run. In “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada” *Canadian Historical Review* LXXII, no. 4 (1991), 471-504, Veronica Strong-Boag argues that the suburban experiment – commonly identified as a marker of affluence – reduced postwar opportunities for women, leaving them geographically isolated. In *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), Mary Louise Adams argues that sexuality became a profound marker of social marginalization and exclusion after 1945. In *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), Mona Gleason reveals that psychological discourse pathologized homosexuality. The exclusion of gays and lesbians from federal employment is discussed in Gary Kinsman’s and Patrizia Gentile’s *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010). In *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), Gary Marcuse and Reginald Whitaker revealed that Canada’s international policy after 1945 was both anti-Communist and pro-American. Bryan Palmer affirmed Marcuse’s and Whitaker’s findings in *Canada’s 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). In *Journeys: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Nelson, 2006), historians R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith argue that wealth was inequitably distributed between English-speaking Canadians, French-speaking Canadians, Jewish Canadians, and recent immigrants. In *The Limits of Affluence: Welfare*

Consider that affluence is presented as a nearly universal phenomenon. For example, J. M. Bumsted selected the title “Prospering Together, 1945-1960” for his discussion of the post-World War II era in his textbook *A History of the Canadian Peoples*.²⁹ A sense of progression, an economic fluorescence, is coded into Bumsted’s selected gerund. More importantly, prosperity is shared; Canadians, Bumsted suggests, are “prospering together.” Textbooks are designed to relay standard knowledge and, through Bumsted, we can see that historians overwhelmingly agree that affluence positively impacted the lives of most Canadians after 1945. This finding is explicitly supported by Michael Bliss who summarized the period as follows: “The decades after 1945 were the age of peace and prosperity” and distinguished by “steadily rising levels of wealth” and “levels of mass affluence unprecedented in human history.”³⁰ J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton echoed this view in *Canada Remembers*: “After 1945, Canada was a land of both opportunity and security. Steady growth in... purchasing power seemed to promise that there would always be more.”³¹ Reflecting on the American experience, journalist Robert J. Samuelson mused that “Prosperity was all they [baby boomers] had ever known” – a claim mirrored by Canadian historian Douglas

in *Ontario, 1920-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), James Struthers reveals that wealth was unevenly distributed within Ontario.

²⁹ J. M. Bumsted, “Prospering Together, 1945-1960,” *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 4th edition (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2011), 356-402. Note that Bumsted’s chapter title mirrors that of a competing textbook, Francis, Jones, and Smith’s *Journeys: A History of Canada*. Francis, Jones, and Smith address the post-World War II period in “Toward a More Affluent Society: 1945-1960.” “More” adds a layer of nuance unseen in Bumsted’s title. However, a sense of progression is once again coded into the chapter title – consider that “more” is coupled with “toward.” While Canadians do not “prosper together” in *Journeys*, readers sense that Canadians were accumulating wealth at the macro-level after 1945.

³⁰ Michael Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 481.

³¹ J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, “The War Changed Everything,” in *Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation*, 6th edition, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002), 327.

Owram.³² However, this historical consensus has been based on Canada's statistical majority. In 1950, individuals of European descent formed 95 percent of Canada's population.³³ Affluence was most evenly shared among this 95 percent, but this wealth was, in part, accumulated by extracting resources from Indigenous lands, a fact still not adequately represented in the historical literature on Canada's 'prosperous era.'

Indigenous experiences of Canada's prosperous era have been underrepresented.

Bumsted, once again, offers a sample of historiographical trends. Of the 42 pages on the post-World War II era in his *History of the Canadian Peoples*, he devotes only half a page (or 1.2 percent) to the topic of "Aboriginals."³⁴ Given that, in 1950, only 1.2 percent of Canada's population were classified as "Status Indians," this might seem to reflect demographic realities; however, column-counting does not tell the whole story.

Bumsted's treatment of affluence is not environmentally representative. The cost of affluence was disproportionately borne in Canada – if "status Indians" accounted for only 1.2 percent of the population, they arguably did 95 percent of the suffering. Even less attention is granted to Indigenous experiences in Canada's "more affluent society" in *Journeys: A History of Canada*. Historians R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith note that "Many First Nations people began to flee poverty and unemployment on the reserves, in search of better opportunities in urban centres" without questioning how poverty came to be endemic on-reserve.³⁵ The literature to date does not

³² Robert J. Samuelson, *The Good Life and Its Discontents* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 35. Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), particularly the preface.

³³ Within this statistic, individuals of British, Irish, and French descent formed the demographic majority. Canadian Human Rights Commission, "Population and People: 1 January 1950," *Human Rights in Canada: A Historical Perspective*, accessed 10 August 2015, <http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/en/getBriefed/1950/population.asp>.

³⁴ Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 377.

³⁵ Francis, Jones, and Smith, *Journeys: A History of Canada*, 446.

address how First Nations paid for, negotiated, or even resisted post-war affluence. This dissertation seeks to expand and to deepen our study of Indigenous history after 1945. How did Indigenous peoples experience, if at all, post-war affluence?

Much as in the United States, where the affordable housing of Levittown came to symbolize broadly shared economic growth, housing was the most visible symbol of post-war prosperity in Canada.³⁶ After 1945, the federal government encouraged Canadian banks to loan capital to families seeking to purchase a home. Better yet, interest rates were low. “A rising standard of living and easy credit,” Doug Owram suggests, allowed the average Canadian breadwinner to purchase a single-family detached home. Available credit stimulated household demand. The number of houses built in Canada doubled between 1945 and the mid-1950s.³⁷ In Kenora alone, building permits “top[ped] the million dollar mark” in 1955 and 1956.³⁸ Such symbols of prosperity did not exist on Anishinabek reservations along the Winnipeg River. Whitedog Falls Generating Station produced electricity to power electric stoves, refrigerators, televisions, and radios in the settler-colonist community of Kenora. Whitedog Falls Generating Station simultaneously flooded Anishinabek homes on-reserve. With their houses, tent sites, and ancestral lands underwater, band members of Dalles 38C and One Man Lake Indian Reserve reported an unprecedented increase in homelessness rates after 1955. The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) highlights the inequitable distribution of wealth in the post-World

³⁶ The Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) suggests that housing was the most visible symbol of post-war prosperity. *Canada: A People's History*, “Years of Hope and Anger, 1946-64,” CBC, 12 January 2002, directed by Marquise Lepage, <http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP15CH3PA3LE.html>.

³⁷ Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 56.

³⁸ The *Kenora Daily Miner and News* anticipated another million dollar boom in 1957 – by the start of the third quarter, 36 housing permits had been approved by the municipality. This was a pronounced shift from the first quarter of 1950. At this time, the *Kenora Miner and News* predicted, but did not report on, building construction. “Building Permits Reach Million Mark,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News* (12 October 1957), 1.

War II era. In a public brief, the CHRC noted that “Conditions on many Aboriginal reserves [in 1950] are comparable to those in third world countries.”³⁹ Problematically, historians have rooted “third world” conditions in the distant past. Bryan Palmer (2009) links Indian poverty – “discovered” following the 1966 Hawthorn Report – to settler-colonial acts before 1900. He writes, “Aboriginal life sagged under the weight of devastating change: pious religious certainties spelled out in letters of destructive conversion [;] infections and devastating diseases [;] the mind-altering and wildly intoxicating introduction of alcohol [;] and the proliferation of trade items as seemingly innocuous as the copper pot.”⁴⁰ J. M. Bumsted too associates limited advantages on-reserve with alcohol consumption.⁴¹ Settler-colonialism or disease is used to explain the limits of affluence. My dissertation complicates this narrative by showing that poverty on-reserve after 1945 is directly linked to federal and provincial infrastructure capacity programs that stimulated wealth off-reserve at the expense of reserve communities. Contrary to growth-oriented narratives, my research shows that reservations in the Winnipeg River drainage basin were economically sustainable until the post-World War II era when governmental interference led to poverty.

While historians have linked affluence to an increase in federal and provincial spending, the direct inverse is true on reservation. Endemic poverty on-reserve in the Winnipeg River drainage basin correlates positively with the heyday of growth economics.⁴² Between 1950 and 1975, Canada regularly ran a deficit. Monies poured into

³⁹ Canadian Human Rights Commission, “Population and People: 1 January 1950.”

⁴⁰ Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 277.

⁴¹ Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 377.

⁴² The term “growth economics” has been selected in lieu of “Keynesian economics.” British economist John Maynard Keynes certainly advocated for the expansion of government spending to fight depression, but he did not recommend a role for the government in alleviating income inequality between groups of people. Instead, the political push for income parity originated with a small group of technocrats

infrastructure capacity building.⁴³ One of the most well-known of these federal projects was the St. Lawrence Seaway, or Great Lakes Waterway, which linked the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River with the Atlantic Ocean by way of its channels, locks and canals. Canada invested about \$330 million into the \$470.3 million project between 1954 and 1959.⁴⁴ Federal monies stimulated high rates of employment in Ontario and Quebec. Oral historian Claire Puccia Parham found that individuals who worked on the St. Lawrence Seaway in the 1950s “never forgot the time they spent on the job.” Labourers associated high wages with “college educations” or “saving for a first home.” Others remembered “on-the-job training, which led to future job offers on other waterway and public works projects.”⁴⁵ Many labourers, Parham suggests, associated personal wealth with construction (and, by extension, the expenditure of public funds).⁴⁶ Less well known,

after World War II. These state officials argued that expansion ought to be the goal of American economic policy, their belief being that improvements in the general economy would benefit all Americans. See Robert M. Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), for more on this.

⁴³ The CBC released an interactive timeline (“Canada’s deficits and surpluses, 1963-2014”) in March 2014. It reveals that Lester B. Pearson ran a \$1.2b deficit during his first year in office (1963-1964) and a \$1b deficit during his last (1967-1968). He was succeeded by Pierre Elliot Trudeau who ran a \$667m deficit during his first year in office (1968-1969) and a \$10.9b during his last (1978-1979). Statistics before 1963 are not included in this interactive timeline. Michael Pereira and Kerry Wall, “Canada’s deficits and surpluses, 1963-2014,” *CBC News: Canada*, 18 March 2014, accessed 1 September 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/canada-deficit/>.

⁴⁴ The cost of the project is outlined by the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation in “Seaway History,” accessed 1 September 2015, <http://www.greatlakes-seaway.com/en/seaway/history/>. Victor Kaczowski and Gordon C. Shaw, “St. Lawrence Seaway,” *Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed 1 September 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/st-lawrence-seaway/>, identified that Canada struggled to repay accumulated debt into the 1970s. Kaczowski and Shaw reveal that Canadians did not universally approve of federal spending on the St Lawrence Seaway; the railways voiced concerns about “unfair subsidized competition.”

⁴⁵ Claire Puccia Parham, *The St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project: An Oral History of the Greatest Construction Show on Earth* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 296.

⁴⁶ Joy Parr and Daniel McFarlane have highlighted the human cost of the St. Lawrence Seaway. In *Negotiating a River: Canada, the U.S., and the Creation of the St. Lawrence Seaway* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), Daniel Macfarlane affirms that relocation was “a disorienting experience.” To make way for development, McFarlane reveals, Canada partially funded the inundation of over 225 farms and over 531 homes. Unlike Parr, McFarlane briefly acknowledges the loss of Iroquoian territory in the Kahnawake region. He argues that the traditional way of life at Kahnawake was disrupted by flooding. Unfortunately, the human cost at Kahnawake is identified, but poorly substantiated by evidence (124-26). See also Joy

however, is infrastructure building in the Northwestern Division of Ontario. During this same period (1954-1959), the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario invested in the largest northern water development campaign since its inception in 1906. At its height, the development of Whitedog Falls Generating Station created over 1800 jobs in the Winnipeg River drainage basin; hundreds of Canadian families received pay during the construction period.⁴⁷ Here is evidence of wealth generated by state-driven industrial expansion. However, as water levels increased, access to local resources like *manomin*, fur-bearing animals, and fish decreased on-reserve. As water levels stabilized, access to employment with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission decreased. With the subsistence economy jeopardized by flooding and jobs lost once construction was completed, the standard of living for members of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, One Man Lake Indian Reserve, and Whitedog Indian Reserve declined. This dissertation uncovers the social cost of hydroelectric development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. It reveals how the economic capacity of reserve communities declined exponentially during – not necessarily before – the 1950s.

The suggestion that infrastructure capacity building programs – particularly hydroelectric development – negatively impacted Indigenous labour practices and household economies is not unique to this study.⁴⁸ In 1974, H. V. Nelles revised

Parr, "A Walking Village Remade: Iroquois and the St. Lawrence Seaway," *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 79-101.

⁴⁷ "Electricity Now Flowing in to Hydro's N.W. Ontario System," *Kenora Daily Miner and News* (5 March 1958), 1.

⁴⁸ While historians have begun to write more extensively on hydroelectric development on Indigenous lands, the geographic limits of my study are unique. Little has been written to date on hydroelectric development in the HEPC's Northwestern Division. Waldram first identified this gap in *As Long as the Rivers Run* in 1988. He noted that Grassy Narrows First Nation and Whitedog First Nation "are infamous in Canada" due to their struggle with mercury pollution. But, "[l]ittle known... is that prior to the mercury pollution the two communities experienced the negative effects of hydro dam construction. Other Native communities in the region were also affected" (10). My research uncovers those "other Native

celebratory narratives of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario as a public utility, arguing that “good politics” is “good business.”⁴⁹ As early as 1988, James Waldram revealed that “good business” required access to Indigenous territories. Politicking was the work of colonial agents. Waldram writes, “[T]he processes by which people had come to be victimized by hydro dam construction [by Manitoba Hydro and Saskatchewan Power Corporation] were similar to the processes by which they had lost their lands through treaty making and script allocation.”⁵⁰ Since Waldram’s publication, historians have continued to see hydroelectric development as a colonial process. Colonial analyses (whether academic or popular) often present Indigenous peoples as victims of hydroelectric development. Take, for example, Paul Charest’s “Hydroelectric

communities,” Dalles 38C Indian Reserve and One Man Lake Indian Reserve, and begins to detail their experiences with Whitedog Dam Generating Station. Waldram’s claim that hydroelectric development in the HEPC’s Northwestern Division is supported, in part, by Anastasia M. Shkilnyk’s *A Poison Stronger Than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985). Shkilnyk argues that the Department of Indian Affairs’ decision to relocate Grassy Narrows Indian Reserve upset traditional ways of being (e.g. economic activities, gender relationships, and family structure) and increased federal presence on the reserve, thus decreasing Anishianbek self-sufficiency and establishing a system of dependency. Shkilnyk seeks to expose the human costs of industrial development (e.g. Reed Paper Mill and mercury poisoning) and urban growth (the establishment of a federally-designed village at Grassy Narrows). In an effort to highlight human costs, however, Shkilnyk pathologizes her subjects. Her text works to uncover the root of the “Indian problem” – the origins of alcoholism, high suicide rates, etc. In her analysis, the people of Grassy Narrows are “sick.” Shkilnyk links this sickness to environmental change. A large portion of Shkilnyk’s argument centres on the loss of a trapping economy. However, the loss of a trapping economy cannot be attributed solely to relocation. Concurrent with the period she is discussing – although she does not address this issue – was the artificial increase of water levels on the English River. Caribou Falls Generating Station – built as a sister plant to Whitedog Falls Generating Station – decimated the muskrat population. Relocation cannot be blamed entirely for reduced yields; Caribou Falls Generating Station flooded dens and drowned the muskrat therein. Dam development must be recognized as a catalyst of socio-economic change.

⁴⁹ In “Revisiting the Politics of Development,” a preface to *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941*, 2nd edition (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005; 1st edition 1974), Nelles reflects on the research climate of the 1960s. He noted that “Canadian historiography had taken a distinctly biographical turn” (xv). He further observes that “the 100th anniversary of Confederation had drawn out the nation-building instinct among historians” (xvi). Published shortly after *The Politics of Development* (1974), James Sturgis’ children’s book, *Adam Beck* (Don Mills, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1978) helps to illuminate this celebratory trend. Adam Beck believed that “it was wrong to allow private interests to make a profit at the people’s expense,” Sturgis writes. Beck believed that water resources belonged to and should benefit the people of Ontario. Beck, who became the first Chairman of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, championed “power for the people of the province at a cost” (12). The establishment of the HEPC in 1906 is presented as a triumph for the people – Ontario Legislature heard and responded to their needs.

⁵⁰ Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run*, xiii.

Dam Construction and the Foraging Activities of the Eastern Quebec Montagnais.”

Charest argues that industrial capitalism has caused the “destruction of the old social and economic structures of the Montagnais” and the “sedentarianism and proletarianization of former... Montagnais hunters-trappers.”⁵¹ Charest later identifies an increase in wage labour and transfer payments as indicative of a decline in traditional life, noting that three-quarters of the income in the average Montagnais family was generated in a “non-Aboriginal” environment.⁵² While it is impossible to deny the many changes wrought by industrialization to previously isolated Montagnais communities, the decision to participate in a new and potentially lucrative economy does not necessarily indicate a loss of tradition. Charest fails to separate traditional lifestyle from subsistence activities. His Marxist interpretation focuses too much on material circumstances, negating social understandings of community. Participation in a capitalist economy did not necessarily indicate a loss of culture; it could indicate cultural adaptation. As rational economic actors, or even free agents, Indigenous peoples pursued economic security in new ways to meet new economic environments. Choice did not necessarily mean cultural abandonment; Through cultural change a people could survive the modifications to their environment.

Charest is not alone in his analysis. Other researchers have argued for Indigenous victimization by focusing on seasonal labour. In *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada*, Geoffrey York argues that the traditional economy at Moose Lake was

⁵¹ Paul Charest, “Hydroelectric Dam Construction and the Foraging Activities of Eastern Quebec Montagnais,” in *Politics and History in Band Societies*, eds. Eleanor Leacock and Richard B. Lee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 424-25.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 421.

“shattered” by the hydro flooding at Grand Rapids Hydro Dam.⁵³ Indigenous communities throughout Manitoba and Saskatchewan had been “assaulted by northern industrial development.”⁵⁴ Indigenous peoples are presented as being entirely at odds with industrial development; however, York fails to develop his argument beyond stylized depictions of traditional life. He suggests that Indigenous peoples required land to live traditionally and does not acknowledge that traditional activities are an important, albeit singular, aspect of a dynamic culture. Desire for land, and the oft quoted idea that “[a]n Indian without land is a dead Indian,”⁵⁵ does not mean that culture is dependent on localized hunting and fishing activities. While land is a prerequisite for any type of community, York exaggerates the relationship between Indigeneity and wilderness.

Jean Manore also focuses her discussion of Indigenous losses on the land in *Cross-Currents: Hydroelectricity and the Engineering of Northern Ontario*. By focusing exclusively on Indigenous peoples as hunter-gatherers from the signing of treaty to the 1950s and 1960s, Manore’s scope of discussion is limited to environmental impact assessment. The building of power generating stations is identified as having “profound environmental impacts on the ecosystem” and as interfering with “First Nations’ fishing and trapping practices.”⁵⁶ Manore focuses on problems associated with development like inaccessible ancestral territory, fish and animal depletion, and flooded vegetation. Her emphasis on changed “Aboriginal subsistence activities” refuses to acknowledge Cree economic adaptation.⁵⁷ In failing to address community change - by focusing on the loss

⁵³ Geoffrey York, *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989), 109.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 119.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁶ Manore, *Cross-Currents*, 137.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 137-41.

of subsistence activities - Manore denies the Cree a dynamic and distinctively Indigenous future. Indian land is not just about living; it is about making a living. Her failure to distinguish between the process and the product of hydroelectric development reinforces the stereotype in which socio-economic disadvantages are blamed on Indigenous peoples' inability to adapt to change, instead of the HEPC's failure to engage First Nations in negotiations. Poor communication and poorer compensation are not identified as potential causes for Indigenous reactions to hydroelectric flooding. Such analyses of hydroelectric development as intrusive and destructive to 'traditional' life and subsistence economics do not accurately reflect Indigenous community life. As Rolf Knight and John Lutz have shown, Indigenous labour practices diversified in response to industrialization. Seasonal rounds had been supplemented with work for pay by the late nineteenth century.⁵⁸ Surely Anishinabek mechanics mourned the submersion of muskrat dens differently than Anishinabek trappers who relied on furs for income. And yet, historical analyses privilege the experiences of able-bodied males working in seasonal industries.

The overrepresentation of "traditional" labourers persists despite scholarly recognition that Indigenous peoples did not shun, in Palmer's words, "opportunities for wage labour and the new options offered by the capitalist marketplace."⁵⁹ Few scholars have considered how Indigenous labourers may have associated dam construction with economic opportunity (i.e. work for pay). In 1988, James Waldram suggested that Indigenous resistance to the Limestone Generating Station in Manitoba was silenced "by a comprehensive plan to hire Native people for the dam's construction."⁶⁰ Here work for

⁵⁸ Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia, 1848-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), 3, 8, 18, 20; Lutz, *Makúk*, 38, 109, 159, 211.

⁵⁹ Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 373.

⁶⁰ Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run*, 12.

pay fostered cooperation between industrialists and band members seeking industrial employment. Megan Stanley's *Voices from Two Rivers* is the first academic treatise to acknowledge Indigenous labour on hydroelectric generating stations in British Columbia. She writes, "[w]hen construction on the reservoir began, jobs became available clearing the transmission lines and reservoir, transporting loggers and surveyors, and working in the portable sawmills.... [m]any Tsek'ene moved to Finlay Forks to take advantage of these opportunities."⁶¹ And yet, Stanley's acknowledgement of job opportunities in *Voices from Two Rivers* is undeveloped, while passing references made by Waldram are conspicuous for their rarity. Dam sites are most strongly associated with subjugation: "traditionalists," whose hunting, trapping, and fishing grounds are flooded, become increasingly reliant on state welfare. Displaced peoples are forced to adapt to Western socio-economic practices. More recently, Caroline Desbiens has implied that Indigenous (Cree) labourers struggled to maintain their social position. James Bay workers, she claims, "were often seen as participating in the colonial appropriation of the region's resources."⁶² Desbiens does not develop or substantiate this passing reference to community exclusion. Elders in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, by contrast, emphasized that there are many ways to be "Native," none of which depend entirely on seasonal rounds. As Elder Bert Fontaine explained to me in 2012, "Native people can work anywhere... It's just like anything – painting everyone with the same brush. All

⁶¹ Megan Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers: Harnessing the Power of the Peace and Columbia* (Vancouver: BC Hydro Pioneers Association with Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 110.

⁶² Caroline Desbiens, *Power from the North: Territory, Identity, and the Culture of Hydroelectricity in Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 171. Desbiens circulated similar ideas in "Pioneers, Labourers, Water Builders... A Geography of 'The People' in James Bay" (paper presented at the ICG Conference, Taegu, South Korea, 9-13 August, 2000). This presentation paper is available for download at http://econgeog.misc.hit-u.ac.jp/icgg/intl_mtg/CDdesbiens.pdf (accessed 12 December 2012).

these [academic theories] about Natives that can't work – that's BS.”⁶³ Taking Fontaine's words seriously means considering work for pay as a viable and valuable Anishinabek response to industrial development.

The historical focus on trapping, hunting, and fishing has also eclipsed women's experiences of hydroelectric development. Surely women whose household labour was highly localized did not associate the loss of hunting territories with sedentary living, as Charest suggested. Limited attention to childcare reflects an ingrained masculinist perspective in the literature of hydroelectric development, and post-war Indigenous history more generally. Historians have bemoaned the inundation of Indigenous hunting grounds, spaces traversed predominately by Indigenous men.⁶⁴ Some have also acknowledged that flooding can disrupt big game migration routes, posing significant threats to the intergenerational transmission of men's hunting knowledge. Charest and York have mourned the losses of Indigenous men who, unable to hunt and trap, have come to rely on welfare and thus made critical exposés of the environmental injustices faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. And yet, the overwhelming attention to food provision by males may result from anthropological biases dating back to the early twentieth century. Consider the conceptual barriers against framing a feminist interpretation of flood damages in Anishinabek territories: anthropologist Ruth Landes mused that “trapping is the chief economic activity of the Ojibwa” in her 1938 book,

⁶³ Elder Bert Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

⁶⁴ For example, see Paul Charest, “Hydroelectric Dam Construction,” 213-26; Manore, *Cross-Currents*, 137, 139; Frank Quinn, “As Long as the Rivers Run: The Impacts of Corporate Water Development on Native Communities in Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 11, no. 1 (1991): 137-54.

A notable title that helps to illuminate this point is *Strangers Devour the Land: A Chronicle of the Assault upon the Last Coherent Hunting Culture in North America, the Cree Indians of Quebec, and Their Vast Primeval Homelands* by Boyce Richardson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975).

Ojibwa Women.⁶⁵ She observed Anishinabek families in the Treaty #3 District and concluded that “males are trained to shoulder economic responsibilities” and take primary responsibility for the hunt. Landes suggested that women who retrieved game for household use were exceptional, “pressed by economic or temperamental needs to take up male work.”⁶⁶ Ernestine Friedl echoed Landes’ masculinist perspective in 1975 when she claimed that “game was the group’s most valuable resource” and downplayed women’s harvesting activities.⁶⁷ Historically, scholarship has considered women’s contributions as secondary to men’s attempts to fend off hunger in Anishinabek territories. In this dissertation, I seek to restore Anishinabek women to their position as partners in family food provision, and to deepen our understanding of the effects of industrial development on the household economies of Indigenous peoples. We cannot truly understand the effects of hydroelectric development on Anishinabek communities without examining the unique effects of floodways on women and their infants. This dissertation resists homogenization along masculinist lines and uncovers diverse Indigenous responses to hydroelectric development. Flooding was experienced differently along economic and gender lines.

Researchers like Charest, York and Manore have overrepresented hunters and gatherers in their analyses. While able-bodied males who engaged in subsistence activities may form a majority, they represent an Indigenous interest group; they do not represent diverse sub-groups within the community. The underrepresentation of mothers and general labourers, for example, prevents us from seeing multiple losses (e.g.

⁶⁵ Ruth Landes, *The Ojibwa Woman* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), v.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vi.

⁶⁷ Friedl quoted in Priscilla K. Buffalohead, “Farmers, Warriors, Traders: A Fresh Look at Ojibway Women,” *Minnesota History*, 48, no. 6 (Summer 1983): 240.

reproductive and paid labour) and instead focuses our attention on changing habitat. This focus on territorial decline reinforces romantic depictions of Indians in the wilderness in historical and journalistic accounts of hydroelectric development. Consider Boyce Richardson's *Strangers Devour the Land* (1991), a popular text hailed "as a stirring account of a minority group's struggle to save their land and lifestyle."⁶⁸ Richardson, a Montreal-based journalist, provides a highly personalized account of the James Bay Crees' hunting way of life and the two court cases leading up the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975. Given his claim of contact with northern Cree communities⁶⁹ and his extensive use of primary sources, Richardson had an uncommon opportunity to challenge stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, for instance the "ecological" Indian, upheld by the popular imagination.

Unfortunately, Richardson's literary emphasis on "Indians" roughing it in the bush limits audience recognition of Cree environmental modifications. Richardson claims that the James Bay Cree live in the "awesome wilderness of northern Quebec."⁷⁰ The term "wilderness," used throughout the text, implies an uncultivated region and nullifies the economic potential of the land, as well as the ways in which the Cree have shaped their environment. Richardson thus downplays the value of Cree labour in the creation and operation of productive trap lines. Land must be cleared for hunting lodges. Trails must be cleared to lay traps and, later, to access them. Richardson's suggestion that Cree hunters live in "exquisite balance" with "the herbivores and carnivores" reinforces

⁶⁸ "Strangers Devour the Land (Editorial Review)," in *Publisher's Weekly*, accessed 29 July 2008, <http://reviews.publishersweekly.com/bd.aspx?isbn=0930031407&pub=pw>, 1997.

⁶⁹ Boyce Richardson, *Strangers Devour the Land: A Chronicle of the Assault upon the Last Coherent Hunting Culture in North America, the Cree Indians of Quebec, and Their Vast Primeval Homelands* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), Acknowledgements.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

romantic misconceptions of the ecological Indian. William Cronon – in his rejection of “wilderness” as a sacred space unmarred by human activity – challenges his readers to think of “home” instead. When we build our homes, we, by necessity, “[manipulate] and [work] and even [kill] some parts of nature to make our home.”⁷¹ Surely, the Cree did too. By unifying Indigenous peoples with the animal world, Richardson devalues the productive labour of Cree hunters and trappers. While he admires their assumed social and technological simplicity, this admiration prevents readers from recognizing Cree as economic players who – like Québécois developers – modified their environment to improve their “home life.” We must remember that lands outside of Canadian metropolitan centres (like Montreal) never felt “wild” to Indigenous occupants. By obscuring this fact for rhetorical effect, we affirm colonial configurations of space and privilege Euro-North American boundaries.

Moreover, when researchers frame their studies around environmental change in Canada’s “wilderness,” they define Indigenous loss in Western terms that are rarely articulated by their subjects. This disjuncture between scholarly and Indigenous speech is audible in Boyce Richardson’s 1974 documentary, *Cree Hunters from Mistassini*. The narrator opens, “Northern Quebec is one of the last great wilderness areas of North America.” His subjects, by contrast, demarcate and claim trapping grounds north of Mistassini. Sam Blacksmith occupies about 3108 square kilometres referred to throughout the film as “Sam’s Territory.” This is no wilderness. Blacksmith emphasizes that land left vacant for multiple seasons does not revert to nature. He states, “We do not

⁷¹ William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, edited by William Cronon, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 89.

give up our land. It is still ours when we are not here.”⁷² Historian Jennifer Brown notes that Cree speakers use two variations of “our” in the term “our land.” The prefix *ki-* in *kituskeenow* (“our land”) is inclusive and reflects shared authority over the territory. *Nituskeenan* is an exclusive term for “our land” – Cree speakers are most likely to employ *ni-* when speaking to outsiders.⁷³ When speaking to an anonymous member of the film crew, Blacksmith uses the prefix *ni-*. This grammatical nuance suggests that Blacksmith affirmed his relationship to the land through speech. By using *ni-*, Blacksmith “othered” the crew member. Blacksmith simultaneously asserted his belonging and claimed the ability to identify outsiders. Filmmakers like Richardson, however, did not recognize Sam’s Territory as a Cree homeland. Richardson located Sam’s Territory in Quebec’s “wilderness.” Blacksmith, in turn, identified filmmakers as “outsiders,” suggesting that men like Richardson did not, or could not (*ni-*), truly grasp Cree territories. This conceptual gap between researcher and subject, between “wilderness” and “homeland,” is inaudible in text.

Historians of hydroelectric development on Indigenous territories have used “wilderness” interchangeably with “hinterland” – a term that, while occasionally useful, nevertheless obscures important geopolitical realities. Waldram, for example, claimed that hydroelectric dam construction was located in the “vast hinterland areas” of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.⁷⁴ But, to whom is northern Quebec, Manitoba, or Saskatchewan a “hinterland”? This descriptor – used to tell Indigenous histories – does

⁷² *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*, directed by Tony Ianzelo and Boyce Richardson (National Film Board of Canada, 1974), available online at https://www.nfb.ca/film/cree_hunters.

⁷³ Jennifer S. H. Brown, “Rupert’s Land, *Nituskeenan*, Our Land: Cree and English Naming and Claiming around the Dirty Sea,” in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Pasts*, eds. Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 25.

⁷⁴ For example, Waldram claimed that hydroelectric dam construction was located in the “vast hinterland areas” of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run*, xi.

not accurately reflect Indigenous conceptions of space. In this dissertation, I reject “wilderness” as a descriptor of Indigenous territories. My research presents the north shore of Lake of the Woods as a bustling centre of Anishinabek activity. As such, it participates in the process of “visual reorientation” first proposed by Daniel Richter in *Facing East from Indian Country*.⁷⁵ While Kenora was isolated from other Anglo-Canadian centres, it was an Anishinabek homeland. In 1873, Treaty #3 was signed between the Crown and Anishinabek signatories at Northwest Angle on Lake of the Woods. Far removed from Ottawa, Anishinabek signatories considered Lake of the Woods to be a political centre. To the west of Lake of the Woods is *Manito Ahbee*, which translates “where the Creator sits.” *Manito Ahbee* is revered by Indigenous peoples across North America as a sacred space. Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River facilitated travel to a spiritual centre. For Anishinabek families, the north shore is not a “hinterland” or a “wilderness,” but rather a hotbed of economic, political, and spiritual activity. It is a space where women and men hunted, raised their children, and worked for pay.

This dissertation is written looking out from Indian country. I do not see “hinterland” resources being extracted for central consumption. Instead, I envision a centre being disrupted to serve a competing settlement. In so doing, I join other Indigenous activists like Hidatsa/Mandan filmmaker J. Carlos Peinado in reorienting narratives of development.⁷⁶ Readers are here challenged to consider the Winnipeg River

⁷⁵ Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 8-9.

⁷⁶ In *Waterbuster* (2006), Hidatsa/Mandan filmmaker, J. Carlos Peinado, centres his analysis around Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in what is now known as North Dakota. Peinado does not present Fort Berthold as a peripheral space. Instead, neighbouring “White” settlements are presented as peripheral spaces that tribal members visit to shop or to further their education. Peinado makes Fort Berthold Indian Reservation a hotbed of cultural activity. It is at Fort Berthold that Siouan languages were spoken, that clans were active. It was at Fort Berthold that bumper crops were seeded, monitored, and harvested. There is no sense that Fort Berthold is a “peripheral” space. Indeed, the Garrison Dam is said to have displaced

drainage basin as an Anishinabek homeland. The geographical boundaries of this study reflect Anishinabek boundaries. Oral testimony reveals that Anishinabek families from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, Whitedog Indian Reserve, and One Man Lake Indian Reserve primarily utilized a stretch of water from Rough Rock Lake in the North to Warroad, Minnesota, in the south. It is this stretch of the Winnipeg River drainage basin that is the focus of this study. While previous “wilderness” and “hinterland” studies have normalized Western jurisdiction, I draw attention to alternative geopolitical boundaries that examine the impact of hydroelectric development on the centre of a vibrant Anishinabek Nation. Within these boundaries, I explore how Indigenous communities fractured in response to hydroelectric development, responding not as “Indians,” but as distinct Anishinabek interest groups.

By examining the north shore of Lake of the Woods as a centre of meaningful Anishinabek activity, this dissertation deepens historical analyses of Indigenous activism in Canada. Indigenous activism is typically understood as an organized, large-scale, and public rejection of state programming (be it federal or provincial). The year 1969 is often accepted as a “watershed moment in Native militancy,” a moment when Indigenous peoples united across Canada to protest the proposal of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien to dissolve the Indian Act.⁷⁷ Historians have suggested that social and technological change in the mid-twentieth century was crucial to making Canada-wide resistance to this reform possible. For

Peinado’s ancestors from centre. Peinado affirms Fort Berthold – its original location flooded by the Garrison Dam – as an imaginative centre for displaced peoples; Hidatasa/Mandan hearts still yearn for their ancestral home. Hidatasa/Mandan eyes still look towards their ancestral home. *Waterbuster*, directed by J. Carlos Peinado (Quechees, VT: Brave Boat Products Inc., 2006), DVD.

⁷⁷ Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 393-408; Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 2nd edition (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999), 99-107.

example, Arthur J. Ray and co-authors Kristin Burnett and Geoff Read have suggested that World War II fostered a “new political consciousness” among Indigenous peoples.⁷⁸ Military service created a new social environment; Indigenous peoples, many of whom had previously lived on isolated reservations, now gathered on military bases. Soldiers from British Columbia to Nova Scotia realized that they shared grievances against the Crown as a result of their shared subjugation under the Indian Act. Harold Cardinal, author of *The Unjust Society* (a text generally credited with galvanizing action in 1969), believed that television and radio made Canada-wide resistance possible. Indigenous peoples could identify a shared struggle on-screen or over the airwaves.⁷⁹ Physical proximity – which enlistment had allowed during World War II – was no longer essential to knowledge exchange. Technology made it possible for Indigenous peoples to identify and to rally under a shared cause.

Yet, as Kristin Burnett and Geoff Read note, “this temporal focus has overshadowed centuries of defiance by Aboriginal peoples,”⁸⁰ which is certainly true of the literature on Indigenous resistance to hydroelectric development. Consider the historical focus on Cree and Inuit resistance to the James Bay Project (circa 1971-1975). According to Paul Wertman, approximately eight distinct Indigenous communities lived in the projected flood zone at the time Premier Robert Bourassa announced his vision of

⁷⁸ Kristin Burnett and Geoff Read, “Political Activism,” in Burnett and Read, eds. *Aboriginal History: A Reader* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2012), 356; Similarly Arthur J. Ray claimed that “the White Paper... galvanized the Native nationalist movement.” Ray, *I Have Lived Here since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada’s Native People: Revised Edition* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2005), 335.

⁷⁹ Cardinal, *Unjust Society*, 90. A major benefit of Indigenous activism was the explosion of Indigenous peoples working in academe who paved the way for Indigenous methodologies to be employed in a wide variety of disciplines. In history, notable Indigenous scholars who integrated Indigenous methodologies are Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View* (Toronto: New Press, 1975), Maria Campbell, *Halfbreed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), and Vine Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

⁸⁰ Burnett and Read, “Political Activism,” 356.

the La Grande Complex in 1971. Faced with the risk of territorial loss, these eight distinct groups united to form the ad hoc Quebec Indian Committee. As a united front, these Cree and Inuit hunters organized against Quebec.⁸¹ As identified by Romuald Wera and Thibault Martin, collective action resulted in an interim injunction in 1972. Justice Albert Malouf's decision was overturned shortly thereafter, but the public nature of Cree and Inuit complaints and "the obligation imposed on Quebec by a court of law to negotiate and to compensate Aboriginal people before appropriating their land put an end to a long era of colonial behaviours."⁸² Successful Indigenous resistance to the James Bay Project was large scale, organized, and publicized – markers of success associated with the Red Power Movement. But what of daily affirmations of territorial rights made by families who never reached the courtroom or Parliament Hill?

The emphasis on large-scale organization has limited the historical study of Indigenous resistance to colonial exploitation and usurpation of natural resources. Studies that predate the White Paper of 1969 generally focus on extraordinary political leaders who organized military campaigns against Western powers before 1885. Attention has been paid to Pontiac, an Ottawa Chief, who organized the Ottawa, Wyandot, Anishinabek, and Potawatami nations to expel British forces from lands previously claimed by the French Crown.⁸³ Tecumseh, a Shawnee Chief, has also captured the public imagination. This military leader organized against American encroachment on Upper Canada in 1812; he hoped that a strategic alliance with the British would help him to

⁸¹ Paul Wertman, "Planning and Development after the James Bay Agreement," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* III, no. 2 (1983): 278-79.

⁸² Romuald Wera and Thibault Martin, "The Way to Modern Treaties: A Review of Hydro Projects and Agreements in Manitoba and Quebec," in *Power Struggles: Hydro Development and First Nations in Manitoba and Quebec*, edited by Thibault Martin and Steven H. Hoffman (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008), 65.

⁸³ *The Pontiac Rebellion*, directed by Brian McKenna (Montréal: National Film Board of Canada, 2002), DVD.

secure a large Indian Territory in the Great Lakes Region.⁸⁴ Further west, Big Bear, a Cree Chief, is celebrated for his attempts to resist Treaty #6 until favourable terms – particularly a large Indian Territory in the Cypress Hills on the border of present-day Saskatchewan and Alberta – was granted by the Crown.⁸⁵ In 1885, after a failed attempt to gain Canada’s recognition of Métis rights and territories in the Northwest, Louis Riel, a Métis leader, was hanged for treason.⁸⁶ Riel’s hanging ushered in the nadir of Indigenous mobilization (1885-1969). Canada’s fears of an effective Indigenous resistance to colonial power prompted amendments to the Indian Act of 1876. After 1885, Canada amended Section 114 to criminalize religious ceremonies (i.e. the Sun Dance), although the law was applied to eliminate large gatherings of Indigenous peoples more generally. Section 114 would not be lifted until 1951.⁸⁷ Arthur J. Ray has suggested that mobilization against the state was impeded by federal policies until 1951.⁸⁸

While the criminalization of Indigenous gatherings made it difficult to organize a large-scale resistance, Anishinabek in the Winnipeg River drainage basin never accepted Canada’s or Ontario’s claim to their natural resources. This dissertation helps to fill the gap between 1885 and 1969, uncovering highly localized forms of everyday resistance to colonial power. A close look at the Winnipeg River drainage basin allows us to

⁸⁴ James Laxer, *Tecumseh & Brock: the War of 1812* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2012); John Sugden, *Tecumseh: A Life* (New York: Henry Hold and Co., 1999).

⁸⁵ John Tobias, “Canada’s Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885,” *Canadian Historical Review* 64, no. 4 (1983): 519-48.

⁸⁶ Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 217-20. David Lee provides a notable exception to the focus on extraordinary political leaders like Louis Riel in the North-West Rebellion of 1885. Lee explores the socio-political reasons for Métis militants to take up arms against the Dominion Government (“The Métis Militant Rebels of 1885,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 21, no. 3 (1989): 1-19.).

⁸⁷ Keith D. Smith, ed. “4b.I Legislation Restriction Indigenous Ceremonies, 1884-1933,” *Strange Visitors: Documents in Indigenous-Settler Relations in Canada from 1876* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 96-7. See also Constance Backhouse, “‘Bedecked in Gaudy Feathers’: The Legal Prohibition of Aboriginal Dance: Wanduta’s Trial, Manitoba, 1903,” *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 63.

⁸⁸ Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 315.

understand how Anishinabek peoples envisioned their rights against the oppressive Indian Act (and a battery of subsequent colonial laws). Further, it allows us to better understand how adaptation and cooperation with federal and provincial water use functioned as forms of resistance. Adaptation and cooperation allowed Anishinabek families to continually occupy their homeland despite colonial actions that threatened its socio-economic sustainability.

Discussions of Anishinabek resistance are not intended to downplay the severe imposition that the Indian Act placed on Indigenous lives. From 1898 (when Norman Dam was installed) to 1958 (when Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operating at full capacity), Anishinabek families were disempowered by the state. Canada and Ontario justified both developments without actively consulting with Anishinabek occupants of the Winnipeg River drainage basin. However, evidence of exclusion does not rule out the possibility of discontent. Anishinabek families organized and found creative methods to assert their claim to water resources on Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River. For example, Anishinabek families participated in intra-community ceremonies that asserted Anishinabek guardianship over water resources claimed by Ontario. Anishinabek families developed investment strategies to manage environmental change and to retain the territorial integrity of their reserves. Anishinabek families also sought paid opportunities with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. None of these activities were overt acts of resistance. Instead, these were private acts of resistance.

In this dissertation, I reveal that Anishinabek activism before 1969 took three distinctive forms: adaptation, cooperation, and passive resistance. Adaptation refers to family strategies developed in response to environmental change that allowed

Anishinabek men, women, and children to subsist on- and off-reserve. Cooperation is marked by Anishinabek attempts to work with settler-colonists, despite competing economic goals, to ensure the socio-economic stability of Anishinabek communities. Passive resistance, by contrast, refers to non-violent expressions of discontent against federal and provincial legislation and social engineering. By uncovering private acts of resistance, I build on the work of Gerald Taiaiake Alfred and others who have shown that Indigenous peoples across what is now known as Canada engaged in “a consistent struggle to revitalize various Indigenous cultural and political institutions in the hope of restoring the integrity of national communities.”⁸⁹ Alfred maintains that Indigenous opposition to colonization has been continuous. This dissertation offers proof of that claim.

MAKING SENSE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE: A DISCUSSION OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH METHODS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

In researching this dissertation, I collected evidence of private acts of resistance (adaptation, cooperation, and passive resistance) in oral testimony. At Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, I worked closely with Chief Lorraine Cobiness and her advisory council to contact individual families. Each resident family was mailed a letter requesting them to (1) identify a reliable narrator, and (2) participate in my research study. By asking each family to nominate their narrator, I hoped to avoid Western misunderstandings of “Elder.” In Anishinabek society, the term “Elder” reflects an accumulation of experience that may not reflect biological age. Equally, age may not make a reliable narrator. Members of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve nominated the following interviewees to participate in my study:

⁸⁹ Gerald R. Alfred, *Heeding the Voice of Our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1995), 9.

1. Alice Kelly (b. 1946)
2. Roberta Jameson (b. unknown)
3. Archie Wagamese (b. 1944)
4. David Wagamese (b.1948)
5. Moses Henry (b.1941)
6. Joe Nabish (b.1933)
7. Marjorie Nabish (1932-2015)
8. Larry Kabestra (b. 1948)

These eight interviewees have been have been vetted by their communities. I liken the selection process to peer review. Community members gauged accuracy and skill before referring individuals to me. These eight interviews, conducted in 2012, were supplemented by transcript summaries produced by Cuyler Cotton after a series of interviews with Dalles' band members in the 1990s. Transcript summaries are not yet publicly available, but researchers may request to access information through Dalles' band office. An additional nine interviewees were identified off-reserve using the snowball technique. I believed that these individuals could teach me about life in the Treaty #3 District more generally. Interviewees also drew my attention to written sources produced by Anishinabek culture carriers. Autobiographical writings and policy proposals that originated from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, Shoal Lake #40 Indian Reserve, and One Man Lake Indian Reserve were also incorporated into this study.

My personal location – as direct descendant of Kawitaskung and daughter of former Chief Allan Luby (Ogemah) – eased my access to elder knowledge. Although I am, by law, a non-status Indian, I am in-practice a peripheral community member. Raised

off-reservation and ineligible for voting privileges at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, I was identified as a potential history keeper by Chief Lorraine Cobiness and her advisory committee. Why me? I had been brought to the reserve sporadically during my youth to attend pow-wows or to visit my father at the band office. I had also explored lands unrecognized by the Department of Indian Affairs, but claimed by my community through practice. For me, Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River overflow with stories. My mother, Sheila McRae, reflects on my informal training:

You had a lot of pressure being first family, pressure with your Dad being Chief, pressure with your Dad trying to tell oral stories. I always felt that you were under a lot of pressure. I always felt trying to keep my history straight and walking with your Dad in his world, it became a lot – you became very aware that you had to keep the history.⁹⁰

Cobiness knew that I had childhood memories of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Cobiness also knew that I carried stories specific to my family – how my many great-grandmothers prepared *adikameg* and why my grandmother, Carol Kipling, did not. Cobiness also knew that I had a post-secondary education in history. It was hoped that my education would allow me to communicate our shared history of environmental change with the broader public – a history that displaced my family from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve and made me a visitor to that place. Through my education, I had learned how to speak and how to write like an outsider. And so, it was my bloodline that facilitated initial access to community history. I had inherited a right to stories – a right to know where I came from and how my family came to live in town. My education, by contrast, encouraged band members outside of my kin network to share their stories with me. This dissertation is my homecoming.

⁹⁰ Sheila McRae, telephone interview with author, 9 September 2007.

My homecoming was not without conflict. One female Elder, for example, argued that urban living had jeopardized my ability to carry reserve history. What did I know about living at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve? To ease these concerns, my research process included ceremony. I had to prepare my spirit for listening. My preparation was guided by Elder-mentor Alice Kelly. Participation in ceremony created a unique set of challenges during the research process. Ethical conduct as defined by the Social Sciences and Human Research Council of Canada required Elders to sign a Consent Form. This raised questions about whether I valued the consent form (or Western ceremony) over the exchange of tobacco (or Anishinabek ceremony). My use of consent forms raised questions about whether I truly honoured Anishinabek ceremonies. Further, my use of consent forms conflicted with local understandings of history. Many Elders argued that information was being *shared*, being *transferred* – but, it could not be *released*. Interviews sometimes collapsed because of these semantic differences. One male Elder, for example, told me that “I knew better” than to ask for a statement of release. When I explained that I was honouring a Western ceremony, I was accused of “acting like an ass.” My community research process was thus defined by ceremony, exchange, and a struggle to balance two worlds.

I used archival sources to corroborate oral testimony wherever possible. The complete collection of the *Kenora Daily Miner and News* held by the Kenora Public Library proved invaluable in building a general timeline of development – demographic and economic – in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. I mined newspapers for details about the Norman Dam, the hearings of the International Joint Commission, and the Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Newspaper records were paired with texts (like town

minutes, resident diaries and photographs) and artefacts (like clothing and household items) held by the Lake of the Woods Museum (Kenora). Three archives proved foundational to my success. The Treaty #3 and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre (TARR) in Kenora, Ontario, opened their document collection to me, which helped me to manage the cost of research as TARR held facsimiles of the RG-10 records housed by Library and Archives Canada (Ottawa). The Archives of Ontario (Toronto) provided key information about how the province understood and (re)valued water during the period under study. Particular attention was paid to the records of Ontario Tourism and the Ontario Water Resources Commission. Lastly, this project would have been impossible without the support of Ontario Power Generation (OPG, formerly the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario). I am thankful to OPG for providing open access to corporate records for Whitedog Falls Generating Station and Caribou Falls Generating Station in July 2007.

I have structured my dissertation with inspiration from the medicine wheel, an Indigenous symbol that is circular in design. The medicine wheel represents Earth. On Earth all living things – plants, animals, and *Anishinabek* (human beings) – are sustained in relationship with each other. The Anishinabek eat *waawaashkeshi* (deer) who eat *giizhik* (cedar). And, when an Anishinaabe (wo)man transitions, her/his body returns to Earth to nourish *giizhik* to feed *waawaashkeshi*. The medicine wheel thus symbolizes the interconnectedness of all things. My research uncovered critical intersections between food insecurity, Whitedog Falls Generating Station, and Norman Dam. To highlight these interconnections, my research findings have been divided into four directions:

EAST DIRECTION: WHERE THE SUN RISES

According to the teachings of the medicine wheel, the East is the direction of new beginnings. It is the direction whence the sun rises.⁹¹ Here, we will explore how federal and provincial governments justified hydroelectric power generation on Anishinabek watercourses. We will determine how settler-colonists claimed Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River from its custodians (Anishinabek) to encourage the expansion of the pulp and paper industry in what is now known as Northwestern Ontario.

In 1873, Anishinabek representatives from the Winnipeg River drainage basin signed Treaty #3 with Her Majesty the Queen. While the treaty carefully detailed the lands that both parties would soon share, little reference was made to water resources and their use. Indeed, the waters began where treaty discussions seemed to end: rivers and lakes became boundary markers. Treaty #3 commenced “at a point on the Pigeon River route” where “the height of the land [separates] the waters running to Lake Superior from those flowing to Lake Winnipeg.” Subsequent reference points include Lake Nipigon, Winnipeg River, Albany River, English River, White Mouth River, and “the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude to Lake of the Woods.” Her Majesty requested access to a “tract [of land] comprised within the lines above, embracing an area of fifty-five thousand square miles.”⁹² Having forged a land-sharing agreement with the Crown, Anishinabek families continued to use Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River as in years past – to fish, to *manoominike* (harvest wild rice), and to travel.

Technological change, however, raised provincial alarm over Anishinabek water use. With the development of transmission lines, Anishinabek access to, and use of, Lake

⁹¹ Phil Lane, Jr., et al., *The Sacred Tree: Reflections on Native American Spirituality* (Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2004), 53.

⁹² “Treaty #3 Between Her Majesty the Queen and the Saulteaux Tribe of the Ojibbeway Indians at Northwest Angle on the Lake of the Woods with Adhesions,” accessed 2 October 2015, <https://gct3.net/grand-chiefs-office/gct3-info-and-history/government-of-canada-document/>.

of the Woods and the Winnipeg River seemed to jeopardize industrial growth in Ontario. In response, as Chapter 1 argues, the Ontario government redefined its control over water use in 1915 to exclude Anishinabek from control over watercourses. Anishinabek were excluded from any role in decision-making concerning hydro-electrical developments. The Ontario government asserted this control without the approval of the federal government in this area of mixed jurisdiction. The Ontario government's actions were illegitimate and were rejected by Anishinabek through acts of passive resistance: Anishinabek families continued to conduct water ceremonies that asserted their custodial relationship with Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River.

Long before Ontario illegitimately claimed control over Anishinabek water courses, industrialists in Ontario developed hydroelectric generating stations on the north shore of Lake of the Woods. Unilateral action in the 1890s prompted an international outcry: American residents living along the south shore of Lake of the Woods claimed that Norman Dam flooded acres of arable land. In 1912, the International Joint Commission on the Lake of the Woods Reference was formed to conduct a cost/benefit analysis of the Norman Dam. The International Joint Commission disallowed Anishinabek participation, and thus, the International Joint Commission's final recommendations did not consider Anishinabek descriptions of environmental change. Chapter 2 reveals how Canadian industrialists gained preferential access to water resources in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. It also marks a state precedent for water development: watercourses could (and would) be modified in Ontario without consultation with Anishinabek riverine users. At this point, Anishinabek riverine users

resorted to adaptation. Denied a public voice, Anishinabek riverine users modified their seasonal rounds to ensure continuous occupation of treaty lands.

SOUTH DIRECTION: A PLACE OF STRENGTH AND VIGOUR

The International Joint Commission favoured industry in its final report, released in 1917. And yet, water north of the outlets of Lake of the Woods continued to flow, uninterrupted, down the Winnipeg River towards the Manitoba border. Favourable conditions perhaps encouraged the Backus-Brooks Company to build the Norman Powerhouse at the western outlet of the Winnipeg River in the 1920s. It was the last hydroelectric development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin for many years. The Great Depression followed the Norman's completion and stymied additional industrial interest in the region.

In 1939, however, Canada rebooted its pulp and paper industries to support the war effort. Sleepy mills in the Winnipeg River drainage basin resumed production. As armistice approached, Canada considered how best to ensure employment for returning soldiers. The federal government decided to help Canadian industrialists expand their operations by financing peacetime production. Industrial expansion in northwestern Ontario, however, would not be possible without electricity.

It was in this environment that provincial officials viewed Lake of the Woods with renewed interest. Here was water that could be turned into hydroelectricity. Hydroelectric power would fuel industry. Industry would create jobs. Indeed, the socio-economic benefits of water development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin seemed unlimited.

In this section of the dissertation, we move in the south direction. According to the teachings of the medicine wheel, the south represents physical strength and vigour.⁹³ Here we will explore how the Hydro-Electric Power Commission physically transformed the Winnipeg River. Our goal in Chapter 3 is to understand the communication strategies that the HEPC used to claim and to remake the riverine environment. In 1966, journalist Heather Robertson wrote that “Indian poverty is neither a mistake nor an omission [it is neither incidental nor accidental]. It is a deliberate and inevitable product of Canadian attitudes and social structures.”⁹⁴ In this chapter, I echo her claim and show that the HEPC’s communication strategies resulted in the inequitable distribution of benefits: indeed, the HEPC developed preferential compensation programs that guaranteed the economic recovery of non-Indigenous riverine users.

The south direction is also “the great place of testing for the physical body.”⁹⁵ And so, we also explore the physical labour of unskilled Anishinabek labourers in Chapter 4. Our goal is to understand the conditions of their labour. More importantly, we will explore the rewards – social and financial – that Anishinabek labourers expected to gain from testing their bodies felling trees, driving trucks, or installing transmission lines for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. I argue that Anishinabek men sought work for pay to reinforce the boundaries of their reservation by financially providing for the families therein.

⁹³ Lane, Jr., et al., *Sacred Tree*, 48.

⁹⁴ Heather Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 1991), 10.

⁹⁵ Lane, Jr., et al., *Sacred Tree*, 49.

WEST DIRECTION: WHENCE DARKNESS COMES

The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario began operating Whitedog Falls Generating Station at full capacity in June 1958.⁹⁶ The HEPC envisioned a future where it could meet Ontario's ever increasing energy demands. The Northwestern Division, the HEPC believed, would provide energy security.

Anishinabek families living between Norman Dam and Whitedog Falls Generating Station faced an uncertain future. Some Anishinabek families, those who had worked for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, had hoped for job security. But, as the HEPC began to dismantle its labour camps near Whitedog Falls, Anishinabek visions of continuous employment faded. However, Anishinabek families could see clearly that the Winnipeg River had changed. Dalles 38C Indian Reserve was now located between two hydroelectric generating stations. It sat on the downstream side of Norman Dam, making it prone to flash flooding. It also sat on the upstream (reservoir) side of Whitedog Falls Generating Station. The Winnipeg River had a new upper limit of about 320 metres above sea level between Old Fort Island, near Kenora, and Dalles 38C Indian Reserve.⁹⁷

In June 1958, the long-term consequences of these riverine changes were unknown. In this section of the dissertation, we move in the West direction. According to the teachings of the medicine wheel, the West is the direction of the unknown. It is the direction whence darkness comes.⁹⁸ Here, we will explore how hydroelectric power generation influenced the next generation of Anishinabek water users. In Chapter 5, I

⁹⁶ Whitedog Falls Generating Station consists of three units. Unit 1 went into operation on 17 February 1958. Unit 2 went into operation on 25 March 1958. Unit 3 went into operation on 16 June 1958. At this time, Whitedog Falls Generating Station became fully operational. "Whitedog Falls Generating Station," Ontario Power Generation Inc., accessed 26 July 2015, <http://www.opg.com/generating-power/hydro/northwest-ontario/Pages/whitedog-falls-station.aspx>.

⁹⁷ "Winnipeg River (Ontario) Level Statistics," Lake of the Woods Control Board, accessed 26 July 2015, <http://www.lwcb.ca/reg-guide/rgp-PT2-WPGRVRON.html>.

⁹⁸ Lane, Jr., et al., *Sacred Tree*, 53.

argue that hydroelectric development contributed directly to the collapse of the fishing economy on the Winnipeg River: rising water levels on Winnipeg River increased levels of food and economic insecurity at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. The 1970s are generally accepted as a “dark time” in the community – families went hungry and bank accounts sat empty.

The West is also “the place of testing, where the will is stretched to its outer limits.”⁹⁹ In this section, we will explore the long-term complications of riverine change. In Chapter 6, I argue that food insecurity caused by mercury contamination upset Anishinabek household economies, leading many Anishinabek families to rely on federal services to ensure their survival. In this section of the dissertation, we focus on Anishinabek mothers and their unique struggles to provide for the next generation of Anishinabek youth.

NORTH DIRECTION: A PLACE OF REFLECTION

The North is acknowledged as a place of reflection. In this section of the dissertation, I distill my research findings. I ask, “What have I learned by travelling through all four directions?” From each direction – East, South, and West – Anishinabek families responded creatively to riverine development by settler-colonists. In the East, I found evidence of adaptation; Anishinabek families opened bank accounts, replacing caches with cash. Money could be used to purchase supplies – like flour and canned goods – if Norman Dam destroyed ice roads needed to move across trapping grounds. In the South, I found evidence of cooperation. Some Anishinabek men saw the Whitedog Falls Generating Station as an opportunity to earn sufficient income to occupy the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 53.

reservation year-round. Work for pay promised, at least temporarily, to secure reservation lands. And, in the West, I found evidence of passive resistance. Anishinabek men who could no longer fish walked away from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve and attempted to integrate into neighbouring reservations. If Dalles 38C Indian Reserve could not survive economically, it would survive in the memory of its people.

Taken together, these chapters provide an image of Indigenous, particularly Anishinabek, experiences of the post-World War II era. Generally accepted as a golden age of prosperity through state-led capitalist expansion, my research shows that infrastructure capacity building program decreased economic stability on-reservation after 1945. Improved standards of living among the *waiâbishkiwedig* in the post-war period correlate positively with decreased standards of living on reserve. Endemic poverty was not discovered in 1969; it was structured by Canada, Ontario, and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario.

EAST DIRECTION

WHERE THE SUN RISES

CHAPTER 1

“IT... NEVER WAS INTENDED THAT LANDS UNDER A RIVER SHOULD BELONG TO THE INDIANS”: ANISHINABEK AND PROVINCIAL WATER USES AND RIGHTS IN THE WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, 1873-1915

Imagine it is 1915. You are a settler of British origin standing on a road named Main Street in a town called Kenora in a province known as Ontario.¹ You have been lured to Kenora by the promise of steady employment. Municipal circulars have long suggested “the bulk of the milling and manufacturing of [Canada’s] great west will be done [on the north shore of Lake of the Woods].”² These circulars have also attracted the attention of 6000 others: settlers of British origin, Scandinavian lumber workers, Ukrainian and Polish navvies, Métis trappers and, of course, the local Anishinabek.³ Some of your neighbours have proudly identified Kenora as a boom town. And, rightly so. In 1871, the population of the Canadian North was approximately 60,000. British men tended to pass through Kenora, collecting furs from the local Hudson’s Bay Company trading post before paddling southeast towards Fort Frances. Then, in 1876, Frank Gardner, the first permanent White settler, established himself in Kenora. Others, like you, followed. By 1901, the Canadian North housed over 100,000 souls.⁴ Looking out over Lake of the Woods, Kenora’s industrial future seemed to be guaranteed by Mother Nature herself. Here lay a body of fresh water said to stretch over 4,349 square kilometres. You saw the promise of hydroelectric power

¹ Rat Portage officially joined Ontario in 1884 when the boundary dispute between Manitoba and Ontario was settled in favour of Ontario. Lake of the Woods Museum (LOWM), “Historical Timeline,” *Lake of the Woods History* (2006), accessed 19 March 2009, <http://www.lakeofthewoodsmuseum.ca>.

² “A Triune City,” *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 9 January 1892, 1.

³ Town Planning Consultants Limited, “Chart I: Population, Town of Kenora,” Chapter 2: Assumptions, in *Report on Existing Conditions Prepared as Based Material for Planning* (Kenora, Ontario, September 1947), 25.

⁴ Robert M. Bone, *The Canadian North: Issues and Challenges* III, 3rd edition (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2009), 99-100. See also LOWM, “Historical Timeline.”

generation. The Ontario Legislature had recently revoked *An Act for the Settlement of Questions between the Governments of Canada and Ontario Respecting Indian Lands* (assented to 4 May 1891), which gave the Anishinabek control over waterways running through or around reserve.⁵ A new piece of provincial legislation, *An Act to Confirm the Title for the Government of Canada to Certain Lands and Indian Lands* (1915), deemed that waterways “shall not [...] form part of such reserve.”⁶ Yes, this Act gave you hope of a prosperous, industrial future in Kenora. Water, you knew, was power.

At pivotal moments between 1873 and 1915, water on Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River became synonymous with hope for a prosperous economic future.⁷ In 1873, Treaty #3 was concluded between “Her Majesty the Queen of Great

⁵ In 1891, Canada and Ontario passed “basically identical laws” (Treaty #3 and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre (TARR), Kenora, ON. Don Colborne, Leo Waisberg, Tim Holzkamm and Diane Adams, “A Briefing of the Treaty#3 Chiefs-in-Assembly on the Headlands Issue,” Prepared for the Treaty 3 Chiefs-in-Assembly, 16 May 2008). These laws deemed “waters within the laid out [reserve] or to be laid out as Indian reserves... form part of such reserve” (Ontario Legislature, *An Act for the Settlement of Questions between the Governments of Canada and Ontario Respecting Indian Lands*, 1891. See Ontario, *Statutes of the Province of Ontario Passed in the Session Held in the Fifty-Fourth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Being the First Session of the Seventh Legislature of Ontario* (Toronto: Warwick & Sons, 1891), 7-9. On 16 April 1894, Canada and Ontario came to a statutory agreement known as the 1894 Joint Agreement of the 1891 Legislative Acts. It affirmed that “the land covered with water lying between the projecting headlands of any lake or sheets of water not wholly surrounded by an Indian Reserve or Reserves shall be deemed to form part of such reserve” (Canada and Ontario quoted in David McNab, “The Administration of Treaty 3: The Location of the Boundaries of Treaty 3 Indian Reserves in Ontario, 1873-1915, in *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, edited by Ian Getty and Antoine Lussier (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011), 149). In 1915, Ontario revoked clause 4 of the 1894 agreement and claimed that Indian reserves shall *not* include water lying between the projecting headlands (TARR, Mark L. Berlin to Shirley T. Parks, “Headland to Headland Boundary, Grand Council Treaty 3,” 27 January 1981).

⁶ Claudia Notzke, “Fisheries,” *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada* (Concord, ON: Captus Press Inc., 1994), 68-9.

⁷ In *Cross-Currents*, Jean Manore explores how riverine claims mirrored political power in the Moose River Basin. She reveals the Crown interpreted Canadian treaties, particularly Treaty #9, to subjugate First Nations: “Rather than protecting Aboriginal rights and lands, they [treaties] served as vehicles for surrender and compensation, thereby clearing the way for development” (30). While no direct reference to water is made, documentary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin suggests that Canada robbed First Nations of their resources with Treaty #9 (*Trick or Treaty*, directed by Alanis Obomsawin, Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2014). This argument reinforces Manore’s claim that Canada interpreted Treaty #9 to both subjugate First Nations and to lay claim to natural resources, likely including water. Unlike Treaty #3, which does not clearly address Indigenous water rights, Treaty #9 “included a clause that no site suitable for hydroelectric development exceeding 500 horsepower would be included within the boundaries of any reserve” (Manore, *Cross-Currents*, 26). This clause – which separates Cree and Anishinabek peoples from valuable waterways – resulted from

Britain” and the “Saulteaux Tribe of Ojibbeway Indians.” In return for sharing their land, the “Ojibbeway,” also known as the Anishinabek, received Crown-sanctioned rights and benefits, including, but not limited to reserve lands, cash, an allowance for hunting and fishing tools, and farming assistance. The Anishinabek agreed to share approximately 14,245,000 hectares of territory through Treaty #3. Neither Crown nor Anishinabek negotiators clearly defined how water resources were to be shared. Instead, shorelines functioned as boundary limits in written records of their agreement. Crown agents seem to have been primarily concerned with guaranteeing safe access to a “tract of country” (read: land).⁸

After treaty, Anishinabek inhabitants and provincial officials debated how water ought to be used and who ought to be using it; their decisions, made over 100 years ago, determine how water on Lake of the Woods is used today. During the Treaty #3 negotiations Anishinabek chiefs and leaders demanded their right to

pre-treaty negotiations between Ontario and the Department of Indian Affairs. Thus, Treaty #9 is an apt demonstration of how colonial/legal claims to water reflect the growing power of settler-colonists. Both Canada (and Ontario) designed the treaty to ease industrial developments.

Control over water also mirrored political standing within Ontario (not just between Canada and First Nations). H. V. Nelles has written that *The Politics of Development* illuminates “failures in democratic practice” (xxi). Readers learn how business elites (or men of capital) influenced the provincial regulation of Ontario’s resources. For example, in 1903, Premier George William Ross appears to have drafted “An Act to Provide for the Construction of Municipal Power Works and the Transmission, Distribution and Supply of Electrical and Other Power Energy” through “close consultation” with E. W. B. Snider (244). Snider was “a miller, a farm implement manufacturer, lumberman, and former politician” with a vested interest in wresting power away from Toronto. He organized a group of manufacturers into an effective pressure group that demanded a cooperative approach to the distribution of hydroelectric energy. Snider’s goal was to ensure favorable electricity rates on the outskirts of Toronto (237-38). The establishment of the 1903 Act revealed Snider and his delegation had sufficient political clout to demand change (albeit moderate) from the Ross government. Adam Beck, “as a mayor of an aspiring manufacturing city... sincerely felt the need for cheap, Niagara power” (247). When the Conservative government rose to power, Beck replaced Snider as leader of the public power movement. The relationship between water control and political standing is again evident: Snider’s influence declined as Ross’ power declined. Beck’s influence increased as Whitney’s power increased. Beck pushed the Whitney government to create the Hydro-Electric Commission of Inquiry in 1905. Beck was appointed as its chairman (258). The establishment of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission in 1906 resulted, in part, from Beck’s ability to acquire mass support for public ownership. Beck “pitted the haute against the petite bourgeoisie of Ontario” while working on the Commission (304). Beck thus pushed Whitney’s hand towards public ownership (despite moderate alternatives), using the public interest to, ultimately, reinforce “a progressive businessmen’s crusade” (304).

⁸ “Treaty #3 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Saulteaux Tribe.”

continue using water for long-established fisheries.⁹ The government of Ontario initially supported Anishinabek demands, as Indian use did not interfere with the provincial goal of promoting water access to draw settlers into Northern Ontario. The 1891 Act seemed to recognize Anishinabek fishing concerns: it protected Indian ownership of the waterbed and rescinded “the public common right of the fishery” in Indian waters.¹⁰ In April 1894, Canada and Ontario came to a statutory agreement known as the 1894 Joint Agreement of the 1891 Legislative Acts. Claudia Notzke argues that “[t]he intergovernmental Agreement of 1894... committed the provincial government to the headland-to-headland principle,” meaning that waters running through or around reserves belonged to the Indians.¹¹ The advent of hydroelectricity, however, led the Ontario Legislature to redefine provincial water use by 1915. Anishinabek water use was now seen as incompatible with provincial development goals. Conflicts over water were shaped by the unequal distribution of social power and reinforced that inequality. As this chapter reveals, the Ontario government constitutionally needed the federal government’s consent to repeal the 1894 Joint Agreement and to redefine reservation boundaries. Confident that the Department of Indian Affairs would support Ontario’s development goals, provincial legislators changed the map of Treaty #3 reservations without negotiating with the Anishinabek, who would be, in years to come, strongly affected by hydroelectric development. Changing definitions of water rights therefore provide a lens through which to view

⁹ Garden islands and access to water for gardening were also a central concern of the Anishinabek during this time period, but are outside the scope of this study. For further information on Anishinabek gardening practices, see: Wayne Moodie, “Manomin: Historical-Geographical Perspectives on the Ojibwa Production of Wild Rice,” in *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada*, edited by Kerry Abel and Jean Friesen (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991), 71-80; Tim Holzkamm, Leo Waisberg, and Jean Lovisek, “Ojibwa Reserves as ‘An Incubus Upon the Territory’: The Removal Policy in Ontario, 1874-1982,” in *Papers of the 27th Algonquian Conference*, edited by David H. Pentland (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1997), 337-52.

¹⁰ Ontario Legislature, *An Act for the Settlement of Questions*. See Ontario, *Statutes of the Province of Ontario*, 7-9.

¹¹ Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources*, 68.

changing power relationships between Anishinabek residents and settler arrivals in northwestern Ontario.¹²

Water has also been used to explore power dynamics between First Nations and the settler state in post-World War II Canada. Tina Loo suggests members of the Tsay Kay Dene First Nation were disproportionately affected by the Bennett Dam along the Peace River. Many Indigenous peoples, Loo claims, “lost their autonomy” as BC Hydro flooded their communities to create the Williston Reservoir (circa 1968).¹³ The unequal distribution of environmental impacts and benefits in British Columbia becomes evident in Loo’s analysis of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Project Group, an intergovernmental task force designed to restore the delta (circa 1971). Tsay Kay Dene recommendations to “make the Delta even better” were dismissed by the Project Group which separated the Bennett Dam from the larger history of

¹² This chapter complements Nelles’ *The Politics of Development*. His chapter “Hydro as Myth” examines the socio-political push for public power in southern Ontario. Readers learn that changing definitions of water rights (private versus public) provide a lens through which to view changing power relationships between Toronto (an industrial centre) and peripheral manufacturers. Nelles writes, “The socially and politically influential manufacturers turned readily to public ownership primarily because the private electric companies at Niagara refused to guarantee them an immediate, inexpensive supply of a commodity on which they believed their future prosperity rested” (249). The Berlin Board of Trade organized against the Electric Development Company in Toronto. Members of the Berlin Board of Trade required a steady supply of cheap electrical power. They used the language of “public interest” to rally support for public – initially, municipal – ownership in the early 1900s. While the language of “public interest” garnered large-scale support, ultimately upsetting the power of the Electric Development Company, members of the Berlin Board of Trade were primarily concerned with cost management. Water became public in response to the mobilization, and growing political power, of London, Brantford, Hamilton, Stratford, Waterloo and Berlin (now Kitchener). Similarly, in northwestern Ontario, manufacturers struggled to overturn “private” – that is reserved First Nations right – to water resources to secure electricity at a cost.

I am not the first to argue that non-Indigenous industrial interests compromised Indigenous water rights. Using Treaty #9 as an example, Jean Manore argues that treaty negotiations were used to separate Cree and Anishinabek peoples from their waterways. Once Treaty #9 was signed, Canada claimed “paramount power over land use” (*Cross Currents*, 30). In Manore’s analysis, Canada claimed, by extension, control over water. Manore argues the word “subject” (as it appears in Treaty #9) provides governing authority to the Crown: “The Aboriginal people were to have the right to ‘pursue their usual vocations’... subject to ‘such regulations as may from time to time be made by the government of the country’” (30). Thus, through Treaty #9, the Crown claimed the right to govern the Cree and Anishinabek and their political prowess (and power to generate electricity) declined. Despite this loss of power – both political and hydroelectric – Manore suggests that the Cree and Anishinabek “continued to persist and subsist according to their traditional ways” (37). This chapter builds on Manore’s research by revealing how the Anishinabek continued to persist. More importantly, it reveals how the Anishinabek resisted colonial attempts to unilaterally determine water use.

¹³ Tina Loo, “Disturbing the Peace: Environmental Change and the Scales of Justice on a Northern River,” *Environmental History* 12 (October 2007): 905.

colonialism that required redress to improve lives in the region. Loo claims that even in its attempts to redress environmental problems, the settler state dictated how loss could be framed and discussed.¹⁴ Ardith Walkem has echoed such claims, and criticizes the Canadian court system (rather than preliminary investigations) for upholding settler power. In Walkem's estimation, the "socioeconomic interests of newcomer society" have prevented Indigenous peoples from (re)claiming jurisdiction over "Canadian" waterways. While Canadian court decisions have protected Indigenous water use, they have failed to enforce co-management over lakes, rivers, and oceans; Indigenous water interests remain secondary to provincial water management systems. Court decisions thus reinforce the line between colonizer (Canada) and the colonized (Indigenous nations).¹⁵

¹⁴ I have opted to use "claims" and "suggests" as Loo lacks sufficient evidence to formulate an argumentative stance. For example, Loo suggests "The Bennett Dam might have contributed to [Tsay Kay Dene] problems... but from bands' standpoint, the damage caused by the dam merged almost seamlessly into the larger impacts of centuries of colonization and structural changes in the economy that rendered many northern communities poor" (910). Intergovernmental task groups failed to accept Tsay Kay Dene timelines for environmental dysfunction in the Peace-Athabasca Delta. However, Loo is unable to link this observation to any Tsay Kay Dene First Nation. Instead, she claims this "perspective is shared by indigenous peoples in the United States and around the world" (919, footnote 88). She proceeds to cite American and Australian historians. While it is likely that the Tsay Kay Dene understand environmental change (and its origins) differently than the state, Tsay Kay Dene experiences of colonialism cannot be defined by Indigenous groups to the south. *Ibid.*, 910.

¹⁵ Ardith Walkem, "The Land is Dry: Indigenous Peoples, Water, and Environmental Justice," in *Eau Canada: The Future of Canada's Water*, edited by Karen Bakker (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 307-09. Manore similarly argues that "court rulings denigrated Aboriginal title" (*Cross Currents*, 32). In "Estimating Historical Sturgeon Harvests on the Nelson River, Manitoba," in *Fishing Places, Fishing People: Traditions and Issue in Canadian Small-Scale Fisheries*, edited by Dianne Newell and Rosemary E. Ommer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), Peter J. Usher and Frank J. Tough also identify "the unwillingness of the courts to characterize harvesting rights as a form of property right that provides for defences against and remedies for, nuisance, trespass, or expropriation" (193). Usher and Tough do not focus their analysis on water rights; however, jurisdictional dispute – between Manitoba (provincial) and Cross Lake (Cree) – undergirds their analysis. Cross Lake Indian Band maintains that Jenpeg Generating Station, operated by Manitoba Hydro, has diminished the Nelson River's sturgeon population since the 1970s. In the 1990s, Cross Lake Indian Band sought compensation through arbitration. Usher and Tough composed their article in response to Manitoba Hydro's allegation that "because the estimate made by the provincial Department of Natural Resources of the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) on the Nelson River sturgeon fishery was lower than Symbion's consumption estimate [Symbion was hired by Cross Lake Indian Band], that estimate, and hence the band's claim for harvest loss, were excessive" (196). Usher and Tough do not indicate the court's decision. And yet, their article reveals how state power and social inequity relate: Manitoba Hydro dismissed Cross Lake Indian Band's submission, downplaying environmental losses on reserve. Speaking back to power required Cross Lake Indian Band to retain Peter Usher and submit a Westernized counter-argument.

Donald Fixico, writing about the Warm Springs Confederated Tribes of the United States, offers an interesting counter narrative (albeit in brief). While Fixico agrees that water power and social power are intimately linked, he suggests Native American tribes can maintain their autonomy by developing their own hydroelectric generating systems (like Pelton Reregulating Dam). Although the Warm Springs Confederated Tribes are a unique case – they have the only Indian-owned hydroelectric project in the United States – Fixico successfully dissociates hydroelectric development with colonial subjugation.¹⁶ He demonstrates instead that hydroelectric power can be a tool for healing; hydroelectric projects can empower Native Americans and help them to rebuild self-supporting reservation economies. This chapter does not present hydroelectric power as a tool for healing; however, it aims to dissociate hydroelectric development with colonial subjugation. Even as Ontario redrew reservation boundaries, Anishinabek families reinforced their spiritual duty to manage water resources in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Where the province drew boundary lines (visible on paper), the Grand Medicine Society made audible alternative conceptions of space through song.

Competing definitions of water use will be examined from Anishinabek and settler perspectives using both Indigenous and non-Indigenous sources. Indigenous sources include the Paypom Treaty, as written by Joseph Nolin. Nolin was a Red River Métis hired by Lake of the Woods District Chiefs to record the 1873 negotiations. Paypom consists of notes from his personal diary.¹⁷ Paypom has long

¹⁶ Donald Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century: American Capitalism and Tribal Natural Resources*, 2nd edition (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado Press, 2012), 199.

¹⁷ Ojibwa Chiefs of Treaty #3, 4 October 1873, *Paypom Treaty*. “Paypom Treaty,” Grand Council Treaty #3, accessed 19 November 2014, <https://gct3.net/grand-chiefs-office/gct3-info-and-history/paypom-treaty/>.

been absent from historical analyses of treaty-making in Canada.¹⁸ I offer one possible explanation for its absence from the literature. Paypom was not made available for public viewing until the 1990s. Around 1906, Treaty #3 signatory Chief Powassan of Shoal Lake First Nation entrusted Paypom to Carl Linde, “a photographer and a friend to the Indian People.”¹⁹ Some years later, Elder Paypom, of Shoal Lake First Nation, purchased the document from Linde in an effort to protect Anishinabek history from settler bids. Paypom was subsequently treated like *wiigwaasabakoon* (birch bark scroll), a sacred object. Elder Paypom regulated now ceremonial viewings of the document. Public access to Paypom was thus limited until his death in 1990, whereupon his successor donated the text to Grand Council Treaty #3.²⁰ Paypom has only been readily available for analysis for twenty-five years. This chapter actively incorporates Paypom using it as corroborative evidence with more familiar non-Indigenous documents (federal legislation and historical records created by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and its predecessors).

¹⁸ For example, Paypom Treaty is absent from Sarah Carter’s *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). Carter identifies that “[t]here were unique features to each of the agreements, and different understandings of these agreements emerged” (121) without exploring written Indigenous sources. Jill St. Germain’s *Indian Treaty Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867-1877* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001) acknowledges the Anishinabek engaged Joseph Nolin during the negotiations, but Paypom is not referenced in her analysis (64). Germain appears to be more interested in the presence of competent interpreters during negotiations than the content of Nolin’s notes.

Out of the academic texts examined for this chapter, only David McNab mentions the existence of Paypom in “Hearty Co-operation and Efficient Aid, the Métis and Treaty #3,” in *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 3, no. 1 (1983). However, McNab does not quote Paypom within the body of his essay. Instead, he notes potential complications associated with using it: “The copies of these three documents [oral histories, Nolin’s notes, Paypom] were not signed either by representatives of the Indian people or by the Federal Government, as was the Treaty #3 document” (5). Ethnohistorians Tim Holzkamm and Leo Waisberg are the only experts to quote Paypom in their analysis of Treaty #3. Much of their work, however, is not widely circulated and is considered the property of Grand Council Treaty #3. Holzkamm and Waisberg, *We Have Kept Our Part of the Treaty: The Anishinaabe Understanding of Treaty #3*, (Kenora: Grand Council Treaty #3, 3 October 1998).

¹⁹ Ojibwa Chiefs of Treaty #3, 4 October 1873, *Paypom Treaty*.

²⁰ Former Chief Allan Luby (Ogemah), telephone interview with author, 9 November 2014. Sara Mainville, affirms that Paypom Treaty was purchased by Chief Paypom from Charles Linde. Mainville does not address access limitations. Brian Walmark includes Elder Paypom’s description of the treaty purchase in Appendix C of his analysis of Treaty #3. As in Mainville’s text, Walmark makes no reference to document restrictions. See Mainville, “Treaty Councils and Mutual Reconciliation Under Section 35,” *Indigenous Law Journal* 6, no. 1 (fall 2007): 153, footnote 59; Brian Walmark, “Alexander Morris and the Saulteaux: The Context and Making of Treaty 3,” (M.A. thesis, Lakehead University, 1993).

Ultimately, this chapter focuses on the bureaucratic processes that restricted Anishinabek access to water resources. In so doing, it contributes to the literature on jurisdictional disputes in northwestern Ontario – disputes that are historically rooted in the Constitution Act of 1867. In 1870, the Dominion government acquired Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company. This purchase forced the Province of Ontario to delineate its boundaries, sparking conflict over which government could rightfully claim the resource-rich lands northwest of Lake Superior. In 1884, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) ruled in favour of Ontario: the province's western boundary was drawn at "the meridian of the most north-westerly angle of the Lake of the Woods."²¹ Considerable research has been conducted on the *St. Catherine's Milling* case, or *Indian Titles* case, borne out of the Ontario-Manitoba Boundary dispute in 1888.²² In this case, the Dominion government argued that "Indians" owned the land and that ownership rights were passed to the Dominion

²¹ Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, *Ontario-Manitoba Boundary Case*, 11 August 1884, accessed 19 November 2014, http://www.heritage.nf.ca/law/lab5/labvol5_2148.html.

²² *St. Catherine's Milling and Lumber Co. v the Queen* [1888] features in diverse analyses of Indian title in Canada – from academic texts to informational pamphlets. Focused analyses include S.B. Cottam's "Indian title as a 'celestial institution': David Mills and the St. Catherine's Milling Case" in *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects*, edited by Kerry Abel and Jean Friesen (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1991, 247-52). Cottam reveals that the extinguishment of Indian title by settlers shifted from general practice to court-sanctioned policy after 1888. Given that *St. Catherine's Milling* dealt with Indian title in Canada, it also features in general academic analyses of Indian title like Kent McNeil's "The Meaning of Aboriginal Title" (*Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality, and Respect for Difference* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 135-54). Informational pamphlets summarize critical findings for a non-academic audience. For example, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) released "Facts about Leading Aboriginal Rights Cases," accessed 10 December 2014, <http://www.crr.ca/images/stories/pdf/ePubFaShLeadAboRight.pdf>. The CRRF explains that "the Privy Council conceived of Aboriginal title as a mere right to occupy and use the land, rather than as a legal right of ownership (3)." The Privy Council's ethnocentric viewpoint was first problematized by Cottam. In 2007, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) commissioned a research paper on Aboriginal Title and Rights: Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Aboriginal Title Curriculum Project, 2007, accessed 10 December 2014, http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/Educators/Two_World_Views.htm#axzz3LX9pP7KY. UBCIC summarized the material consequences of this decision as follows: "91(24) jurisdiction only extended to lands set aside as Indian reserves after treaty. While Indigenous Nations may have had a continued interest in the lands before the treaty, once Aboriginal Title had been extinguished the lands fell entirely to the province" (14-5). This statement reflects the 2006 findings of Kent McNeil who argued that "[t]he nature of the underlying title the provincial Crown has by virtue of s. 109 is therefore determined negatively: it amounts to whatever interest remains after the Aboriginal title that burdens it has been subtracted." Kent McNeil, "Aboriginal Title and the Supreme Court: What's Happening," *Saskatchewan Law Review* 69, no. 2 (2006): 295.

through treaty. The Dominion government claimed ownership of “Indian” resources within Ontario’s boundaries through this transfer agreement. Ontario counter-argued that “Indians” had a “mere right to occupancy”; “Indian” title was based solely on use and could be extinguished by the Crown (hence, resources reverted to the Province of Ontario through treaty). So far scholars have tended to focus on issues related to land use (or control, or ownership).²³

The historical focus on land use may be linked to the ongoing debate over Indigenous water rights in Canada. Indeed, jurisdictional disputes (re: water

²³ In *Native Peoples and Water Rights: Irrigation, Dams, and the Law in Western Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), Kenichi Matsui made a similar suggestion. He claimed that “no historian [in 2009] has tackled these [federal] records [re: ‘securing water for the Native peoples’] and unveiled the importance of Native water rights issue in western Canada” (6). He indicates that “the question” of Indigenous water rights “has become politically muddled because of increasing business and ‘public’ interest in, and industrial demand for, the limited water resources” – a question being debated by “Native peoples, legal experts, and policymakers” at the time of his publication (6). Matsui offers a series of case studies to illuminate how British Columbia wrested water from reservation lands in interior British Columbia and parts of Alberta. Yet, he cautiously notes that “this chapter is to place these jurisdictional issues [First Nations versus federal government versus provincial government] within a historical context rather than to determine the extent to which the Native peoples, the federal government, or the provincial government had jurisdictional power over water” (41). This is an interesting disclaimer. Matsui draws readers’ attention to the political nature of doing water research: he knows that his research may be used by “Native peoples, legal experts, and policymakers” to determine settler claims. With this sentence, Matsui provides a frame for his research and reinforces that *Native Peoples and Water Rights* is a historical (exploratory) rather than legal (judgmental) exercise. Matsui finds that “both provincial and federal officials shared the belief that whatever rights Natives had, they were held at the ‘pleasure of the Crown’” (63). He found that Indigenous assertions of right were rejected by both provincial and federal officials (64).

Dispute is not unique to Ontario, Alberta, or the interior British Columbia. In “The Land is Dry,” Walkem also makes reference to similar disputes along the Pacific Coast. For example, “[t]he Haida Nation, for example, is currently involved in litigation claiming Haida title to all of Haida Gwaii... including the deep sea and ocean bed surrounding the islands” (307). Douglas Harris’ *Landing Native Fisheries: Indian Reserves & Fishing Rights in British Columbia, 1849-1925* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008) draws attention to the origins of water disputes in British Columbia. He argued that Canada set aside smaller reserves in British Columbia because Indian Affairs believed coastal First Nations could support themselves through fishing (thus large tracts of land were not required for agriculture). In the early twentieth century, however, Canada began to limit Indigenous access to fisheries. What is in question is the right of coastal First Nations to use water to make beneficial use of reservation lands.

While Ardith Walkem highlights ongoing debates over Indigenous water rights, she also advocates for Indigenous jurisdiction. Walkem suggests that Aboriginal title (as defined in the *Delgamuuk* case) ought to protect Indigenous water rights, at least by providing them a voice “in all land and water use decisions that affect their territories” (306). Treaty is also associated with Indigenous water rights. Walkem argues that “Many treaties contain the provision that Indigenous peoples will be able to continue to sustain themselves on the lands reserved to them, and this provision implies the full protection of the water necessary to fulfill the terms of the treaty” (308). Claudia Notzke also addresses Aboriginal title and treaty in “Water Resources,” *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*, 7-32.

allocations on reserve lands) remain active in northwestern Ontario. As Alison Norman, research advisor for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, noted in an email to the author on 1 September 2015, “there are some [claims] currently that deal with the area that you are talking about [Treaty #3].”²⁴ In 2007, Ardith Walkem noted that Anishinabek groups in the Great Lakes “are claiming title to areas of the waterbed” through the Canadian court system. She also made reference to “‘water walks’ along the shores of the Great Lakes both to uphold their [Anishinabe women’s] responsibility to give voice to the water and to raise awareness.”²⁵ Implicit in this statement is a long-standing jurisdictional dispute: Anishinabek women are demonstrating their responsibility to manage water and, in so doing, peaceably demonstrating against (failed) provincial management. Further attention must be paid to jurisdictional disputes over “Indian” waterways. By discussing Anishinabek access to and use of water in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, this chapter contributes to the scholarship on federal/provincial disputes over natural resources in Ontario. While this chapter aims to place these jurisdictional issues within their historical context, it does not seek to determine who has (or who ought to have) jurisdictional control over waterways in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

Furthermore, this chapter considers how local Anishinabek responded to settler disputes. The existing literature, particularly texts on the *Indians Title Case*, emphasizes Anishinabek exclusion from the deliberations of the JCPC. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) explains that “Aboriginal peoples were not represented when the case was argued.”²⁶ The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) similarly claims that “the Indigenous Nations interpretation of Treaty #3 was not

²⁴ Alison Norman, email message to author, 1 September 2015.

²⁵ Walkem, “The Land is Dry,” 307, 312.

²⁶ Canadian Race Relations Foundation, “Leading Aboriginal Rights Cases,” 3.

considered in this dispute [*Indian Titles Case*].”²⁷ These public announcements reveal that current understandings of Indian title were borne of Eurocentric thinking. CRRF shows that “the Privy Council ended up interpreting the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* on the basis of European ways of thinking.”²⁸ UBCIC supports CRRF’s contention: “the arguments formulated by Canada and the province of Ontario...ignored the spirit and intent of the treaty.”²⁹ Strictly speaking, as a final court of appeal, the JCPC never listened to the proponents, only the legal arguments that came from the lower courts. What is missing is a sense of how Indigenous nations may have responded through internal systems of governance and related spiritual practices. This chapter builds on the existing literature, revealing that Anishinabek families expressed conflicting understandings of territorial rights (and resource management) outside of Western institutions. While it is true that the Ontario Legislature did not solicit Anishinabek opinion while revising the 1894 Joint Agreement (an exclusionary tactic reflective of the concept of *Indian Title*), Anishinabek families relied on spiritual regulatory bodies like the Grand Medicine Society and responded to Ontario outside of Western institutions. It appears Anishinabek residents of the Winnipeg River drainage basin rejected Ontario’s 1915 amendments. Ontario claimed to have eliminated Anishinabek water rights through the unconstitutional imposition of foreign legislation (the 1915 Act). After 1915, however, Anishinabek families (re)affirmed jurisdiction over “the water lying between the projecting headlands of any lake or sheets of water” through drumming ceremonies.³⁰ Spiritual practice in the Winnipeg River drainage basin provides evidence of continuous Anishinabek belief in (and exercise of) Anishinabek right to and management of water resources. As a result,

²⁷ UBCIC, “Aboriginal Title Curriculum Project,” 15.

²⁸ Canadian Race Relations Foundation, “Leading Aboriginal Rights Cases,” 3.

²⁹ UBCIC, “Aboriginal Title and Rights,” 15.

³⁰ Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources*, 69.

spiritual practice also reveals the existence of a mental map, carried by Anishinabek families, that conflicts with provincial (re)definitions of Indian space.

ANISHINABEK WATER USE: “FROM WHICH THEY DERIVE THEIR CHIEF MEANS OF SUSTENANCE”

Approximately 3,000 Anishinabek lived on Lake of the Woods when Crown officials penetrated their territory in the mid-19th century.³¹ At this time, the Anishinabek subsistence economy consisted primarily, though not exclusively, of hunting, trapping, fishing, and *manomin* (wild rice) harvesting.³² Written evidence of large fish populations in Anishinabek territories west of Lake Huron extends back to 1660 when trader Pierre Esprit Radisson compared Lake Superior to a “terrestrial [sic] paradise.” The region was resource rich; Radisson identified bear, beaver and enough “[a]ssickmack” or whitefish to “make good cheare.”³³ Other historians have used Radisson’s travelogue to provide evidence of largescale sturgeon fisheries in Anishinabek territories, locating Radisson’s claim to have “dried up above a [mille] sturgeons” on the south shore of Lake Superior.³⁴ By the end of the eighteenth century, fur traders noted that Anishinabek in the Winnipeg River drainage basin were difficult trading partners, “content to live upon sturgeon and other native foods rather

³¹ Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 10. This population estimate may have been pulled from Simon J. Dawson’s *Report on the Line of Route between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement*. Dawson writes that “The only localities where the Indians are at all numerous are at the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River, but the entire population does not greatly exceed three thousand.” Simon J. Dawson, “The Indian Element,” *Report on the Line of Route between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement* (Ottawa: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1868), 27.

³² David McNab, “The Administration of Treaty 3,” 145.

³³ Germaine Warkentin, ed, *Pierre-Esprit Radisson: The Collected Writings, Volume 1, The Voyages* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 256.

³⁴ Tim Holzkamm, Victor Lytwyn, Leo Waisberg, “Rainy River Sturgeon: An Ojibway Resource in the Fur Trade Economy,” *Canadian Geographer* 32, no. 3 (1988): 195. In his 1868 publication, Simon J. Dawson noted that hundreds of Anishinabek gathered at Rainy River to harvest large quantities of sturgeon. Dawson wrote, “I have seen as many as five or six hundreds of them collected at one time, at the rapids on Rainy River, engaged in catching sturgeon, the flesh of which they preserve by drying like Pemmican. Please see Simon J. Dawson, *Report on the Line of Route*, 27.

than engage in trade.”³⁵ An unidentified official, writing after 1857, associated Anishinabek refusal to participate consistently in trade with the Hudson’s Bay Company with an “abundance of sturgeon.” Indeed, large-scale fisheries and a steady supply of food led the *waiâbishkiwedig* to criticize Anishinabek as “independent; sometimes even a little saucy” from contact until treaty.³⁶

Non-written sources like totemic symbols suggest fishing was important to the Anishinabek since “time immemorial.” Anthropologist Basil Johnston identified five fish clans north of Lake Superior.³⁷ Anishinabek used totemic symbols like family names; they functioned as, in the words of Theresa Schenck, the “genealogical chain by which bands are held together.”³⁸ It is important to note that Anishinabek families living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin continue to define themselves (and their relations) by clan. Elder Alice Kelly of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, for example, identified as a sturgeon in 2012.³⁹ Anishinabek men and women also tried to emulate the character of their totemic animal. *Maanameg* (catfish) symbolized breadth and scope (likely intellectual); *ginoozhe* (pike) symbolized swiftness and elegance; *namebin* (sucker) represented calmness and grace; *name* (sturgeon) evoked depth and strength; and *adikameg* (whitefish) symbolized abundance.⁴⁰ Totems informed human behaviour. Kelly acted like a sturgeon in 2012 when she shared her community’s

³⁵ Tim Holzkamm and Leo Waisberg, “Native American Utilization of Sturgeon,” 29.

³⁶ Unidentified official quoted in *ibid.*, 30.

³⁷ Basil Johnston identified the six clans as catfish, pike, sucker, sturgeon, whitefish, and mermaid. In 1885, historian William Warren identified the same six clans. However, Warren specified that sucker, sturgeon, and whitefish “are only known on the remotest northern boundaries of Ojibway country.” For further reading, please see: William Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 44. Warren’s claim was reprinted in Frances Densmore’s *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979), 10. Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003), 53, 60.

³⁸ Theresa Schenck, “William W. Warren’s History of the Ojibway People: Tradition, History, and Context,” in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, edited by Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2003), 199.

³⁹ Elder Alice Kelly, “Living with ‘Dirty Water’: Personal Recollections from On and Off Dalles 38C Indian Reserve” (paper presented at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Uncasville, Connecticut, 3 June, 2012).

⁴⁰ Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*, 53.

struggle to access potable water at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference in Ledyard, Connecticut. She had the strength to communicate Dalles 38C's intergenerational pain with a public audience.⁴¹ In the late 1800s, much like today, Anishinabek men and women incorporated their clan fish into how they understood their world. The existence and significance of the fish clans reflect the social (and spiritual) as well as economic importance of fishing in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Through totemic symbols, fishing was part of daily life – fish were social markers, behavioural guides, and dinner.

Totemic symbols indicate a relationship with water resources that extends beyond the material. Elder Alex Skead, of Rat Portage Indian Reserve, explained that "There is a word older than *manomin* and that is *manitou gitigenan*, the 'Great Spirit's Garden.'"⁴² As Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Director Andy Sky suggests, the concept of *manitou gitigenan* necessitates an understanding of land and water resources as a living gift from the Great Spirit and, as a garden, tending this gift requires eco-literacy. Sky proceeds to outline three land use directives handed down by the Great Spirit: (1) *maanci chi' ga'win*, the duty to ensure the health of resources and to mitigate against exploitation; (2) *assemma ka'iwn*, the duty to offer ritual tobacco in honour of what has been taken from the land; and (3) *wii'kaadown*, the duty to make seasonal offerings in gratitude to land, water, air, and all living things. Maintaining such a gift requires recognition of the land as a shared resource: Anishinabek resource managers offered thanks to all creatures who shared the Great Spirit's garden. Chiefs and leaders thus entered into treaty negotiations with the clear goal of maintaining access to *manitou gitigenan*. Land and water resources were not to be ceded; instead, Anishinabek sought to uphold their sacred duty to manage

⁴¹ Elder Kelly, "Living with 'Dirty Water'".

⁴² TARR, Alex Skead quoted in Andy Sky, "Limitations of Existing SCB Process and Bill C-30 Action Redress of Me'Ozhaa Taa'Wa'Ning" (September 2010).

resources and to accommodate newcomers through the extended practice of *maanci chi' ga'win*.

Anishinabek treaty demands illustrate the extraordinary value they placed on water for fishing in the Winnipeg River drainage basin and a clear sense of what future relationships between Anishinabek occupants and the *waiābishkiwedig* should look like. During the failed treaty negotiations of 1869, Anishinabek negotiators presented thirteen conditions under which they would consent to make a treaty. Condition 13 reads, “[t]hat every married woman gets fishing terine [sic] and cord line to make four nets every year.”⁴³ Condition 13 was designed to ensure that waters could continue to be fished according to long-standing practice. In her anthropological report *Chippewa Customs*, Frances Densmore noted that “the use of seines was the general method of obtaining fish” and that “fishing... was the work of women who placed nets in the water.”⁴⁴ By demanding that Anishinabek women receive fishing implements, negotiators worked towards retaining their fishing rights. They wanted tools to continue Anishinabek patterns of water use in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

Access to water and fishing rights were so important to the Anishinabek that they refused to take treaty until their demands in this regard were satisfied. From the perspective of Commissioner Wemyss M. Simpson in 1871, the Anishinabek chiefs were making “new and extravagant demands” of the Crown.⁴⁵ Federal records indicate Anishinabek chiefs and leaders may have tempered their demands before 1869: presents were exacted from Hudson’s Bay Company traders and federal

⁴³ The 13 conditions, dated 22 January 1869, were attached to Alexander Morris’ report of the 1873 negotiations. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), “Alexander Morris, Report to Government House, 14 October 1873,” RG-10, Vol. 1918, fol. F2790B.

⁴⁴ Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 125.

⁴⁵ Wemyss M. Simpson quoted in Bryan Phelan, “First Nations Denied Economic Promise of Treaty #3: Historians’ Perspective,” *Kenora Enterprise*, 31 September 2001, 7.

surveyors for *passage through* the country. There is no evidence to suggest Anishinabek chiefs negotiated a payment schedule that would allow continuous settler access to the territory. Indeed, in 1857 John Palliser attributed his “friendly parley” with the unnamed chief at Fort Frances to the latter’s regular “dealings [with] the Hudson’s Bay Company.” Like waves of non-Indigenous traders, Palliser could continue his journey unmolested, so long as he moved *out* of Anishinabek territories.⁴⁶ Two years later, Anishinabek chiefs and leaders granted surveyor Simon J. Dawson “full permission to explore the country.” Confusion about Anishinabek demands may have arisen from Dawson’s 1859 report. Dawson suggested to the Chiefs (and reported to the Crown) that “payments should be made in the shape of yearly presents such as articles that might be useful to them.”⁴⁷ In this quotation, Dawson does not suggest a cash allowance; he suggests payment-in-kind. His recommendation grants the Crown the power to manipulate access fees: goods are not specified. Thus, the value of gifts could vary on an annual basis. Given this historical context, Anishinabek chiefs and leaders appeared to strike a hard bargain when treaty negotiations began in 1869. In July 1872, frustrated Indian Commissioners Simpson, Dawson, and Robert Pither reported to Joseph Howe, Secretary of State for the Provinces, that because of their concerns over water rights “[t]he Indians could not be

⁴⁶ In *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 3-21), historians Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller, and Frank Tough revealed that Hudson’s Bay Company traders maintained peaceable relationships through regular participation in ceremony. In what would become Treaties 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10, Indigenous inhabitants expected annual gifts (annuities) from the Hudson’s Bay Company. Indigenous inhabitants also expected relief for individuals enduring physical and/or material hardships. It is likely that the Hudson’s Bay Company adopted similar practices in what would become Treaty #3. See also John Palliser, “Exploration of British North America,” in *The Papers of the Palliser Expedition 1857-1860*, eds. Irene M. Spry (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1968), 76-8.

⁴⁷ Simon J. Dawson, “General Report on the Progress of the Red River Expedition,” *Report on the Exploration of the Country between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement and Between the Latter Place and the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan*, facsimile of Canada, Legislature of Canada, *Sessional Papers No. 36* (Appendix), A. Toronto: n.p, 1859.

induced to go into the discussion.”⁴⁸ From the Anishinabek perspective, fishing rights were no extravagance. As E. B. Borron put it in “Report on Indian Claims Arising at North-West Angle,” Anishinabek negotiators were afraid “the settlers would interfere with the fisheries from which they derive their chief means of sustenance.”⁴⁹ Elaborating on Indian refusals to enter treaty, Dawson noted that fishing rights were “strongly insisted upon and [they] had great weight with the Indians.”⁵⁰ Chiefs and leaders refused to make a treaty that required the surrender of their fisheries or challenged their relationship to water.

The treaty that was finally concluded in 1873 granted the Anishinabek the protection they sought. Treaty Commissioner Dawson recalled the commissioners promised Anishinabek “would forever have the use of their fisheries.”⁵¹ Commissioners well understood that without such a guarantee no agreement would have been reached. In this quotation, Dawson asserted that Anishinabek retained usage rights over local fisheries; fishing territories were explicitly identified as *theirs*. Additionally, Anishinabek did not surrender their use of fishing territories. There is no indication that fisheries were to be located on reserve; rather Anishinabek appear to have continued proprietary interest over fishing territories regardless of location. Indeed, Treaty #3, as published by the Government of Canada, expressly provides for the right of the Indians to “pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered.”⁵² In addition to unaffected water use, Paypom Treaty guarantees the Anishinabek “fifteen hundred dollars every year in twine” for the

⁴⁸ It is important to note that mineral rights also featured in the 1871 negotiations. LAC, “Simon Dawson, Robert Pither, Wemyss Simpson, Report to Joseph Howe, Secretary of State, 17 July 1872,” RG 10, Vol. 1868 F577.

⁴⁹ TARR, “E. B. Borron, Report on Indian Claims Arising at North-West Angle, 30 December 1893,” Document 371, Phase 1: Headlands to Headlands.

⁵⁰ Holzkamm and Waisberg, “Native American Utilization of Sturgeon,” 32.

⁵¹ Simon Dawson quoted in Holzkamm and Waisberg, *We Have Kept Our Part of the Treaty: The Anishinaabe Understanding of Treaty #3*, 6.

⁵² “Treaty #3 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Saulteaux Tribe.

making of nets.⁵³ Both Anishinabek and Dominion sources demonstrate that hard, realistic bargaining by First Nations took place. The Anishinabek position was designed to guarantee the material and cultural survival of Indigenous people, as demonstrated by Anishinabek attempts to retain their fisheries and to maintain long-standing water use.

Once Treaty #3 was signed, the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior surveyed Anishinabek territories and assigned reserves. The location of reserves recognized Anishinabek water use. In a memorandum for the Department of the Interior in Ottawa dated 24 June 1874, Minister David Laird determined reserves “should be confined generally to localities heretofore cultivated by the Indians and occupied by them as camping and fishing grounds.”⁵⁴ Early officials attempted to keep treaty. In an unsigned letter dated 1886 to George Foster, Minister of Mines and Fisheries, Commissioner Simon J. Dawson was said to oppose non-Indigenous fishing on Lake of the Woods. The author supported Dawson’s position, arguing that “the Indians of this country are a fish-eating people; they live almost entirely on that food.”⁵⁵ By 17 December 1890, Commissioner Dawson garnered the support of E. Dewdney, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, who determined that fisheries on Lake of the Woods “should be reserved for the common use of the Indians of Treaty #3, as from this Lake they have always been in the habit of deriving their principal sustenance.”⁵⁶ The Dominion recognized Anishinabek water use and protected the fisheries accordingly. This protection culminated with *An Act for the Settlement of Questions between the Governments of Canada and Ontario*

⁵³ Ojibwa Chiefs of Treaty #3, 4 October 1873, *Paypom Treaty*.

⁵⁴ LAC, “Minister of the Interior David Laird to Department of the Interior, 24 June 1874,” RG 2, Series 1, PCOC 841(a).

⁵⁵ LAC, “Unidentified to Honourable Geo Foster, Minister of Mines and Fisheries, 27 December 1886,” RG10, Vol. 3800, File 48-542.

⁵⁶ LAC, “E.W. Dewdney, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, to the Department of Indian Affairs, 17 December 1890,” RG10, Vol. 3830, File 62509-1 Black.

Respecting Indian Lands (1891), which confirmed Anishinabek propriety rights over water running through or around reserve. The 1891 Act held that “the waters within the lands laid out or to be laid out as Indian reserves in said territory... shall be deemed to form part of such reserve.”⁵⁷ As legal scholar Richard Bartlett notes, the Dominion derived Indian territories from Treaty #3.⁵⁸ By confirming Anishinabek ownership of waterbeds adjacent to reserve in the 1894 Joint Agreement, the governments of Canada and Ontario protected ancestral fishing grounds and thus upheld the treaty right to fish.⁵⁹

Federal recognition and protection of water rights manifested itself in local geographies. Writing on the allocation of reserves in British Columbia, legal historian Douglas Harris argues that the Department of Indian Affairs consciously located Indian communities in British Columbia near the water to reduce settler conflict over arable lands and the cost of guardianship (First Nations were guaranteed independent access to a stable food supply). Harris rejects the academic tendency to centre rights analysis on written records of treaty negotiations (or, in the case of British Columbia, a lack thereof). He argues that scholars must look beyond textual sources to visual records of the past. Harris contends that federal maps prove that Dominion officials intended to provide fisheries to First Nations. Simply put: the division of space reflects federal understandings of Indian rights.⁶⁰ Following in Harris' footsteps, a look at a modern map of the Winnipeg River drainage basin shows that Indian agents similarly approved reserves to provide water access.⁶¹ Superintendent Dewdney was

⁵⁷ Ontario Legislature, *An Act for the Settlement of Questions*.

⁵⁸ Richard H. Bartlett, *Aboriginal Water Rights in Canada: A Study of Aboriginal Title to Water and Indian Water Rights* (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1986), 107.

⁵⁹ LAC, “Simon Dawson, Robert Pither, Wemyss Simpson, Report to Honourable Joseph Howe, Secretary of State, 11 July 1871,” RG 10, Vol. 1864, fol. 375.

⁶⁰ Harris, *Landing Native Fisheries*, 187, 196, 198.

⁶¹ Refer to Figure 1 for a map depicting select Anishinabek reserves in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

not all talk: he approved reserves that maintained the attachment of Anishinabek to their fisheries. Promoters recognized that Indian reserves dotted the waterscape, musing that “more fairy-land beauty, more real isolation from the bustle of life, more roaming over nature in her primitive beauty, untouched by the hand” could be found at Lake of the Woods – with the exception of Anishinabek peoples who “live around this lake” and traverse the waters in birch bark canoes.⁶² Some of the earliest reserve maps (produced by federal surveyors) in the Winnipeg River drainage basin clearly extend reservation boundaries across adjacent waterways. Consider A.W. Ponton’s 1890 survey of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve (Figure 3). Ponton allotted Chief Kawitaskung and his band the waters below the northernmost rapids to the “high rocky country” distinguished by its “timberwood [sic] with jack pine.” Approximately one year later, Ponton’s map was approved by J. Nelson, the federal agent “in charge [of] I.R. surveys.”⁶³ Elder testimony has subsequently revealed that the allotted stretch of water included long-established fishing grounds.⁶⁴ That local Anishinabek occupied riverbeds and built communities along the shore was common knowledge among the *waiâbishkiwedig* and a certifiable fact by the Department of Indian Affairs in the immediate aftermath of treaty.

Even while Indian water rights were governmentally recognized, the Anishinabek realized that the *waiâbishkiwedig* understood water differently. Even in these early days of government agreement to protect fishing and water rights, the seeds of encroachment were sown: Treaty #3 guaranteed non-Indigenous access to resources. The Anishinabek recognized that resource access could lead to misuse.

⁶² “Rat Portage, Keewatin and the Canadian Lake of the Woods,” *Special Supplementary Number of the Colonist*, September 1893, 3-4.

⁶³ A. W. Ponton, D. L. S., *Treaty No. 3 Ontario: Survey of Indian Reserve No. 38C at ‘The Dalles’ Winnipeg River*. [Map] 20 chains: 1 inch. Ottawa: Dominion Land Survey, 1890.

⁶⁴ Sheldon Ratuski, “Gathering Traditional Knowledge and Perspectives of Sturgeon on the Winnipeg River from Dalles Community Members” (unpublished report, Lake of the Woods Museum, 2005), unpaginated.

And so, they took steps to ensure they would be compensated if the *waiâbishkiwedig* broke treaty and infringed on Anishinabek water rights. During the 1873 treaty negotiations, Chief Powassan, from Lake of the Woods, demanded that Commissioner Dawson “Look to where the waters separate,” rhetorically using water as a symbol of difference. Powassan recognized that Anishinabek and non-Indigenous lifestyles and water usages differed; it was essential to establish a relationship based on mutual respect – where separation demanded negotiation or compensation. The Anishinabek recognized that the *waiâbishkiwedig* used water for dams, canals, and other public works. Should non-Indigenous water use predominate, the Anishinabek demanded compensation for the loss of resource use. On 1 October 1875, Lake of the Woods District Chiefs signed for waterfront reserves. Chiefs agreed to the following clause: “It is also understood that the Government shall have the right to construct canal locks or other public works... should they so desire. In such case, the Indians to be duly notified and if the Fisheries should be destroyed thereby the Indians to be fairly dealt with in consequence.”⁶⁵ The Anishinabek thus guarded against having their interests damaged by future public works. If they lost some of their water resources they would receive new fiscal resources in exchange. Anishinabek water use (fisheries) dominated in the immediate post-treaty period in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

THE RED HURDLE: CHANGED WATER USE IN ONTARIO AND THE PURPOSIVE REDEFINITION OF ANISHINABEK WATER RIGHTS

Despite the federal treaty provisions, however, the government of Ontario always saw water as a riparian (not specifically Indigenous) right. In 1859, *Chasemore vs. Richards* determined riparian rights in Ontario, assigning “the right to the enjoyment of a natural stream of water on the surface, *ex jure naturae*, [to]

⁶⁵ TARR, “J. S. Dennis, Surveyor General, to David Laird, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 1 November 1875,” Document 29, Phase 1: Headlands to Headlands.

the proprietor of adjoining lands, as a natural incident to the right to the soil itself.”⁶⁶ Land owners were entitled to use adjacent waters as they wanted, without needing special permission. Dominion maps – like A.W. Ponton’s 1890 survey of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve – extended similar rights to Anishinabek living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

Before 1900, Ontario envisioned water as the key to provincial growth and prosperity because water attracted settlers and industry. In an attempt to draw settlers to the Winnipeg River drainage basin, for example, the province exclaimed, “the Wabigoon River [a tributary of the English River] flows north and west, a broad navigable stream with abundant water-power at intervals” that the hard-working man could use to his profit.⁶⁷ The settler could benefit from domestic consumption, irrigation, or power from water wheels. Ontario’s promotional literature linked a seemingly inexhaustible water supply to visions of individual success. Promoters reminded settlers there was “no water rate to meet” at Lake of the Woods and that “good spring water” abounded there. They pronounced that “[t]here is no good reason a thrifty man cannot make a living here.”⁶⁸ Ontario valued water instrumentally as a way to lure settlers to the northwest. Provincial definitions of water as a resource over which no property rights were recognized (until claimed by the adjacent property owner) mirrored this value system.

⁶⁶ Bartlett, *Aboriginal Water Rights in Canada*, 49. It is important to note, however, that water courses were still considered public resources under the law. Riparian owners were simply entitled to receive the flow of water to their property. For further reading, please see Alastair Lucas, “Security of Title in Canadian Water Rights” (Calgary: Canadian Institute of Resource Law, 1990), 102.

⁶⁷ Toronto Public Library (TPL), Ontario Department of Agriculture, “The Pioneer Farm and the Wabigoon Country Rainy River District – A New Section Opened for Settlement, information as to the country and its capabilities, an account of the farm established there by the Ontario government,” Toronto: Ontario Department of Agriculture, 1896. CIHM/ICMH Microfiche Series, no. 93747.

⁶⁸ “Our North Country,” *Rat Portage Miner and Semi-Weekly*, 16 May 1906, 1.

Provincial officials also visualized local hydroelectric generation as a “symbol of anxiously awaited industrialism.”⁶⁹ Government pamphlets actively encouraged its local industrial use. Targeting prospective investors, literature on the Rat Portage and Rainy River District claimed that “[t]he chief resources of the country lie in the rich quality and large extent of mineral deposits.”⁷⁰ Ontario touted mining operations in gold, silver, iron, mica, asbestos, talc, and quartz as prime candidates for hydroelectric development. It was believed that “possibilities are only beginning to be made known” and that “the future will witness here the upbuilding of extensive mining.”⁷¹ According to the province, future success in northwestern Ontario also depended on the establishment of the lumbering industry. Ontario promised that “[t]he various streams are richly lined with timber of the finest quality in great quantities.”⁷² All the Northwest needed was private investment. Provincial emphasis on water as a riparian right amounted to a de facto protection of Indigenous rights, as Ontario’s promotional campaign met with little success.

There was also little threat from hydroelectric development during the nineteenth century. Firstly, few people lived in-and-around Kenora, whose population hovered around 1,800 souls in 1891 and peaked near 6,000 souls in 1911; power demands remained low.⁷³ Secondly, Anishinabek occupants of the Winnipeg River drainage basin enjoyed provincial protection of their water rights

⁶⁹ Nelles, *Politics of Development*, 217.

⁷⁰ J. J. Talman Library, “Rat Portage and the Rainy River District: the islands of the Lake of the Woods as a summer resort : the lumber industry of the district : the rich and fertile farming lands of the Rainy River : mineral wealth and development,” *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 1888. PAMP 1888#26.

⁷¹ TPL, Ontario Department of Agriculture, “The Pioneer Farm and the Wabigoon Country Rainy River District.”

⁷² J. J. Talman Library, “Rat Portage and the Rainy River District.”

⁷³ Population details were pulled from Town Planning Consultants Limited, “Chart I: Population, Town of Kenora,” Chapter 1: Base Material for Planning, Section 3: Population, in *Report on Existing Conditions Prepared as Based Material for Planning*, Kenora, Ontario, September 1947.

because of technological limitations: direct current could only be efficiently transferred over a short distance, which mitigated against hydroelectric dams. As Merrill Denison notes “Without the turbine, generator, and high-voltage transmission line, Ontario’s splendid hydraulic resources would continue to pour almost unused.” He reminds readers that the water wheel was not an efficient power convertor; its use was limited to a few strategic and highly localized sites.⁷⁴ While water wheels could power production at an industrial scale, development was highly unfeasible on isolated rapids in the Winnipeg River drainage basin – finished products could not be easily transferred to markets. North Americans made little advance in long-distance energy transmission until November 1896, when a generating station in Niagara Falls successfully powered the city of Buffalo over a 32-kilometre-long transmission circuit. According to Robert Hay, 32 kilometres “was the longest electricity had been transmitted for commercial purposes up to that time.”⁷⁵ When transmission technology changed, so too did Ontario’s willingness to recognize Anishinabek treaty rights to water. After the Niagara-Buffalo event, Ontario business and municipal elites (re)conceptualized water as a solution to Ontario’s energy (i.e. coal) shortage.⁷⁶

In “The Way to Modern Treaties: A Review of Hydro Projects and Agreements in Manitoba and Quebec,” Romauld Wera and Thibault Martin similarly observed that technological advances stimulated Canadian interest in hydroelectric power. Wera and Martin write, “At the 1878 Universal Exhibition of Paris, the world discovered a new reality: electric lighting. The following year, Quebec became the first Canadian city to take advantage of this wondrous new

⁷⁴ Merrill Denison, *The People’s Power: The History of Ontario Hydro* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1960), 27.

⁷⁵ Robert H. Hay, *Electric Power in Ontario* (Ontario Municipal Electric Association: 1985), 5.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

possibility.” They continue, “A new era began in Quebec and Manitoba when several companies, specializing in producing and distributing electricity appeared.”⁷⁷ This chapter builds on this observation, forging links not only between technology and hydroelectric power production, but technology and Indigenous dispossession. In so doing, it reinforces James Waldram’s claim that “Native inhabitants became a non-issue” for provincial bureaucrats until “a new source of wealth [water] was targeted” as a result of “changes in [hydroelectric] technology.”⁷⁸ My sources reveal that the link Waldram identified between technology and Indigenous dispossession is not unique to the Prairie Provinces. It draws our attention to what appears to be a national trend in Indigenous dispossessions: technological change reduced reservation holdings in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Under considerable political pressure, Ontario simply upheld treaty rights until inconvenient to do so, at which point Ontario claimed priority in allocating water resources, ignoring and supplanting federal responsibility for the protection of reserve lands.

Early twentieth-century announcements made by Ontario emphasized that water was available to determined settlers and industrialists, often in response to public pressure for the government of Ontario to fund hydroelectric initiatives. Beginning in 1902, manufacturers and municipal leaders from Waterloo County hounded Premier William Ross to de-privatize water. They argued that Ontario had been largely dependent on Great Britain and the United States because it lacked coal. Ontario relied on international imports to produce energy in the steam era. Hydroelectric power combined with Ontario’s abundant water resources promised economic independence. The Berlin Board of Trade claimed that hydroelectric

⁷⁷ Wera and Martin, *Power Struggles*, 58.

⁷⁸ Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run*, 5.

development was akin to national defence; de-privatization would benefit all Canadians.⁷⁹ Conservatives supported such views and pressured the Laurier government to prevent all exports to New York and devote energy resources to Ontario.⁸⁰

And yet, as H. V. Nelles has argued, “Premier Ross found it impossible to identify the public interest and the manufacturers’ interests as closely as had the municipalities.”⁸¹ In the spring of 1903, Premier Ross announced, “We are willing to allow municipalities, Toronto, and the rest, to develop energy there and they will not be curtailed. But Ontario must not get into debt because of it.”⁸² Ontario did not consider hydroelectric generation a profitable enterprise, supporting privatization for fear that provincial investment would benefit few residents. Premier Ross emphasized that the government of Ontario would not fund projects unless for the “substantial benefit of all.”⁸³ He maintained that provincial coffers could not be drained to benefit manufacturers specifically. At the time, Ontario understood water, or hydraulic potential, as a private or municipal concern. It is important to note that Ontario’s attitude reflected a fairly standard approach to fiscal prudence as well as technological limitations. Any large projects were going to incur debt at a time when Ontario had yet to establish a substantial tax base. From the moment of this announcement, however, Premier Ross faced opposition from organized municipalities and manufacturers. Interest in Ontario’s waterways burgeoned as acceptance of individual ownership and use declined.

⁷⁹ Nelles, *Politics of Development*, 321. In *Electric Power in Ontario*, Hay emphasized that Ontario depended on coal suppliers before the development of water power. He writes, “Coal [could] be shipped hundreds of miles from Alberta or imported from the United States.” In 1897, during an American miners’ strike, Ontario industrialists were forced to import coal from Wales (5).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁸² Premier Ross quoted in William Rothwell Plewman, *Adam Beck and the Ontario Hydro* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), 39. Nelles also selected this quotation for discussion in *Politics of Development*, 241.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 39.

The year 1905 was a pivotal moment in which water became a public utility. The Conservatives, known to support public power initiatives, were voted into office.⁸⁴ Following his election, Premier James Pliny Whitney redefined water as a provincial resource, when he announced:

I say on behalf of the government that the water powers all over the country shall not in future be made the sport and prey of capitalists and shall not be treated as anything else but a valuable asset of the people of Ontario, whose trustees the government of this people are.⁸⁵

Water was no longer to be claimed by individual property owners; it became a provincial asset. Whitney's government would not allow individuals to monopolize water resources (an action condoned by Liberals), but would ensure regulated use for electricity production. Water needed to be controlled by Ontario and protected by Ontario for the benefit of Ontario residents generally.⁸⁶ The Ontario Legislature created the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, an administrative body, through *An Act to Provide for the Transmission of Electric Power to the Municipalities* (1906). The 1906 Act gave the HEPC powers "to distribute electric

⁸⁴ Nelles, *Politics of Development*, 257.

⁸⁵ Premier Whitney quoted in Plewman, *Adam Beck and the Ontario Hydro*, 47. Robert Hay paraphrased Whitney's nationalist declarations as follows: "Whitney said clearly that the water power of Niagara was the property of the Canadian people and declared that the Ontario Government must make it possible for the people to enjoy this heritage without paying tribute to profit-seeking enterprise" (Hay, *Electric Power in Ontario*, 10).

⁸⁶ Nelles, *Politics of Development*, 257. In his chapter "Hydro as Myth," however, Nelles demonstrates that the language of "public ownership" initially benefited manufacturers in southern Ontario. Some manufacturers "conceived the public interest as indistinguishable from their own private interests" (248). They believed that power at a cost would make home electricity more affordable thus benefitting the working class. In addition, power at a cost would help to stimulate employment in manufactories – a perceived boon to the working man. Yet, as the example of P. W. Ellis is used to show, "[t]he interests of the manufacturers and the people were not entirely identical." Ellis "advocated public power" but did not act as "a true friend of labour" in his role as president of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association (254). In *Adam Beck*, James Sturgis noted that some Ontarians initially protested against the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, noting that "[t]here were long and delicate negotiations with farmers along the route [of a transmission line from Niagara]" (19). In 1910, Adam Beck, Chairman of the HEPC, worked to gain the support of farmers in Ontario. Beck required a public relations campaign to quell dissent amongst agrarians who feared losing valuable land to serve manufacturers' interests.

power to the municipalities, but also to regulate private utilities.”⁸⁷ According to Robert Hay, the 1906 act was repealed in 1907 and recast as *The Power Commission Act* (1907). The 1907 act established a “wholesaler” and “retailer” system between the Commission and the municipalities, making electricity available at favourable contracted rates.⁸⁸ Ontario thus normalized understandings of water as a hydroelectric resource and, perhaps more importantly, a provincial resource.

It was only when the province adopted a general policy denying private ownership of the waterbed in 1906 that Ontario sought to redefine and then deny Anishinabek water rights. All Anishinabek reserves on Lake of the Woods were set along the shoreline.⁸⁹ In 1906, water rights on reserve could be derived from two sources: Treaty #3 and riparian ownership. As previously noted, Treaty #3 protected Indian rights to fisheries. In accordance with Treaty #3, the 1891 Act and the 1894 Joint Agreement extended reserve boundaries from shoreline to shoreline, or headland to headland, greatly increasing the territory under Indian control. Legal scholar Richard Bartlett argues that the Indian Act guaranteed riparian rights to waterways running through reserve. He writes, “[a] Band has possession of all reserve land, including riparian land, subject to its allotment to an individual member or appropriation for Band purposes.”⁹⁰ Furthermore, the Indian Act expressly sets land apart for the “use or benefit” of the bands.⁹¹ This is not to suggest that the Indian Act purposefully guaranteed riparian rights; indeed, it was touted as a tool of directed civilization – “beneficial entitlement” as understood by the Department of Indian

⁸⁷ Sturgis, *Adam Beck*, 15.

⁸⁸ Hay, *Electric Power in Ontario*, 14.

⁸⁹ McNab, “The Administration of Treaty 3,” 147. Shortly after James Whitney took office, in 1905, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Enquiry was established. This Commission resulted in “a comprehensive survey of the development and undeveloped water resources of Ontario” (see Hay, *Electric Power in Ontario*, 11). This Enquiry raised awareness of and increased concern over the location of reserves throughout the province.

⁹⁰ Bartlett, *Aboriginal Water Rights in Canada*, 50.

⁹¹ *Indian Act*, S.C. 1876, s. 3(6).

Affairs referred to agricultural development, not seasonal rounds.⁹² Nevertheless, legal apparatuses that guaranteed Indians' "beneficial entitlement" to, or use of, reserve lands directly challenged the government of Ontario's hydroelectric development goals; rapids that needed to generate electricity for "the people of Ontario" fell under Anishinabek jurisdiction.

In recognition of the obstacle posed by Anishinabek water rights, the Attorney General of Ontario hoped to amass information with regard "to the character of each reserve as to which water powers existed."⁹³ Waterways in northwestern Ontario now mattered to the Ontario Legislature; the Attorney General of Ontario needed to define newly acquired access. As early as March 1906, E. L. Newcombe, the Deputy Minister of Justice, determined that no known reason existed "why the title to a reserve may not be subject to a right on part of the province."⁹⁴ Newcombe believed Ontario could reserve water for its own use regardless of reserve boundaries. His interpretation hinged on shared constitutional powers over water between the federal and provincial governments. Despite the fact that reserve lands were federal creations (under section 91 (24) of the Constitution Act of 1867), Ontario had primary responsibility for making water use and allocation decisions.

By December 1914, Deputy Minister Aubrey White of the Department of Lands, Forests, and Mines anticipated "future trouble" over Indigenous water rights. Indigenous claims to water could slow industrial development off-reserve, which depended, in part, on a stable supply of electricity. White anxiously noted that "there

⁹² John Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, edited by Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 29-51.

⁹³ LAC, "E. L. Newcombe, Deputy Minister of Justice, to Frank Pedley, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 6 February 1906," RG10, Vol. 2314, fol. 62509-4, pt. 1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

are some water powers lying in the boundaries of reserves.”⁹⁵ Concerns over the implications of Anishinabek control of water resources ran through the correspondence between government officials at the provincial and federal levels. As White wrote to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, “I find there are rivers of considerable size running through them and it surely never was intended that lands under a river should belong to the Indians.”⁹⁶ Scott proposed the repeal of the 1894 Joint Agreement to White as a solution to Ontario’s water access problems. Scott wrote, “If the reserves are confirmed as surveyed, we would [be] require[d] to repeal the statute of 1894 and substitute therefor an enactment which would cover the settlement of the reserve question.” Settlement involved “say[ing] nothing about waters or fisheries.”⁹⁷ By removing the headland-to-headland clause, Ontario could access Anishinabek water resources as its repeal would effectively limit the reserve to land. To manage the burden of loss, Scott proposed that White allow the Anishinabek water powers “not exceeding 500 horse powers.” Scott appears to have sought some form of financial compensation for his wards, suggesting that “a percentage of the gross earnings of water powers when developed” be provided to the Indians.⁹⁸ Despite this limited attempt to secure a

⁹⁵ TARR, “W. R. White, Deputy Minister of Lands, Forests, and Mines, to Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 20 December 1913,” Document 570, Phase 1: Headlands to Headlands.

⁹⁶ LAC, “W. R. White, Deputy Minister of Lands, Forests, and Mines, to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 15 December 1915,” RG 10, Vol. 2314, fol. 62509-5, pt. 1.

⁹⁷ LAC, “Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to W. R. White, Deputy Minister of Lands, Forests, and Mines, 30 December 1914,” RG 10, Vol. 2314, fol. 62509-5, pt. 1.

⁹⁸ In her analysis of the Moose River Basin, Jean Manore found that “the federal government would not defend Aboriginal peoples’ right and title against hydroelectric exploitation, insisting only on compensation for those individuals and bands harmed by the loss of possessions or land” (*Cross-Currents*, 8). Scott’s recommendation to provide dispossessed bands with a “percentage of the gross earnings” aligns with this claim. However, Scott did not insist on compensation. In later exchanges, Scott “trust[ed]” that White would adhere to the compensatory scheme proposed by the Department of Indian Affairs. The subsequent failure of the Department of Indian Affairs to comment on the 1915 Act suggests that Scott (a federal agent) did not insist on behalf of his wards. The federal government did not overtly challenge provincial breaches of power, in part (as Manore suggests) because “the federal

revenue stream for his wards, Scott placed Anishinabek interests after settler goals to open up Treaty #3 to the *waiâbishkiwedig*.

Three months after the issue was initially raised by Ontario, the Departments of Lands and Forests and the Department of Indian Affairs were ready to discuss a draft of the proposed repeal. In March 1915, Scott submitted his comments to White for consideration. Scott highlighted basic typographical errors in the proposed repeal (e.g. replace 1884 with 1894). He also demanded that islands remain part of existing reservations, writing “I wish to make clear...that we shall get the islands which are shown on the plans as part of the reserves.”⁹⁹ While it is difficult to confirm without a copy of White’s draft, Scott may have attempted to again secure a revenue stream for his wards. Scott “trust[ed] that you [White] will make it 50% as I suggested.”¹⁰⁰ Did Scott envision equal profit-sharing between developers and the Indians? Had Scott hoped to mitigate the very loss he facilitated? Whatever his intention, Scott’s suggestions were never incorporated by the Ontario legislation. The Dominion was consulted as to the form of the 1915 act (and federal officials helped to erode Anishinabek water rights) – however, Ontario discarded the limited protections sought by the Department of Indian Affairs.

In April 1915, the government of Ontario infringed upon the federal government’s jurisdiction and repealed Indian water rights granted by the 1891 Act and affirmed by the 1894 Joint Agreement. *An Act to Confirm the Title of the Government of Canada to Certain Lands and Indian Lands*, passed in 1915, was almost identical to the 1891 Act, except for the following provision: waterways “shall

government too supported the idea of development” (8). Kenichi Matsui came to a similar conclusion in his discussion of British Columbia (see especially “The Struggle for Power over Native Water Rights in British Columbia,” *Native Peoples and Water Rights*, 40-63).

⁹⁹ LAC, “Aubrey White, Deputy Minister of Lands, Forests, and Mines, to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General, March 19, 1915,” RG 10, Volume 2314, File 62, 509 5 pt1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

not be deemed to form any part of such reserve.”¹⁰¹ Once passed, the 1915 act effectively denied Indian water rights derived from Treaty #3, and local Anishinabek lost control over waterways adjacent to their reservations; unlike Ponton’s 1890 survey of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, cartographic depictions of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve after 1915 curbed Anishinabek jurisdiction at the shoreline. Despite limited provincial authority over reserve lands, the government of Ontario suppressed Anishinabek interest and asserted its right over Anishinabek territories. Ontario mistakenly believed – given protracted negotiations – that the Dominion would pass legislation agreeing to exclude First Nations from access to water courses thus validating Ontario’s repeal. The Dominion did not validate Ontario’s repeal; it also failed to challenge the provincial government. Scott “trusted” White. While the Dominion should have legally protested against Ontario, it made little sense to demand a retraction of a repeal that originated from the Department of Indian Affairs.

While the Hydro-Electric Power Commission – established by the Ontario Legislature in 1906 – would proceed to develop over 200,000 brake horsepower to the detriment of Indigenous territories after 1915, Anishinabek living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin rejected provincial (re)definitions of their reservation lands. Anishinabek families living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin continued to host ceremonies to manage waters running “between the projecting headlands of any lake or sheets of water not wholly surrounded by an Indian Reserve” years after *An Act to Confirm the Title of the Government of Canada to Certain Lands and Indian Lands* had been passed. Consider, for example, continued use of *mitigwakik*, a ceremonial instrument also known as the water drum, as an act of resistance. The *mitigwakik* is

¹⁰¹ Ontario Legislature, 1915, *An Act to Confirm the Title of the Government of Canada to Certain Lands and Indian Lands*.

handcrafted exclusively by members of the Grand Medicine Society.¹⁰² Standing 40 to 50 centimetres high, its frame is made of basswood or cedar. A pine insert, sealed with pitch, forms the drum base. Tanned deer hide is used to create a drumhead.¹⁰³ *Mitigwakik* earned its English name, however, for the water that partially fills its frame. Upon completion, *mitigwakik* is “audible at great distances” when played.¹⁰⁴ Given its birth at the hands of a medicine man, the sounding of *mitigwakik* “informed one instantly that a medicine ceremony was in place.”¹⁰⁵ Through these ceremonies Anishinabek participants asserted a continued relationship to water, and to all Creation.

When heard, *mitigwakik* reminded Anishinabek listeners of their connection to Creation. Derrick Bresette, an Anishinabek drummer active with Morningstar River Singers in Toronto, Ontario, suggests that the shape of the drum symbolizes the shape of Earth. The circular shape of *mitigwakik* prompts Anishinabek viewers to reflect on their relationship to Creation. He explains, “So when the singers are sounding the drum and the dancers are coming around that drum.... They are thinking about those things that Mother Earth provides for us.”¹⁰⁶ Ceremony is the product of their – (Wo)Man’s and Earth’s – cooperation.¹⁰⁷ Members of the Grand Medicine Society use these visual cues to teach Anishinabek participants that they are united with Creation. As such, *mitigwakik* become an “inherently political” technology. In “Do

¹⁰² The Grand Medicine Society is a “traditional” spiritual association. To learn more about the Midewiwin Society see: Michael Angel, *Preserving the Sacred: Historical Perspectives on the Ojibwa Midewiwin* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002).

¹⁰³ Note that the Haudenosaunee also built water drums for ceremonial use. Haudenosaunee water drums were often made of birch. For more on Haudenosaunee drums, please see Carleton University and Canadian Heritage, “Iroquois Water Drum,” *Native Drums*, accessed 1 November 2014, http://www.native-drums.ca/index.php/Drums/Water_Drum. For more information on Anishinabek drum construction refer to Thomas Vennum, “The Ojibwa Dance Drum: Its History and Construction,” *Smithsonian Folk Life Series*, no. 2 (1982): 40.

¹⁰⁴ Vennum, “The Ojibwa Dance Drum: Its History and Construction,” 228.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Derrick Bresette, interview with Franziska von Rosen, Toronto, Ontario, 7 November 2004. Transcription available online: <http://www.native-drums.ca/index.php/Interviews?tp=a&bg=1&ln=e>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Artifacts Have Politics?” Langdon Winner argues that an artifact is “inherently political” if its creation and operation require a specific social arrangement.¹⁰⁸ For *mitigwakik* to sound, a recognized spiritual authority must stand behind the drum. Audibility depends on the operation of a social system that competes with Western (Christian) worldviews, particularly, hierarchies of nature.

Consider that unity between the Anishinabek and Creation is further symbolized by the material construction of *mitigwakik*. These drums are built entirely of local, natural resources. They sound when members of the plant world (basswood, cedar, and pine), the animal world (deer), the water world (H₂O), and the human world (drummer) work in unison. According to Paul Nadjiwan, an Anishinaabe drummer from Manitoulin Island, the drum is used “to communicate with the powers of relationship.”¹⁰⁹ Relationships reinforced through ceremonial play counter Western understandings of the natural world. Cherokee author Thomas King argues that Christian origin stories, particularly the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis, encouraged Westerners to position themselves in competition with nature. He explains that “the post-garden world we inherit is decidedly material in nature, a world at war – God vs. the Devil, humans vs. the elements.”¹¹⁰ Members of the Ontario Legislature had likely been socialized to believe that water – an element and not a partner-spirit – could be separated from the Anishinabek. Boundary lines could be drawn between the reservation and the river. And thus, the 1915 act could be written and approved by provincial officials. Members of the Grand Medicine Society rejected Western divisions of the natural world when they drummed; they sounded their sacred bonds

¹⁰⁸ Langdon Winner, “Do Artifacts Have Politics,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 109, no. 1 (Winter, 1980): 121-36.

¹⁰⁹ Paul Nadjiwan, interview with Franziska von Rosen, Ojibwe Culture Centre, M’Chigeeng First Nation, Ontario, 10 November 2004. Transcription available online: <http://www.native-drums.ca/index.php/Interviews?tp=a&bg=1&ln=e>

¹¹⁰ Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2003), 24.

to the waters flowing through the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Anishinabek poet Al Hunter of Manitou Rapids, Ontario, explains: “The earth is water. We are water.”¹¹¹ Sometimes compared to blood in Anishinabek writings, the drum suggested that water could not be pulled from Anishinabek bodies or from Anishinabek communities.¹¹² Its politicized message is that *mitigwakik* reinforced Anishinabek connections to the Winnipeg River drainage basin; it encouraged a mental map that conflicted with Western (re)definitions of Anishinabek space.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Anishinabek medicine men used the drum to actively reinforce Anishinabek connections to waterways in the Winnipeg River drainage basin prior to 1915. Written evidence of *mitigwakik* use prior to 1915 can be found in Lake of the Woods Museum. Evidence often takes the form of complaint. The *waiâbishkiwedig* living in Kenora (and likely Anishinabek converts to Christianity) considered drum use a form of noise pollution. In July 1893, a complainant noted that Anishinabek families had gathered “on the outskirts of Rat Portage” to collect their treaty monies. It was on this “vacant common” that Anishinabek men, women, and children engaged in ceremonies “incomprehensible to the white onlooker.”¹¹³ Approximately one year later, a complainant suggested that Anishinabek drumming “rent the air asunder” as sound travelled “down the [Winnipeg] river” towards town.¹¹⁴ Neither record directly identifies *mitigwakik* or the water drum. However, complaints of sound audible at great distances reflect anthropological descriptions of the water drum.¹¹⁵ Anishinabek peoples played an “enormous variety” of membranophones (drums); alternative instruments would have been available for

¹¹¹ Al Hunter, “Water,” *Days of Obsidian, Days of Grace: Selected Poetry and Prose by Four Native American Writers* (Duluth, MN: Poetry Harbor, 1994), 30.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ “Rat Portage, Keewatin and the Canadian Lake of the Woods,” 5.

¹¹⁴ “Norman: Suburban Notes,” *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 31 August 1894, 3.

¹¹⁵ Vennum, “The Ojibwa Dance Drum: Its History and Construction,” 41.

localized use.¹¹⁶ Rat Portage and “down the river,” although vague, are also suggestive territorial markers. During the 1890s, Chief Kawitaskung oversaw both Rat Portage Indian Reserve and Dalles 38C Indian Reserve.¹¹⁷ Despite his Christian conversion, Chief Kawitaskung lived on a “medicine reserve.”¹¹⁸ Dalles 38C Indian Reserve (and off-reserve territories claimed by band members) remained a hotbed of activity for the Grand Medicine Society. It is likely that band members – united under Chief Kawitaskung – met on shared territories to drum.

Summertime complaints further imply *mitigwakik* use. Distinctions between membranophones determined who played them, where they were played, and when they were played. Grand Medicine Society ceremonies, which might require *mitigwakik* use, frequently occurred during the summer months as kin groups throughout the Winnipeg River drainage basin left their familial trap lines and hunting grounds to meet at shared harvesting sites (i.e. blueberry and *manomin* grounds). Anthropologist Ruth Landes suggested that ceremonial activities included “puberty rights, marriages, dances, [and] religious performance.” These activities peaked from June to August – at the same time which Kenora residents complained about Anishinabek drumming.¹¹⁹

Written records of *mitigwakik* use decline in the early 1900s, likely in response to 1895 amendments to the Indian Act. Federal modifications to Section 114 criminalized all dances and ceremonies that involved giving away goods (e.g. clothing, foodstuffs, and tobacco) or money. Section 114 also “proclaimed it an indictable offence for ‘Indians’ or ‘other persons’ to engage in, or assist in celebrating, or encourage anyone else to celebrate” banned Indigenous dances and

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 31

¹¹⁷ Martin-McKeever, *The Chief's Granddaughter*, 39-40.

¹¹⁸ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

¹¹⁹ Ruth Landes quoted in Vennum, “The Ojibwa Dance Drum,” 24.

ceremonies.¹²⁰ Participants were to be charged with a mandatory two-month sentence by their Indian Agent. Federal authorities, however, could impose a sentence up to six months.¹²¹ Bans appear to have been motivated by federal anxieties about Indigenous territorial use. One Indian Agent claimed dancing “unsettled” Indigenous participants.¹²² Dancing was feared to upset reservation boundaries. In 1905, R.S. McKenzie, Indian Agent in Kenora, Ontario, recommended removing Powassan’s chieftainship as a penalty “urging the Indians to hold these Feasts and dances” in-and-around Shoal Lake Indian Reserve. McKenzie further suggested that Powassan be “sent to jail for a time at hard labour” – all in an attempt to establish “lines” of acceptable conduct.¹²³ By July 1911 at least one chief had been incarcerated for ceremonial dancing in territories covered by Treaty #3.¹²⁴ Yet, imprisonment did not seem to dissuade Anishinabek from affirming their unique relationship to all Creation. In 1921, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, hinted that dances upset federal map-making initiatives, particularly Indian confinement to reservation lands. In a circular to Indian Agents at Kenora and Fort Frances, Scott wrote: “You should... prevent them from leaving their reserves for the purposes of attending fairs, exhibitions, etc.” He further advised that “You should suppress any dances which... unsettle them from serious work.”¹²⁵ Federal agents imprisoned ceremonial participants in an attempt to solidify reservation boundaries, to ensure the settlement of reservation lands. Had federal tactics succeeded, one might

¹²⁰ Backhouse, ““Bedecked in Gaudy Feathers,”” 63. To review the 1895 amendment to Section 114, see Smith, ““4b.I Legislation Restriction Indigenous Ceremonies, 1884-1933,”” 96-7.

¹²¹ Backhouse, ““Bedecked in Gaudy Feathers,”” 65.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²³ Letter, R.S. McKenzie to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, 3 October 1905. Transcription by Tim Holzkamm, author’s collection.

¹²⁴ Letter, Chief Joe Pa-wa-wasin to Rev. Mr. Sermons, Winnipeg, MB, 29 July 1911. Facsimile provided by Tim Holzkamm, author’s collection.

¹²⁵ Circular, from Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to the Kenora and Fort Frances Indian Agents, 15 December 1921. Transcription by Tim Holzkamm, author’s collection.

argue that local Anishinabek accepted (however unwittingly) Western (re)definitions of Anishinabek space – but, *mitigwakik* use continued “way out on the lake.”¹²⁶

Oral testimony and biography reveal that local Anishinabek maintained competing definitions of space – particularly interconnectedness with water – by holding ceremonies on Lake of the Woods and the Winnipeg River. While ceremonial sites on reserve fell into disuse after 1895, cultural practice flourished away from the watchful eye of the Indian agent after 1915. Hazel Martin-McKeever (b. 1928), for example, remembers that “[t]here were a lot of pow-wows in the distant islands.”¹²⁷ Born to a Christian family, Hazel’s mother, *Ogimaamaashiik*, never allowed her to attend: “it was a no-no.”¹²⁸ While Hazel never witnessed *mitigwakik* use, she “hear[d] the drums at night” during berry-picking season. Her family feared that drum use was “evil.” Medicine songs, it was (and is) still believed, connected local Anishinabek to the spirit world. And, this connection to all Creation, strong in Anishinabek territory at large, blurred the lines between (wo)man and water, between reserve and water. Ongoing ceremonial practice suggests that the Anishinabek did not believe that the 1915 Act disconnected them from their water resources.

It is important to note that relocation, as a strategy for cultural survival, is encoded in Anishinabek, Cree, and Oji-Cree oral testimony. Lake of the Woods is believed to have been created by a water spirit, a *Manitou*. This *Manitou* so loved Its creation that It transformed into a rock, an unmoveable island. But, It also sought to protect the people of Lake of the Woods, the Anishinabek. *Manitou* said, “I’ll make a

¹²⁶ Former Chief Allan Luby (Ogemah), telephone interview with author, Kenora, Ontario, 1 December 2014. In September 2015, Luby indicated that ceremonies would be held approximately 30 to 50 kilometres away from Kenora on Lake of the Woods. The distance from town was to prevent Indian Agents from disrupting Anishinabek ceremonies. Former Chief Allan Luby (Ogemah), “Regulating Capital, Creating Christians: Banning Indigenous Ceremonies, 1895-1951,” e-lecture, Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON, 29 September 2015.

¹²⁷ Martin-McKeever, *The Chief’s Granddaughter*, 68.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

maze of this lake... to compound those who might try to drive my people from it.”¹²⁹

In this quotation, the islands guarantee Anishinabek protection from harm.

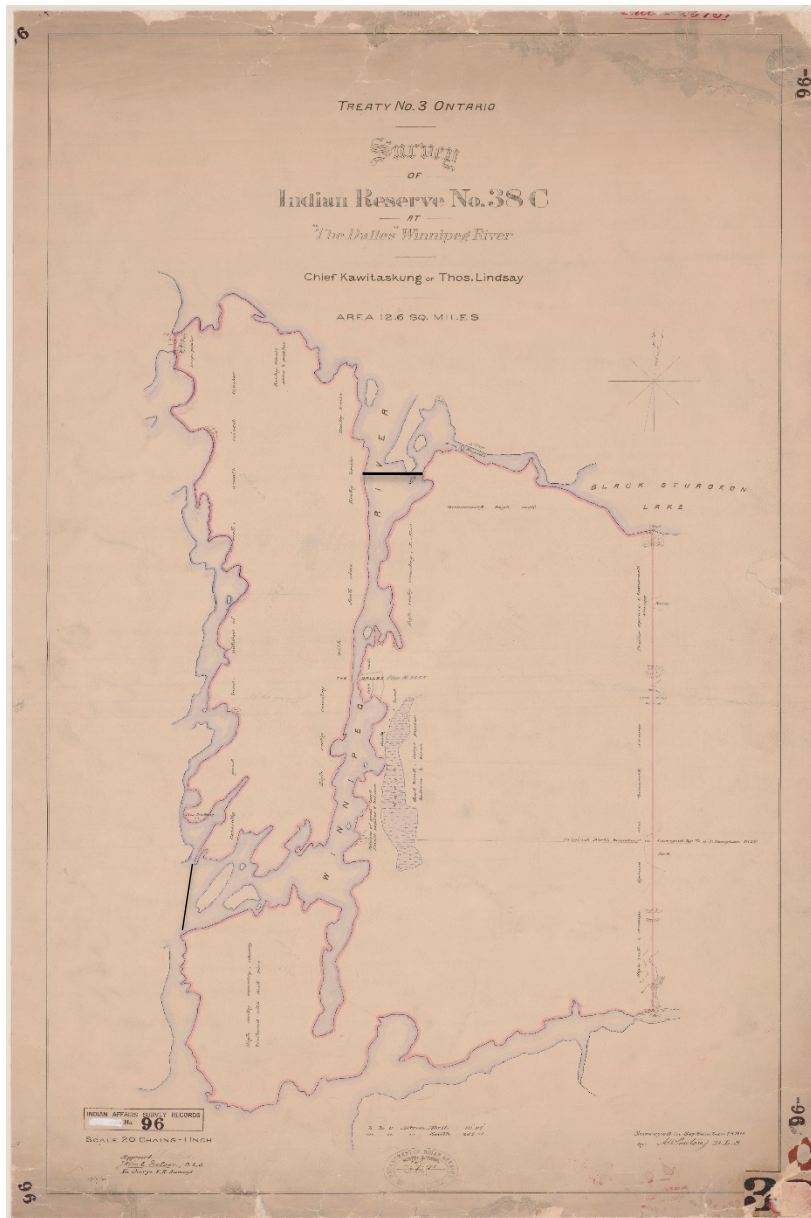
Ceremonial practice “way out the lake” not only reaffirms Anishinabek relationships to water, it is a strategy derived from an alliance between Anishinabek peoples and the water world. Provincial authority and surveyor’s boundaries were not heeded on Lake of the Woods after 1915. Instead, local Anishinabek continually reinforced their connection to water through song. Local Anishinabek did not abide by provincial map-making projects, but as *mitigwakik* use reveals, lived their lives in defiance of them.

CONCLUSION

A detailed review of pivotal moments between 1873 and 1915 illustrates how provincial recognition of Anishinabek water rights depended on Ontario’s understanding of water as linked to the adjacent property (and hence subject to private ownership) or a provincial asset (subject to government control). In 1873, Ontario supported long-established Anishinabek water use for fisheries, legislating Anishinabek water rights with the 1891 Act. Legislation mirrored larger definitions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous riparian water rights, established by the 1859 *Chasemore vs. Richards* case. In 1906, however, Ontario redefined riparian water rights to exclude water power; water became a provincial asset and Anishinabek water use suddenly challenged Ontario’s access to it. Nine years later, Ontario passed legislation confirming title of the government of Canada to reserve lands *generally*, but rescinded clause 4 of the 1894 Joint Agreement (i.e. Anishinabek rights to waters running along or through reserve). Ontario claimed that the shorelines on reserve were boundaries and therefore the province owned all the land underwater adjacent to

¹²⁹ Earl Chapin quoted in Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 5.

reserve. The 1915 Act breached Treaty #3 as published by Canada and Paypom Treaty as understood by Anishinabek, ultimately denying Anishinabek rights to control their waterways. Given that neither the federal government nor Anishinabek occupants formally approved an agreement affecting Indian waterways, the 1915 action is invalid. Titled *An Act to Confirm the Title of the Government of Canada to Certain Lands and Indian Lands* (1915), Ontario cannot enact legislation in relation to Indians without federal approval. The jurisdiction of this area is still technically governed by the fourth clause of the 1894 Joint Agreement between the province of Ontario and the federal government. And so, Anishinabek families continue to recognize clause 4 of the 1894 Joint Agreement. Anishinabek families continue to ritually affirm their relationship to waters running through or around reserve through drum use. One hundred years later, the Ontario Legislature has yet to listen to *mitigawkik*.



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Figure 3: A. W. PONTON'S 1890 SURVEY OF DALLEs 38C INDIAN RESERVE

Federal surveyor A. W. Ponton allotted Chief Kawitaskung (Thomas Lindsay) and his band the waters below the northernmost rapids to the “high rocky country” in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. A boundary line is visible between “I” and “V” in “RIVER.” A second boundary line connects the northwestern tip of the peninsula to the southernmost tip of the island (bottom left). These lines bound waters running between the mainland reserve and the reserve island to Dalles 38C.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ A. W. Ponton's lines have been traced with black ink to improve visibility. A. W. Ponton, D. L. S., *Treaty No. 3 Ontario: Survey of Indian Reserve No. 38C at 'The Dalles' Winnipeg River*. [Map] 20 chains: 1 inch. Ottawa: Dominion Land Survey, 1890.



Figure 4: ANISHINABEK WATER OFFERING (C. 1890)¹³¹

Offering of household and fashion items suggests that Anishinabek actively practiced *wii'kaadown* (the duty to make seasonal offerings in gratitude to land, water, air and all living things) in the aftermath of Treaty #3 thus maintaining their sacred role as caretakers of *manitou gitigenan* (the Great Spirit's Garden).

¹³¹ LOWM, Photographer unknown. "Water Offering, c. 1890," [photograph].



Figure 5: AGOKWE AND ANISHINAABE-KWE DRYING FISH (1912)¹³²

This image depicts an elderly Anishinabek woman (Agokwe) drying fish with a younger Anishinabek woman (Anishinaabe-Kwe), suggesting that after 1873 Anishinabek women affirmed their fishing rights through practice. The practice crossed generational lines, and young women were schooled in resource stewardship by their elders.

¹³² LOWM, Carl Linde, "Anishinaabe-Kwe Drying Fish, 1912," [photograph], 1984.40.33.



Figure 6: A WATER-BASED COMMUNITY (C. 1900)¹³³

While the photographer is unknown, Indian enthusiasts of the early 1900s recognized water-based Anishinabek communities and documented their existence with the camera. It is important to note that this community may not have been formerly designated as reservation land by the Department of Indian Affairs.

¹³³ LOWM, Photographer unknown, "Native Community, c. 1900," [photograph], 1970.30.1

CHAPTER 2

“ALMOST DESTITUTE IN THE WINTER”: FEDERAL RESPONSES TO EARLY FLOOD DAMAGES AND ANISHINABEK ADAPTATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN THE WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, 1893-1950¹

Years before Canadian industrialists introduced long distance transmission technology to the Winnipeg River drainage basin, before Ontario repealed *An Act for the Settlement of Questions between the Governments of Canada and Ontario Respecting Indian Lands* (1894), damming along the north shore of Lake of the Woods stimulated both economic and population growth in the towns of Rat Portage and Keewatin (now joined and known as Kenora). John Mather erected Keewatin's first dam in 1879 where Lake of the Woods flowed from Portage Bay into Mink Bay, which enabled him to power the Keewatin Lumber Company.² Mather benefited greatly from railway growth, producing lumber for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).³ Requiring hands to meet the CPR's lumber demand, Mather recruited skilled and unskilled labourers, hiring workers from as far away as Scotland to populate the mill site.⁴ This flurry of activity was not unique to Keewatin. As historians Graham Taylor and Peter Baskerville have noted,

¹ “The Peoples’ Forum,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 18 October 1922, 2. This chapter begins with the erection of the Norman Dam by the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company in 1893. It ends with the blasting of the Dalles Channel on the Winnipeg River – the next major environmental modification that would change flow – in 1950. While my discussion of Anishinabek adaptation focuses on the immediate aftermath of the International Joint Commission's recommendations in 1917, the challenges of development – particularly lake control by the Norman Dam -- would remain relatively constant until 1950.

² Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 55.

³ The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) began construction in the Winnipeg River drainage basin in 1877. By 1882, the CPR had completed its Western Line. This line connected Rat Portage to Winnipeg. In 1883, the Eastern Line, connecting Rat Portage to Thunder Bay, was completed by the CPR. “Historical Timeline,” *Lake of the Woods Museum*, accessed 1 January 2015, <http://www.lakeofthewoodsmuseum.ca/collectionsandresearch/HistoricalTimeline.aspx>.

⁴ Ronald Wolf, “Things That Go Bump in a Canadian Night: Mather-Walls House, Keewatin, Ont.,” *The Algoma News*, 9 December 2009, accessed 1 January 2015, <http://www.thealgomanews.ca/columns/other-columns/things-that-go-bump-in-a-canadian-night-3/>.

“railways were a catalyst for industrial growth.”⁵ Within twenty years, an additional five dams were built within a few kilometres of Mather’s original site to power his saw mill, flour production, and to improve navigation on Lake of the Woods.

Inspired, perhaps, by Mather’s profitable use of local waters, the Lake of the Woods Milling Company erected a dam (known as Mill A) west of Mather’s site in 1887. Two 1.5-metre water wheels powered flour production. The Milling Company initially produced 1250 barrels of flour per day, which was a booming business. By 1898, production had increased to 3500 barrels per day.⁶ According to Ernest Ingersoll, a naturalist and travel writer, the towns of Rat Portage and Keewatin sprouted up around these successful dam sites: “[Keewatin] is clustered about several great lumbering and flowering mills... These are all run by water power brought through a rock-flume.”⁷ Ingersoll further argued that water power allowed Canadians to “interrupt the wilderness.”⁸ Looking back, historians discover that hydroelectricity “interrupted the wilderness” by fuelling wage-paying jobs at the northern extremity of Lake of the Woods. It is no small wonder that historian Michael Bliss observed that “[f]actories gave communities so much employment that they seemed as beneficial as railways.”⁹ Indeed, few Canadians bemoaned, at least in print, the transformation of the north shore. Travel writers instead waxed poetic about environmental transformation: one “wonders whether the smoke of saw-mills drifts across the sky as it used to do from campfires that are no

⁵ Baskerville and Taylor, *Concise History of Business in Canada*, 180.

⁶ Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 59.

⁷ Ernest Ingersoll, *The Canadian Guide-Book Part II: Western Canada* (London, UK: William Heinemann, 1892), 96.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹ Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 252.

more.”¹⁰ Ontario had long envisioned this transformation. Able-bodied men sought employment at mills powered by water wheels and thus populated Canada’s resource-rich northlands.

And yet, damming was not immune to critique. In 1887, the Canadian federal government constructed the Rollerway Dam, which raised the low level of Lake of the Woods by 0.91 metres.¹¹ The Dominion government argued that the shipping industry required a minimum 0.91-metre increase in water levels to improve navigation.¹² Steamships had become increasingly busy with freight, lumber, and passengers (i.e. labourers) – secure shipments and safe travel required the submersion of rocky shoals with water. American citizens living along the south shore of Lake of the Woods, however, were outraged by Canadian operations. The Rollerway Dam submerged valuable agricultural lands in Minnesota. International tensions heightened between 1893 and 1895 when the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company expanded their operations, building the Norman Dam and rendering the Rollerway Dam obsolete. The Norman, run by a Canadian industrialist, determined the water level of Lake of the Woods.¹³ Canadian industrial needs now had a direct impact on American agricultural production. According to one account, irate Minnesotans responded by attempting to blow up the Norman Dam

¹⁰ Ingersoll, *The Canadian Guide-Book Part II*, 94.

¹¹ Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 61.

¹² Ibid. Section 91(10) of *The Constitution Act* (1867) gave the Dominion government “exclusive Legislative Authority” over “Navigation and Shipping.” *Constitution Act, 1867* (UK), 30 & 31 Vict, c 3, reprinted in RSC 1985, App II, No 5.

¹³ Despite plans to produce hydroelectric power at the western outlet, the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company did not construct a powerhouse in the 1890s. E. W. Backus purchased the Norman Dam in 1919. Powerhouse construction began under Backus’ ownership in 1924. Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 61.

with dynamite.¹⁴ The International Joint Commission (IJC) intervened by hosting an inquiry into Lake of the Woods water levels. Their goal was to maintain peace between Canada and the United States. Between 1912 and 1917, the IJC collected data on northern dam operations, industrial water fluctuations, and property damages to determine whether (and, perhaps, to recommend how) the Norman ought to continue operations. The IJC's data offer the first comprehensive record of industrial flood damages on Lake of the Woods.

Policy analysts and historians alike have examined the IJC's data collection and decision-making processes to produce a history of international non-violent conflict resolution.¹⁵ The metanarrative suggests that a shared sentiment of industry – or, the privileging of capitalist development – facilitated the peaceable co-management of Lake of the Woods between Canada and the United States. Co-management, many scholars have argued, protected economic interests on both sides of the border: Ontario could

¹⁴ Manton M. Wyvell, "Peace between Canada and the United States," *Advocate for Peace through Justice*, 83, no. 7 (July 1921): 256.

¹⁵ The International Joint Commission enjoyed general recognition as a successful model for international governance – a position reflected by contemporary encyclopedia entries. N. F. Dreisziger, writing for the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, suggests that the IJC "has been highly successful." Its success is further implied by Dreisziger's claim that the IJC model "be applied to other problem areas," presumably of international concern. The IJC also appears as a successful model for international governance in *Encyclopedia Britannica's* entry on "Canals and Inland Waterways." The author (unknown) notes that the IJC has "functioned since 1909 with general authority over boundary waters." The IJC sits in stark contrast to European attempts to manage international waterways. Unlike Canada and the United States, European governments do not share a history of peaceable cooperation: "War and political considerations from time to time interrupted the freedom of navigation [between countries]." Further, European governments failed to independently achieve relative stability along international waterways. Instead, peaceable cooperation was achieved in the post-war era through the operation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. These encyclopedia entries condense and reflect larger scholarly trends. It is important to note, however, the work of dissenters such as Daniel MacFarlane who argues that an asymmetrical relationship existed between cooperating parties during the Cold War. "Canals and inland waterways," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed February 23, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/92049/canals-and-inland-waterways/72511/Inclined-planes>; N. F. Dreisziger, "International Joint Commission," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 15 December 2013, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/international-joint-commission/>; Daniel Macfarlane, "Rapid Changes: Canada and the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project," *University of Toronto Program on Water Issues*, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://powi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Rapid-Changes-Canada-and-the-St.Lawrence-Seaway-and-Power-Project.pdf>.

maintain the Norman Dam as long as flooding did not negatively impact American commercial interests.¹⁶ The metanarrative assumes that there were only two vested international parties: Canadian and American. It ignores the presence of the Anishinabek Nation on Lake of the Woods. The occlusion is not surprising – the International Joint Commission did not call on Anishinabek informants to report flood damages directly. This chapter complicates narratives of international co-operation and mutual benefit by reconstructing Anishinabek flood damages caused by the Norman Dam. My goal is to expand on the initial findings of the IJC and to illuminate under-documented losses in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Damages to Anishinabek transport routes on the frozen surfaces of the Winnipeg River and Lake of the Woods (henceforth ice roads) will centre our discussion of loss.¹⁷ Damage analysis affirms political scientist Peter Clancy's

¹⁶ Little scholarly attention has been paid to the particular case of the Norman Dam. However, historical analyses of the St. Lawrence Seaway have emphasized the economic benefits of international co-management. Take, for example, Daniel Macfarlane's write-up on the St. Lawrence Seaway. Macfarlane paraphrases Gordon T. Stewart, author of "America's Canada Policy" (1989), noting that the navigation works "accelerated the economic, trade, defense integration of the two North American countries" (1). D'arcy Jenish further argues that the St. Lawrence Seaway was "a vital commercial artery" (29). In 1959 alone – its first year of operation – the St. Lawrence Seaway doubled the tonnage handled along the river. Canadians recognized its economic value (and ties to the 1909 *Boundary Waters Agreement*) as early as 1954 when the CBC announced that "a fifty year old international agreement [was] exploding into reality." Macfarlane, "Rapid Changes," 1; D'arcy Jenish, *The St. Lawrence Seaway: Fifty Years and Counting* (Manotick, ON: Penumbra Press, 2007); "St. Lawrence Seaway: Let the Flooding Begin," CBC Television, 15 August 1954, <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1826349772>.

¹⁷ My focus on the relationship between dam development and Indigenous mobility is novel. Boyce Richardson (*Cree Hunters of Mistassini*, 1974) researched and scripted a feature length documentary that followed three Cree families – associated with Sam Blacksmith, Ronnie Jolly, and Abraham Voyageur – to Blacksmith's winter trapping grounds in what is now known as Quebec. Richardson identifies the importance of both air and water travel for Cree trappers. Richardson mentions air and water transportation in passing – his primary interest is in Cree trapping practices. Richardson does not connect travel (e.g. canoe routes) to Cree trapping practices even though the canoe is presented as the primary form of transportation between trapping grounds. Richardson appears to be primarily concerned with the flooding of valuable trapping lands (and animal habitat). In Richardson's view, the James Bay Project puts trapping, not transportation, activities at risk. In his analysis of hydroelectric development in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, James Waldram (*As Long as the Rivers Run*, 1988) claimed that waterways "service as transportation corridors was evident; but perhaps less evident was the interrelationship among the waterways, the Natives, and the animals they hunted" (5). In his discussion of Treaty #5, Waldram identifies conflict between Crown and First Nations interpretations about settler access and use of treaty lands in Manitoba. Treaty #5 provided (contested) legal rationale for development by Manitoba Hydro – development that inundated hunting territories and thus threatened treaty hunting rights. Territorial loss

contention that the organization of fresh water “is more often than not uneven and dysfunctional, with a discernible tilt toward partial and vested interests” – here, the interests of Western industrializing nations.¹⁸

Perhaps more importantly, this chapter considers the historical impact of Anishinabek exclusion from the IJC hearings. The IJC hearings not only mark a turning point in Canadian-American relations, but also reflect Canada’s systematic eradication of Indigenous rights. Anishinabek exclusion stemmed from Ontario’s decision to repeal *An Act for the Settlement of Questions between the Governments of Canada and Ontario Respecting Indian Lands* (1891) discussed in Chapter 1; Anishinabek silence mirrored provincial claims that “Indians” had no claim to waters running through or around reserve. Anishinabek exclusion also aligned with subsequent revisions to the Indian Act: in the 1920s, the federal government added Section 141 to bar First Nations from hiring a lawyer to pursue land claims.¹⁹ In short, the IJC hearings established a precedent for

(and habitat loss) rather than the ability to safely access lands is suggested as the cause for decreased hunting activities and increased reliance on wage labour or government transfers by the Rocky Cree. Jean Manore (*Cross-Currents*, 1999) also comments on the extensive use of waterways for trade purposes during the early twentieth century in northeastern Ontario. Citing the 1901 report of J. M. Bell’s survey party, Manore notes that “the Mattagami River was a busy waterway” (circa 1901). Water transportation appears linked to trade: “Numerous people travelled that route to and from the Hudson Bay post of Fort Mattagami and the Canadian Pacific Railway” (21). She argues that increased transportation along the Mattagami River was a low-impact activity. Indeed, Manore suggests that the establishment of trading posts along the waterways did little to disrupt the environment. Exceptions include increased trapping activities to serve HBC posts that depleted certain species (e.g. beaver) (21). Readers, however, are provided with little sense of how water transportation may have been affected by high impact activities (e.g. water regulation) as the fur trade declined. In the grassroots magazine *Briarpatch* (2012), Peter Kulchyski noted that “What was once a highway for hunters [the Nelson River] is now dangerous to travel in winter, as the location of ice pockets created by flooding and retreating water cannot be predicted.” Like his predecessors, Kulchyski identifies the river as a “highway.” Unlike his predecessors, Kulchyski identifies that “road use” was impacted by hydroelectric development. While Kulchyski acknowledges reduced mobility due to water control, he does not explore this issue in detail. Peter Kulchyski, “Flooded and forgotten: Hydro development makes a battleground of northern Manitoba,” *Briarpatch*, 28 February 2012, accessed 1 July 2015, <http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/flooded-and-forgotten>. My dissertation chapter offers one of the few sustained engagements with mobility issues.

¹⁸ Peter Clancy, *Fresh Water Politics in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), xii.

¹⁹ Erin Hanson argues that Section 141 prevented “Aboriginal peoples from fighting for their rights through the legal system.” Coupled with Section 114, which restricted “virtually any gathering” at

water development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The IJC created a closed system of negotiation wherein dam development privileged non-Indigenous industrial concerns (the United States and Canada) by barring participation of the Anishinabek Nation and Anishinabek water-users. These findings expand on Clancy's ground-breaking attempt to build a model of the "freshwater state" in Canada by revealing the flow of power (and of water) between competing nations: the Dominion of Canada, the United States, and the Anishinabek Nation.²⁰ Anishinabek silence about early dam development reflects Western exclusionary tactics that denied Indigenous water-users a public voice and forced Anishinabek to respond creatively to loss. Surviving industrial flood damages required internal change rather than external recognition. Indeed, Anishinabek silence allows us to better imagine how the nascent "freshwater state" of Canada diverted decision-making power away from non-industrial, primarily Indigenous, users.

THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION (IJC), A DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Before we can study Anishinabek exclusion from the "freshwater state," we must better understand the role of the International Joint Commission on the Lake of the Woods Question, a federally-appointed committee responsible for determining the ideal flow of Lake of the Woods. The concept of the International Joint Commission dates back to the *Boundary Water Treaty of 1909*, an agreement between the Dominion of Canada and the United States intended to "prevent disputes regarding the use of boundary

risk of imprisonment until 1951, Canadian law made it difficult for Anishinabek in the Winnipeg River drainage basin to organize collectively against Canada and Ontario. Erin Hanson, "The Indian Act," *Indigenous Foundations: First Nations Studies Program at the University of British Columbia*, accessed 1 January 2015, <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html#potlatch>.

²⁰ Clancy, *Fresh Water Politics in Canada*, xii.

waters.”²¹ Both governments envisaged the IJC as an organization capable of moderating international conflict over shared natural resources. Specifically, the International Joint Commission was “to settle all questions which are now pending between the United States and the Dominion of Canada, involving the rights, obligations or interest of either in relation to the other.”²² As this quotation reveals, the original script of the *Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909* excluded Indigenous nations whose boundaries overlapped the 49th parallel. Only the interests of Canada and the United States – both with historical ties to British colonialism – were protected by the treaty.²³ Each treaty partner had a historical legacy of eliminating Indigenous access to natural resources (such as land) to encourage the settlement of predominately Anglo-Protestant settlers. It seemed unlikely that the *Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909* would protect competing Anishinabek claims to international waterways.

Indeed, the successful operation of the International Joint Commission depended, in part, on perceived mutual interest between Western nations. Trans-boundary cooperation ensured that both the Dominion of Canada and the United States could achieve their goals of territorial and industrial expansion. Attempts at trans-boundary cooperation were not unique to 1909. The *Reciprocity Treaty of 1854* had eliminated protective colonial tariffs to allow for freer trade across borders. Reciprocity brought

²¹ The United States and Canada, International Joint Commission, *Final Report of the International Joint Commission on the Lake of the Woods Reference: Washington-Ottawa*. Washington, DC, 1917, 11.

²² *Boundary Waters Treaty* quoted by the International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 11.

²³ In the anthology *Lines Drawn upon the Water: First Nations and the Great Lakes Borders and Borderlands* (Kitchener, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2008), editor Karl Hele asks Indigenous historians to adopt a hybrid framework of land ethics. He calls on Indigenous historians to recognize the Canadian/American border as a contested space. Hele’s anthology reveals that the border created distinct economic challenges for Anishinabek families. For example, in Sault Ste. Marie, Anishinabek families – defined as wards of the Canadian state – were denied access to their seasonal fishing grounds in the United States. Federal regulations (and penalties) threatened Anishinabek expressions of cross-border sovereignty. This chapter contributes to the growing body of literature that considers the Canadian/American border as an economic handicap.

prosperity to Canadian producers until it was abrogated by the United States in 1865.²⁴ Despite its abrogation, the *Reciprocity Treaty of 1854* revealed that international cooperation could facilitate joint economic growth.²⁵ And yet, the International Joint Commission (whose blueprint was laid in 1909) did not take shape on Lake of the Woods until the 1910s. American complaints about industrial flooding predated the *Boundary Waters Treaty*. Minnesotans mailed a series of affidavits to the United States government to draw attention to the artificial flooding of the south shore in 1907.²⁶ Limited action was taken by the United States at this time – American officials wrongly assumed that high water levels fell within their natural limit.²⁷ It was not until 1912 that formal letters of reference were submitted by both the governments of the United States and the Dominion of Canada to call for a formal investigation of Lake of the Woods water levels. Both parties demanded that the International Joint Commission determine whether artificial flow was desirable on the Lake of the Woods. And, if so, which artificial level would “best serv[e] industry’s interest”?²⁸

In response to these demands, the first International Joint Commission – its parameters defined under Article IX of the *Boundary Waters Treaty* – was furnished in

²⁴ LAC, “The Reciprocity Treaty,” accessed 1 February 2015, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-3010.42-e.html>.

²⁵ Michael Bliss reminds us that the *Reciprocity Treaty of 1854* allowed Canadians to profit considerably from freer trade during the American Civil War. With American industries interrupted by violence, Canadians found increased demand for their manufactured goods (e.g. Americans purchased more Canadian woolen products as American cotton production declined). A protectionist backlash, however, led many Canadian manufacturers to argue against freer trade in the 1870s. “Severe trade retrenchment, falling prices, and increased international competition” increased Canadian demands for protective tariffs and, by extension, an increasingly captive domestic market. John A. MacDonald responded with his 1879 National Policy, which created a system of high protective tariffs designed to stimulate domestic demand for Canada’s manufactured goods. His policy benefited manufacturers more than “[o]rdinary Canadians [who] would have probably preferred a wide amount of reciprocity with the United States, leading to low prices.” The *Boundary Waters Treaty* thus marks a return to earlier cooperative treaties, a swing in the pendulum. See Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 248-51.

²⁶ International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

1912. Washington and Ottawa sought out trusted federal agents to represent their respective national interests. Washington called on Obadiah Gardener to act as the IJC's American Chairman, who was then joined by James A. Tawney and R. B. Glenn. Ottawa asked Charles Alexander Magrath to be the Canadian Chairman, and appointed additional committee members Henry Absalom Powell and Pierre-Basile Mignault. Equal representation by the United States and the Dominion did not accurately reflect the geography of the Lake of the Woods. Seventy percent of the drainage area fell within Canadian boundaries.²⁹ American and Canadian members, however, hoped to share in the economic advantages of hydroelectric development along the north shore. In their final report, Commissioners Gardener, Tawney, Glenn, Magrath, Powell, and Mignault advocated that any judgement ought to depend on "not only all practicable uses to which these waters can be put on their own watershed [i.e. agricultural, fishing, transportation], but also all beneficial uses which the energy developed thereon may serve in the adjacent territory."³⁰ Implicit here is the belief that hydroelectric power stations could serve both nations regardless of their exact boundary location. From the beginning, the IJC deemed "basic practical uses" secondary to innovative uses of water by industry (such as the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company).

Canadian industrial interests – those in favour of the Norman Dam – may have further coalesced against other "practicable use[s]" such as Anishinabek transportation. While the Dominion representatives came from different parts of Canada, they shared the belief that technological innovation (i.e. power or rail) could strengthen the Dominion – its territorial grasp and its economic potential. Consider that Chairman Charles Alexander

²⁹ Ibid., 14.

³⁰ Ibid., 11.

Magrath (1860-1943) was recruited from his home in Lethbridge, Alberta. Magrath had firmly established himself as an advocate of capitalist development, becoming Lethbridge's first President of the Board of Trade in 1899.³¹ Magrath's interest in energy-related industries is evidenced by his employment with the North Western Coal and Navigation Company as well as his position as Fuel Controller during World War I (1914-1918).³² Years after the Lake of the Woods question was settled, Magrath became Chairman of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario – a position he held from 1925 to 1931.³³ His life history reveals a keen desire to fuel national growth with coal and, later, water – an ideological position that made him a likely advocate for artificial regulation of Lake of the Woods by the Norman Dam.

Ottawa partnered Magrath with Henry Absalom Powell (1855-1930). Powell was a Conservative member of parliament from New Brunswick from 1895 to 1900. In 1896, Powell sat on the Standing Committee of Agriculture and Colonization in the House of Commons. His position may have predisposed him towards the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company – and their operation of the Norman Dam – as milling operations had significantly increased the population of northwestern Ontario. Between 1885 and 1900 alone Kenora's population more than quadrupled from 750 to 3500 souls. This demographic influx reflected the expansion of mill operations.³⁴ Powell also served on the Select Standing Committee on Railways, Canals, and Telegraph Lines in the House of Commons. Once again, Powell's occupation suggests a personal commitment to national

³¹ Galt Museum and Archives, Lethbridge, AB, Record Detail, Charles Alexander Magrath (1860-1949).

³² Ibid.

³³ Keith Robson Fleming, *Power at a Cost: Ontario Hydro and Rural Electrification, 1911-1958* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 14.

³⁴ "Historical Timeline," *Lake of the Woods Museum*.

– be it economic or demographic – growth. Curtailing the operation of the Norman Dam would have weakened the rail link between Thunder Bay and Winnipeg. The rail industry, for which Powell advocated, depended in part on the processing of raw material (be it flour or wood) on the north shore of Lake of the Woods. It seems unlikely that Powell would assume a contrary position as an active member of the IJC.

Pierre-Basile Mignault (1854-1945) appears as an outlier on the International Joint Commission. Ottawa appointed Mignault, a lawyer based out of Montréal, to the committee in 1914, and he served until 1918. What connects Mignault to Powell and Magrath is the geographic distance and physical disconnect between Lake of the Woods and his home. Ottawa called Magrath to the Commission from Alberta and Powell from New Brunswick. We see that the Dominion’s decision-making body had no clear tie to Lake of the Woods residents or Lake of the Woods geography. Distance is not necessarily akin to neutrality. Two of these federally-appointed representatives displayed a strong affiliation with local Lake of the Woods industry. Decisions made by these three men – Magrath, Powell, Mignault – depended largely on evidence submitted during public hearings (sometimes by federal officials). From the outset, Magrath, Powell, and Mignault lacked sufficient familiarity with the Winnipeg River drainage basin to anticipate Anishinabek territorial, predominately extra-market, use. Damages recorded in the *Final Report of the International Joint Commission on the Lake of the Woods Reference* reflect the commissioners’ geographic and pro-industry biases. That Ottawa would furnish the International Joint Commission with pro-industrialists reflects larger trends in Canada’s resource sector. As historian H. V. Nelles has revealed, good politics was good business: Ontario was, in part, a “client of the business community” and

facilitated mining, forestry, and hydroelectric development.³⁵ Collusion facilitated water development across Canada – not just Ontario. In later works, Nelles collaborated with Christopher Armstrong to uncover how the state “act[ed] as a handmaiden to capitalist development” as far west as Kananaskis Falls in Alberta (circa 1910-1917).³⁶ Ottawa’s selection of renowned Canadian capitalists affirms this trend at the Norman Dam on the north shore of Lake of the Woods. The challenge is now to reconstruct Anishinabek presence along the north shore from local, non-governmental sources.

ANISHINABEK WATER USE ALONG THE NORTH SHORE OF LAKE OF THE WOODS

Anishinabek families who settled along the Winnipeg River, which drains Lake of the Woods, created and maintained ice roads along central corridors for winter travel. Allan Luby (Ogemah), former Chief of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, suggests that ice roads were critical to regional Anishinabek transportation at the turn of the twentieth century. Transportation across frozen rivers and lakes made geographic sense: “There were no hills. It was very easy to get from Point A to Point B,” which makes sense because Lake of the Woods is in the Precambrian Shield, famed for granite outcroppings, muskeg, and difficult overland travel. Allan Luby goes on to say “all the main communities were always on the water.” Travel across frozen waterways thus offered the shortest, most direct route to family and/or trade; intergenerational transportation routes followed “straight lines.”³⁷

³⁵ Nelles, *Politics of Development*, xix.

³⁶ Armstrong and Nelles, *Wilderness and Waterpower*, 50.

³⁷ Former Chief Allan Luby (Ogemah), interview with author, Kenora, Ontario, 28 December 2014. Revisit Chapter 1 for a detailed analysis of how Ontario re-evaluated Anishinabek water rights and redrew reserve boundaries in response to technological change.

Band members of Dalles 38C certainly relied heavily on ice roads for travel between the reserve and town (Kenora). Elder Matilda Martin said that “We used that road all winter [circa 1885-1908], all the Indian families did. There were fifteen families there one time in that reserve. They used the same road.”³⁸ Martin did not make reference to an alternative winter route. Like some of the other families, Martin travelled the ice road on foot. According to her memoirs, the ice road facilitated an exchange of Anishinabek furs and handicrafts for store merchandise. Beginning in 1902, Martin became solely responsible within her domestic family for walking to town to secure pantry fare.³⁹ On a regular trip, Martin collected “a quarter bag of flour, ten pounds of sugar, some tea, and a few other necessities.” To secure capital for her purchases, Martin would leave her toboggan behind the Hudson’s Bay Company store and sell moccasins near the front of the shop.⁴⁰ The exchange she described was a standard occurrence in the vicinity of Kenora at the turn of the twentieth century. According to the *Rat Portage*

³⁸ In 1908, Matilda married Edward Martin, a non-Indigenous fisher and trapper from the Sand Lake area. Shortly after their marriage, Matilda took up residence north of Dalles 38C with her husband. Up until that point, Matilda had lived primarily with her maternal grandparents at Dalles 38C. For more information see Martin-McKeever, *The Chief’s Granddaughter*, 44, 48. See also LOWM, Elder Matilda Martin, interview with Jillian Torrie, 30 June 1972.

N.B. George Beatty was a journalist for the *Kenora Daily Miner and News* who coordinated interviews with Matilda Martin during the summer of 1972 to produce a series of articles on Anishinabek life in the Kenora area. He worked with a female assistant who is believed to be Jillian Torrie. Dorothy Laverne McLay explains, “George Beatty did the question and answer manuscripts. When I found [out that] they were in existence – I found [out] when he was still living. And, I contacted him: ‘I heard you have this information.’ And, I asked ‘Is it free for everyone? Will you let me have it?’ He said [that] it was free for everyone. So, I made copies for everyone.” Dorothy Laverne McLay, telephone interview with author, 2 October 2011.

³⁹ Writing on Anishinabek families in the Treaty #3 District (particularly, Manitou Reserve near Emo, Ontario) in the early twentieth century, Ruth Landes described the domestic family as a biological grouping wherein “the young are biologically related to the married pair” (53). However, orphaned children’s family unit was subject to change. Orphaned children were often cared for by the grandparents (as in Matilda Martin’s case) or by siblings of the parents (16). See Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Sociology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

⁴⁰ “Old Time Resident Fondly Recalls Walk from Dalles,” *Kenora Miner and News*, page and date not listed. This undated document can also be found in an unpublished memoir at the Lake of the Woods Museum. See file compiled by Lucille Burton at LOWM, “Memoirs of Matilda Josephine Laverne Kipling Martin,” 1987.

Miner, “the Indian,” generally, utilized the ice road to “[bring] in his furs and [take] out flour.”⁴¹ Specific references to in-town exchanges with local Anishinabek were most commonly noted by the press when specialty trades occurred. For example, when Mr. Hook secured three highly valuable silver fox skins, the *Rat Portage and Miner* revealed that “the Indian... came up from Whitedog [Wabaseemoong]” to trade.⁴² General use of the ice road and daily trade, however, received no such coverage; ice travel and the trade it facilitated between riverine communities were considered standard occurrences.

Ice roads not only facilitated economic exchange between band members and town entrepreneurs, but improved Anishinabek access to Western medical care. In 1893, Dr. Thomas Hanson, an employee of the Department of Indian Affairs, travelled from Kenora to Dalles 38C “very quickly by dog train” to examine band members.⁴³ Hanson’s use of the ice road for medical visits received more frequent media attention than Anishinabek travel. Within the year, local newspapers reported again that Hanson “made a trip down to the Dalles 38C by dog train” to help treat the grippe.⁴⁴ Hanson’s use of the ice road remained a popular news item in 1906 when he travelled down the Winnipeg River to investigate “a little sickness,” likely at Dalles 38C.⁴⁵ Within a week of his investigation, Martin used the ice road to bring her husband’s body (John Kipling) to town for the funeral.⁴⁶ While newspaper reports allow us to confirm the relationship between ice roads and health care for three months (December to February), it is likely that ice roads provided an essential service route for up to five months per annum. Local

⁴¹ “Local Items,” *Rat Portage Miner and Semi-Weekly News*, 15 December 1905, 4.

⁴² “Local Items,” *Rat Portage Miner and Semi-Weekly News*, 26 December 1905, 4.

⁴³ “Town Topics,” *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 10 February 1893, 2.

⁴⁴ “Town Topics,” *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 8 December 1893, 2.

⁴⁵ “Local Items,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 2 February 1906, 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

knowledge keepers maintain that ice on Lake of the Woods can come in as early as November. Spring break-up generally occurs between 29 April and 5 May, although a variance of four to six weeks is common.⁴⁷ And so, as the temperature dipped below 0° Celsius, ice roads along the Winnipeg River improved Anishinabek access to Western medicinal practitioners and their remedies. Ice roads provided many Anishinabek families with critical access to Western health care services as the Department of Indian Affairs did not provide reserves such as Dalles 38C with full-time medical care (nor did their federally-funded school house include a nursing station – John Kipling, a lay missionary from Selkirk, MB, was its only full-time employee).⁴⁸ Of course Anishinabek medicines continued to be widely and effectively used throughout this time as well. Today, Elder Alice Kelly teaches Anishinabek youth that Dalles 38C was and remains a medicine reserve.⁴⁹ And yet, when members of Dalles 38C sought additional or alternative (read: Western) care, the ice road functioned as the access key.

The importance of ice travel to Anishinabek families is further evidenced by large populations of sled dogs at Anishinabek settlements. Dogs provided the muscle needed to pull Anishinabek sleds across the ice. When John George Edward Henry Douglas Sutherland Campbell, the Marquis of Lorne, travelled through Lake of the Woods in 1881, his chronicler, W. H. Williams, disparaged the camp conditions of Anishinabek living near Rat Portage (Kenora). Williams was particularly disturbed by the number of unpenned dogs allowed to roam the summer settlement. He wrote, sarcastically, “the very

⁴⁷ Nancy Miller, “Ice In, Ice Out,” *Lake of the Woods Vacation Area*, accessed 14 November 2013, <http://www.lakeofthewoods.com/stories-from-the-lake/ice-in-ice-out/>. Former Chief Luby further explained that “Usually it didn’t take long [to establish an ice road] once the weather got cold – it would only take a few weeks and you could travel to a certain extent.” Former Chief Luby (Ogemah), interview with author, 28 December 2014.

⁴⁸ Martin-McKeever, *The Chief’s Granddaughter*, 8-11, 43-4.

⁴⁹ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

extensive canine population sent out a strong delegation to take up their quarters among the Indians.”⁵⁰ He insulted local Anishinabek by classing Anishinabek families with their dogs. Williams suggested that they (Anishinabek families and local canine) socialized and shared accommodation – a union that interfered with Lorne’s official progress across the North-West towards the Rocky Mountains. But, Williams’ insult also provides us with important insight into Anishinabek water use. Local Anishinabek, it seems, considered sled dogs sufficiently valuable to relocate them during the summer months. While Williams saw the dogs as unmanaged and unrestrained – he suggested that they were masters unto themselves, capable of organizing their own “delegation” – when they were, in fact, being kept and cared for by the families to which they belonged. Dogs had sufficient value to be provided with regular supervision and care. Only in rare circumstances did Anishinabek families leave their sled dogs behind. For example, according to some media reports, dogs were left on reserve for up to two weeks during treaty celebrations on Treaty Island, Lake of the Woods. In a 1905 treaty report, the *Rat Portage Miner* noted that “[t]he dog is conspicuous by his absence, the trip being a little too far away from the reserve for him” as families from down the Winnipeg River travelled south-east through Rat Portage towards Northwest Angle.⁵¹ It is possible that traveling families delegated a friend or relative to watch over their sled team. Anthropologist Ruth Landes observed that women in the Treaty #3 District occasionally took turns guarding “one another’s home and livestock when these [were] deserted for brief periods.”⁵² While Landes limited her observation to the berry and *manomin*

⁵⁰ W. H. Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West; Journal of a Trip from Toronto to the Rocky Mountains* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Company, 1882), 32.

⁵¹ “Treaty Items,” *Rat Portage Miner and Semi-Weekly News*, 15 July 1905, 1.

⁵² Landes, *Ojibwa Sociology*, 14.

harvests, it is likely that the practice of animal guardianship was extended to cover ceremonial absences.

Given the importance of ice roads, a series of Anishinabek teachings developed to manage the critical interspecies relationship between human and dog. For example, Anishinabek families took material precautions to manage large dog populations. Writing in 1909, J. M. Bentley complained that “sleep for transients [was] well nigh impossible” at Dalles 38C given the nuisance dogs created. It is unclear whether Bentley attributed the animal nuisance to noise (e.g. howling) or simple presence.⁵³ Bentley, however, may have made his campsite a target for work animals. It seems that “transients,” like Bentley, failed to adopt community protocols surrounding food and, by extension, animal management. Anishinabek living near the Treaty #3 District were “told to burn [elk and moose bones] so dogs don’t get them.”⁵⁴ During the winter months, Anishinabek women constructed small huts to freeze fish for household consumption. Winter huts were designed to store fish above ground “so [that] the dogs won’t reach them.” Another canine deterrent included layering “some kind of brush on the top” of the fish supply.⁵⁵ Anishinabek families not only treated their catch (and its bones) with care, but removed waste from their campsites.⁵⁶ Whenever possible, food scraps with strong odours were burned or removed to reduce the attractiveness of one’s living and sleeping quarters to dogs. Such precautions were necessary: Anishinabek mobility during the winter months depended on animal, particularly dog, control. Bentley, however, appears to have placed

⁵³ J. M. Bentley, “Visiting the Indian Reserves: An Interesting Canoe Trip,” *Rod and Gun in Canada* 11, no. 6 (1909): 484.

⁵⁴ Marilyn Peckett, “Anishnabe Homeland History: Traditional Land and Resource Use of Riding Mountain, Manitoba” (research report, Bagida’an Aboriginal Research & Partnership Services, 1998), 45.

⁵⁵ Elder Martin, interview with Torrie, 30 June 1972.

⁵⁶ Peckett, “Anishnabe Homeland History,” 45.

little effort into (re)organizing items “unloaded by the Indians.”⁵⁷ According to his travelogue, Bentley pulled his canoe onto the landing at Dalles 38C and pitched his tent nearby. By failing to (re)organize unloaded foodstuffs, Bentley may have unwittingly attracted dogs to his campsite and compromised his ability to rest on reserve.

While records exist to suggest the importance of ice roads to Anishinabek mobility, few surviving textual records describe ice road quality and maintenance along the Winnipeg River, hindering our ability to reconstruct an image of these critical transit routes. We can, however, garner a sense of local standards. Residents of the Kenora District expected that ice roads would be “bushed out as soon as the first solid ice appeared.”⁵⁸ “Bushing out” likely refers to the practice of staking bushes at wide intervals along the transit route. These bushes point out the safest path along or across the ice during periods of low visibility (i.e. blizzard). If we assume that contemporary practice can be used to reconstruct historical methods of road maintenance – a practice known amongst ethnohistorians as upstreaming – we can speculate that Anishinabek families used jack pine to “bush out” transit routes. In December 2014, ice roads southeast of the Norman Dam (remember that current flows strongest in a northwesterly direction) were “bushed out” using jack pine.⁵⁹ This practice mirrors local forest composition. Jack pine grows along thin soils over the granites of the Precambrian Shield, making it one of the most common pine species in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Furthermore, jack pine retains its needle-like leaves beyond one growing season. When asked to describe how Anishinabek families selected road markers, Allan Luby explained that “anything green

⁵⁷ Bentley, “Visiting the Indian Reserves,” 482.

⁵⁸ “Winter Trails on the Lake,” *Rat Portage Miner and Semi-Weekly News*, 19 December 1905, 1.

⁵⁹ See Figure 7 at the end of the chapter. Photograph by author, “An Active Ice Road in Kenora, Ontario (2014).”

will do.”⁶⁰ Travellers needed to be able to distinguish road markers from a winter landscape of whites and greys. Jack pine worked best because it was readily available and evergreen.

The Office of the Minister of Agriculture (circa 1870) further outlined effective maintenance activities for ice roads. To eliminate drift heaps, George H. Henshaw recommended that northern communities “encourage the growth of a close belt of trees along the sides of the road, or [undertake] the more difficult task of planting hedges and keeping them in order.”⁶¹ Hedges functioned as a windbreak. Henshaw further recommended the maintenance (or planting) of coniferous trees because the leaf loss of deciduous trees would reduce the effectiveness of any improvements. The written record does not indicate whether Anishinabek families encouraged the growth of coniferous trees along the ice road. Given that the technology of making ice roads appears to have originated in both Anishinabek and non-Indigenous communities, treeline analysis along known ice routes may reveal Anishinabek development of windbreaks.⁶² Henshaw further recommended “breaking the road,” or running a sled across fresh snow to flatten the route. Regular Anishinabek use of ice routes would create comparable improvements to the road. Along Lake of the Woods, winter trails (so named by the *Rat Portage Miner*

⁶⁰ Former Chief Luby, email correspondence with author, 31 January 2015.

⁶¹ George H. Henshaw, *On the Construction of Common Roads to Which is Appended Some Remarks on the Preservation of Winter Roads* (Montréal: John Lovell for the Office of the Minister of Agriculture, 1871), 31.

⁶² The technology of making ice roads appears to have originated in both Anishinabek and non-Indigenous communities in response to their shared environment. Both communities – Anishinabek and non-Indigenous – were active along the Canadian Shield. During the summer, canoe transport was used to avoid trekking across rocky outcroppings and muskeg: rivers provided the smoothest and most direct line of transit. Overland travel remained challenging during the winter. Snow did not eliminate the rocky and uneven terrain of the Shield. And thus, the development of ice roads (or, the cross-over of canoe routes) provided the most effective means of winter travel.

Treeline analysis may help future researchers to identify the planting of coniferous windbreaks by Anishinabek road users. A study of Anishinabek burning patterns may also help to determine the maintenance of wind breaks – shoreline burns may have helped to “crack open” the pine cone. While not a recognizable form of planting, it would have spurred new growth along the shorelines.

and Semi-Weekly News) were maintained by the Crown Timber Agent until winter 1905. Residents appear to have adopted Crown Timber standards as their own. They bemoaned the loss of federal funding in 1905 and the transfer of responsibilities for road care from the Crown to lumberman. Labourers now had to “mark out their own roads on the lake.”⁶³ Similar complaints were not voiced against ice road conditions along the Winnipeg River – along routes both actively claimed and utilized by Anishinabek from Dalles 38C, Whitedog, and Grassy Narrows reserves. Did Anishinabek families continue the practice of “bushing out” or “breaking the road” through their lands? Kenora residents said little about ice roads on Winnipeg River. Their silence suggests that Anishinabek territories remained well-maintained by an alternative source.

Anishinabek transportation routes demanded year-long maintenance of portages. Travellers used these short land bridges to transfer goods and canoes (or sleds) across turbulent waters. Portages were also used to move goods and canoes (or sleds) from one water route to another.⁶⁴ These passages were often less than two metres wide. Elder testimony from the Lake of the Woods Watershed records dozens of portage routes. Elder Matilda Martin, for example, revealed that members of Dalles 38C may have avoided

⁶³ “Winter Trails on the Lake,” *Rat Portage Miner and Semi-Weekly News*, 19 December 1905, 1.

⁶⁴ Elder Martin recounted that her grandfather, Chief Kawitaskung (Thomas Lindsay) “was employed as a boatman by the Hudson Bay [sic] Company.” The *Kenora Daily Miner and News* paraphrased Matilda’s recollection of Kawitaskung’s portage use: “He was away for months at a time and on his return would tell of these journeys in the York boats, describing the contests at the portages when the doughty oarsmen would vie to take the biggest load and make the swiftest trip.” The *Kenora Daily Miner and News* suggested that Chief Kawitaskung was active between Rat Portage (Kenora) and York Factory. Chief Kawitaskung died in 1914 at the approximate age of 94. He was active during the Treaty #3 negotiations at Northwest Angle in 1873 (aged 53). It is likely that he worked for the Hudson’s Bay Company sometime between 1836, when an HBC post was opened on Old Fort Island on the Winnipeg River, and 1869, the year Treaty #3 negotiations began. Please see “Many Skilled Tasks Performed at Dalles,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, page and date not listed. This undated document can also be found in an unpublished memoir at the Lake of the Woods Museum. See Burton, “Memoirs of Matilda Josephine Lavergne Kipling Martin.”

Miller's Rapids by cutting up and over Barski's Hill.⁶⁵ Much of the literature describing portages (and their use) is found in summer literature. This seasonal focus mirrors portage use in the fur trade. Historian Harold Adams Innis noted that "[f]urs had to be collected, stored, packed and carried for long distances in the spring and summer to the trader."⁶⁶ But, Martin was required to use Miller's Rapids portage long after the furs had been shipped and canoe routes had frozen. Anishinabek families converted canoe routes into ice roads during winter months. As ice would be weak where current was strong, Anishinabek families packed snow along the original footpaths to ease travel. Allan Luby explains, "Wherever there was bad current [,] you would normally have a portage in the summer time. So, you would... portage around those areas in the same way – except you would walk over [instead of paddle to the portage] in the winter time."⁶⁷ Families depended on their knowledge of the Winnipeg River – of strong currents and local portages – to move efficiently between communities for trade, medical aid, or to maintain kin connections. These ice roads, and an understanding of the water that formed them, were thus critical to maintaining Anishinabek economic, physical, and social health at reservations such as Dalles 38C, Whitedog, and Grassy Narrows.

Hydroelectric development at the western outlet of Lake of the Woods affected the stability (and hence reliability) of Anishinabek ice roads along the Winnipeg River.

⁶⁵ Elder Martin suggested that she used to travel from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve to Rat Portage to sell moccasins after her grandfather, Kawitaskung, went blind (circa 1902). She moved off the water "over by the top of the hill, by Barskis... we would then change into our good shoes at the top of the hill and put our old shoes in a bag." Matilda Martin, interview by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, Kenora, Ontario, summer 1972.

Elder Martin referenced another portage three to five kilometres away from the reservation. Matilda Martin, interview by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 30 June 1972.

⁶⁶ Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 20. During the winter months, Indigenous hunters and trappers journeyed into the interior. Anishinabek families generally shifted their economic focus from active trade to trapping animals and processing winter coats for future sale. As cross-cultural interactions declined, written records of winter portage use also declined.

⁶⁷ Former Chief Luby (Ogemah), interview with author, 28 December 2014.

Intergenerational knowledge that had allowed Anishinabek families to travel safely along the ice was compromised by industrial operations. Currents increased randomly and artificially if stop logs were removed to power production at one of the mills.⁶⁸ Which sections of the river froze (and to which extent) now depended more on electrical demands than nature's course. Drastic environmental change, particularly in freezing patterns, has been captured by local prose. Prior to the establishment of the Rat Portage Dam (1892) one Rat Portage resident claimed that Hebe's Falls would freeze during the winter months. He wrote:

[T]he walls of the narrow gorge through which pass the seething, foaming waters of the Winnipeg or 'River of Rapids' were of ice, carved into facades of columns and fluted stalactites....Below, where all was dark shade, a partially formed ice bridge appeared.⁶⁹

Ice depicted below Hebe's Falls was "dark" and presumably unstable. As a general rule, "dark" ice is low density and therefore unable to support additional weight. Given natural flow patterns, ice was likely being eroded from the bottom up. And yet, the western outlet appeared immobile. Natural flow allowed freezing. Stability increased as one moved north of the outlet.⁷⁰ We know, for example, that Martin walked the across the ice north

⁶⁸ The U.S. Department of the Interior, "Putting a Stop to Stop Logs," *Reclamation: Managing Water in the West*, accessed 25 January 2015, <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/video/transcript/minidokastoplogs.pdf> explains that the use of "wooden stop logs is a very traditional way of controlling the elevation of a river or reservoir." They further explain that "[t]hey are actually a series of logs that are stacked horizontally" and that these logs can "[hold] the water back." Managing lake levels by stop log is a labour intensive process as "all... stop logs would be manually changed, by hand."

⁶⁹ "Hebe's Falls," *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 5 December 1891, 2.

⁷⁰ Ice strength is never uniform – even on the same body of water. Stability is affected by a number of factors including flow. For example, rapids and springs can erode ice from below. While ice stability would have increased north of Hebe's Falls (as current decreased), ice was not reliable for the entire thirteen kilometre stretch between Rideout Bay and Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. It seems that Miller's Rapids (near Old Fort Island, ON), created a second notable weak spot. A break in the ice road developed near Miller's Rapids causing members of Dalles 38C to move off the ice and rest (or change) near present-day Barski's Hill, ON, before continuing into Rat Portage, ON, for trade. Elder Martin, interview by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, summer 1972.

of Miller's Rapids – just a short distance from the western outlet. In 1924 the *Kenora Miner and News* substantiated poetic renderings by publishing accounts that Kenora Bay, near the outlet of Lake of the Woods, had frozen over by November in 1876.⁷¹ Before dam development, the north shore of Lake of the Woods and large sections of the Winnipeg River froze during winter months.

Printed warnings about ice stability do not seem to have appeared in Rat Portage until the erection of the Norman Dam in 1893. Following hydroelectric development, local journalists advised skaters to avoid short-cuts from Norman to Rat Portage across Kenora Bay – a short-cut likely taken by members of Dalles 38C (such as Martin) from Tunnel Island to town hubs (such as the Hudson's Bay Company store). An anonymous journalist at *Rat Portage Weekly Record* explained that current was "apt to wear away the ice from below and spots may become so thin as to be dangerous" that same year.⁷² Continuous water flow, caused by dam operations, meant that former ice routes became unreliable. After American inquiries into the effects of the Norman Dam, however, journalists rarely acknowledged changing current as the cause of poor ice conditions. Some attempt was made to blame heavy snowfall for unreliable ice routes shortly after an IJC hearing in September 1915. In January 1916, the *Kenora Miner and News* suggested that "mild weather in the early part of the season, and subsequent snow falls" jeopardized ice quality.⁷³ Snow, reporters suggested, prohibited the discerning user from reading the ice; weak spots were covered by a thick white blanket. Ice users, it was feared, would thus "very easily walk into almost open water before they would realize it."⁷⁴ True,

⁷¹ "Local Items," *Kenora Miner and News*, 12 November 1924, unpaginated.

⁷² "Town Topics," *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 24 November 1893, 2.

⁷³ "Local Items," *Kenora Miner and News*, 12 January 1916, 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

water-saturated snow (once frozen) makes porous and weak ice. But, no reference was made to changing current patterns – another critical determinant of ice stability – caused by dam operations. When R. P. Murphy of Murphy Bros., a shipping agency, travelled from Whitefish Bay, ON (southeast of Rat Portage) to town, he complained that “the ice in places which in ordinary years was absolutely safe was this year found to be very thin.”⁷⁵ Heavy snowfall was again blamed for unreliable transit routes: “the heavy mantle of snow on the lake...prevents the frost from forming ice of sufficient thickness.”⁷⁶ Unlike the November report, he made a passing reference to current: ice weakened “where there is even only a slight current.”⁷⁷ No attempt was made to address the severity of changing water patterns; slight current changes were suggested where fluctuations of roughly one metre were known to occur. Local journalists utilized modifying adjectives to downplay ice erosion, to make nature (i.e. snowfall) accountable for artificial modifications to winter routes.

Later in 1916, the *Kenora Miner and News* published conflicting evidence in a human interest piece. The tale of a drowning hound implies that water fluctuations may have had a greater effect on ice stability than heavy snowfall. A local journalist reported that an unfortunate dog broke through the ice “to the rear of the town office” in Kenora Bay. Another pup stood near the hole, barking incessantly until a passerby pulled up the hound. The journalist attributed the hound’s accident to poor ice conditions caused, most likely, by dam operations: “As the lake has gone down some, the water in the hole was not up to the top of the ice.”⁷⁸ Ice instability in Kenora Bay most likely resulted from the

⁷⁵ “Ice on the Lake is Still Unsafe,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 19 January 1916, 1.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ “Dog Saved His Chum,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 26 February 1916, 1.

gap between surface ice and the water below, probably caused by the removal of stop logs from the Norman Dam. Limited documentary evidence about air pockets between the ice and the water exists as Public Works failed to issue notices until 1918. Up until that point, as a local journalist explained, “stop logs were removed or replaced, and local interests would not be aware of any change till there was a noticeable rise or lowering in the level of the Winnipeg River” – or, perhaps, until a hound broke through the ice.⁷⁹

What was happening to the ice? Ice on the south side of the dam (i.e. Kenora Bay) would fracture along the shore as the Norman Dam drew water from the reservoir. Ice approximately one metre from the shore would eventually drop. If any ice formed along Kenora Bay, it would freeze in a bowl shape. Fissures and cracks created structural weaknesses that even the harshest winters could not overcome. Downstream of the dam – where we would find ice connecting reservations such as Dalles 38C, Whitedog, and grassy Narrows to town – also weakened in response to changing levels. Water released by the Norman Dam into the Winnipeg River lifted ice from the shore. Ice downstream of the dam was thus separated from the shore. A frozen river could quickly become open water. Should levels stabilize, a new thin layer of ice may form over open water. New ice would be more unreliable (and, likely, too thin for safe travel). Ice stability thus depended primarily on how the *waiâbishkiwedig* operated the Norman Dam.

Industrial operations compromised the stability of Anishinabek transit routes. Pine markers no longer guaranteed safe(r) passage along the Winnipeg River towards the western outlet of Lake of the Woods. Poor ice conditions effectively landlocked Anishinabek communities during the winter months. Prior to the Rollerway and Norman dams, Anishinabek families limited winter travel during winter freeze-up and spring

⁷⁹ “Notify Board of Trade Re Stop Logs,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 13 April 1918, 1.

thaw. Allan Luby explains, “You’d set up camp and you’d wait” for the water to transform.⁸⁰ Anishinabek families exchanged stories, socio-cultural directives, during these transitional periods. Periodic isolation from family and trade was short-lived. After a few weeks of deep cold, short trips became possible. Within a month, families could cover greater distances – from Dalles 38C to Rat Portage – by foot or sled. After 1887, the transitional period never clearly ended. Knowledge keepers lost the ability to estimate whether ice had formed north of the western outlet. Elder testimony suggests that Anishinabek men from Dalles 38C limited winter treks towards Rat Portage due to perceived travel risks. Urgencies – like food shortages – led Anishinabek men towards the western outlet. For example, Elder Alice Kelly attributes her grandfather’s death to dietary need and unstable ice. Kelly’s *nokomis* fell through the ice and drowned en route to Rat Portage.⁸¹ Her grandmother survived the season, presumably through intra-community resource exchange.

It is difficult to enumerate the cost of damages that the Province of Ontario and the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company, operating in tandem, caused to Anishinabek ice roads. Scientific research may allow us to gauge the number of pine markers lost to industrial water fluctuations. But, how do we calculate the loss of potential trade? Reduced medical access? How can we, historians, enumerate family loss? Let us turn our attention instead to demonstrable phenomena. The next section asks: whose interests did the International Joint Commission hearings protect? How did the IJC limit Anishinabek participation in public hearings?

ANISHINABEK EXCLUSION FROM IJC HEARINGS

⁸⁰ Former Chief Luby (Ogemah), interview with author, 28 December 2014.

⁸¹ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

The Dominion of Canada and the United States wrote Anishinabek participants out of the IJC by employing the language of nationhood and citizenship during its formation; the International Joint Commission did, after all, originate from an international agreement designed to protect the interests of Canadian and American citizens who shared waters. The public appears to have adopted federal terms - or frameworks - in its evaluation of IJC proceedings. Consider that the editorial team of *The American Journal of International Law* identified the IJC as symbol of “comity between nations.”⁸² Years later, Manton M. Wyvell argued that both parties hoped to curb “strong feelings and even hatreds” by building a “peace machine” between equal adversaries: Canada and the United States.⁸³ Canadian law had long (re)defined Anishinabek interests as subject to the Dominion – not as independent of the state. Consider that, as historian John Milloy explains:

Under the authority of section 91 subsection 24 of the British North America Act, the Canadian federal government in the first comprehensive Indian Act, that of 1876, took extensive control of reserves and tribal nations. Traditional Indian government was dismissed and replaced by Indian-agent-controlled models of white government.... Governmental powers left with the tribes placed them, in the multi-layered Confederation, well below the position of a respectable municipality.⁸⁴

This (re)definition of Anishinabek nationhood is critical to understanding Indigenous exclusion from the International Joint Commission. While there was no explicit bar against Indigenous participation in the IJC hearings, there was also no clause for inclusion. As members of an unrecognized nation, on-reserve Anishinabek men and

⁸² American Society of International Law, “Boundary Waters between the United States and Canada,” *The American Journal of International Law* 4, no. 3 (1910): 669.

⁸³ Wyvell, “Peace between Canada and the United States,” 254.

⁸⁴ John S. Milloy, “The Early Indian Act: Developmental Strategy and Constitutional Change,” in *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, edited by Ian Getty and Antoine Lussier (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983), 57.

women discovered that their interests were deemed secondary to the Dominion. As members of an unrecognized nation, Anishinabek men and women were to function as supporting – rather than foundational – members of national plans for economic growth.

During the IJC hearings, federal organizations – considered representative of the public interest – submitted data to the International Joint Commission. The Dominion Water Power Branch, the Department of Public Works of Canada, and the Department of Indian Affairs rendered “valuable services” to Magrath, Powell, and Migneault. The IJC also thanked “individuals in both countries” for sharing their knowledge of the lake.⁸⁵ Here again we find implicit barriers to Anishinabek inclusion. The IJC relied on local communications (like the *Kenora Miner and News*) to recruit “any person” to submit information about lake levels.⁸⁶ The IJC also called on “interested parties.”⁸⁷ According to the *Indian Act of 1876*, however, Anishinabek (wo)men were wards of the state. Historian Arthur J. Ray explains that “all ‘legal’ Indians were to be treated as minors without the full privileges of citizenship.”⁸⁸ The Department of Indian Affairs was to protect and to represent Indigenous interests; federal law disqualified Anishinabek (wo)men from the IJC’s call. Exclusion is not a necessary end result of this legal reality,

⁸⁵ International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 18.

⁸⁶ On 11 September 1913, the International Joint Commission announced that “any person having information or evidence bearing upon the question [of water levels on Lake of the Woods will be] granted permission to be heard.” The IJC called on persons capable of speaking to “agricultural interests, fishing interests, harbor and navigation interests an opportunity of being heard.” This call was made public through the *Kenora Miner and News*. As wards of the Dominion, the Anishinabek did not qualify as persons in matters of rights. Under the Indian Act, reservation lands were federal lands. Thus Indigenous peoples affected by flooding or changed flow patterns may not have been considered citizens of Ontario with agricultural, fishing, or navigation interests. “Joint Commission Here Monday,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 11 September 1913, 1. For more information on the legal definition of person under the *British North America Act* (circa 1867-1929), see Tabitha Marshall and David A. Cruickshank, “Persons Case,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last edited October 16, 2015, accessed 1 May 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/persons-case/>.

⁸⁷ International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 18. See also “International Joint Commission Will Hold Sessions Here,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 11 September 1915, 1.

⁸⁸ Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 203.

but it did not stimulate public demand for Anishinabek participation. Indeed, Canadians following the *Kenora Miner and News* might have wrongly assumed that the *waiâbishkiwedig* accurately represented Anishinabek interests. In October 1915, the *Kenora Miner and News* noted that G. G. McEwen of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa and Constable Hans Hansen of Kenora left town “to make an inspection and report on the lands owned by the Indian Department in this district.”⁸⁹ McEwen and Hansen were to estimate whether reservation lands “would be affected by any permanent change in levels of the Lake of the Woods.”⁹⁰ There was no subsequent report on their findings. Recent research has shown that federal agents – like McEwen – rarely prioritized Indigenous interests. Instead, the Department of Indian Affairs was linked to the ministries responsible for natural resources and western development.⁹¹ The Dominion government favoured industrial interventions that fuelled national economic growth and not Anishinabek environmental uses that maintained an extra-market economy.⁹² It is unlikely that McEwen reported changes to ice roads in the Winnipeg River drainage basin – not only were these roads off reserve (and thus outside of his assignment), they did not directly contribute to industrial resource (read: capital) development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

⁸⁹ “Local Items,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 30 October 1915, unpaginated.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 205.

⁹² This claim echoes Thibault Martin who argued that “the state, when it negotiates agreements with First Nations, behaves as though it represents only the non-Aboriginal portion of the population” (30). Martin subsequently quoted Roméo Saganash who claimed, “Canada acts as though the national interest of the State largely excludes the interest of the Indigenous peoples from whom the parliament of Canada has a direct constitutional responsibility” (Martin, 30). Both authors base their critique on Hydro-Québec’s interactions with Innu and Cree Nations on the James Bay Project. See Martin, “Hydro Development in Quebec and Manitoba: Old Relationships or New Social Contract,” in *Power Struggles: Hydro Development and First Nations in Manitoba and Quebec*, edited by Thibault Martin and Stephen H. Hoffman (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008): 19-37.

Not only were Anishinabek participants excluded from the IJC hearings as wards of the state, evidentiary norms further limited Anishinabek ability to submit data to the International Joint Commission. The IJC based their decision on “extensive field surveys and the collection, analysis, and coordination of a vast amount of physical data.”⁹³ Let us examine a piece of accepted testimony. The IJC appointed Arthur V. White of Toronto and Adolph F. Meyer of Minneapolis as consulting engineers on the Lake of the Woods question.⁹⁴ White and Meyer produced an atlas together. Sheet No. 4 of Arthur V. White and Adolph F. Meyer’s *Atlas* (1915) depicts Garden Island, Lake of the Woods. Sheet No. 4 was part of large map collection that showcased “low lands bordering on the American and Canadian sides of the lake.”⁹⁵ The map adhered to non-Indigenous cartographic traditions. Scale was clearly marked. Anishinabek maps, by contrast, unfolded like stories; they were not topographic representations of the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Working with Anishinabek informant Mrs. Wawiekumig (Nawajibgokwe), anthropologist Frances Densmore found that map-makers prioritized “the intersection of streams and the presence of lakes” – critical details for individuals travelling by canoe.⁹⁶ These visual cues did not require Anishinabek maps to conform to non-Indigenous standards of scale. Densmore found that Wawiekumig’s map conformed to the piece of paper on which it was drawn. Available materials dictated the scale of the map. Anishinabek map-makers used long lines to represent hard paddling. The difficulty

⁹³ International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 12.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Arthur V. White and Adolph F. Meyer, “Southerly Shore: Lake of the Woods from Northwest Angle Inlet to Big Grassy River, 1913-1914,” in *Atlas to accompany Report to International Joint Commission Relation to Official Reference re. Lake of the Woods Question* (Ottawa: Government Printing Department, 1915).

⁹⁶ Frances Densmore found that her informant, Mrs. Wawiekumig (Nawajibgokwe), “conformed to the shape of the piece of paper on which it (a map) was drawn, so that relative distances and points of the compass were not strictly maintained” (*Chippewa Customs*, 180).

of the route determined the distance between key points on a map. Patterns of line use appear to have originated centuries earlier, an observation based on pictorial writing (pictographs) in the Precambrian Shield. Working with Anishinabek informant Mrs. Seymour, archeologist Grace Rajnovich analyzed a pictograph from Annie Island, Lake of the Woods, that reveals that someone journeyed for approximately one month to reach the site. Rajnovich notes that “The arduousness of the journey is in the long, crooked line.”⁹⁷ While not a map, this picture story uses line to indicate the difficulty – rather than the exact mileage – of the journey. The difficulty of a route could be used to extrapolate travel time: a difficult journey takes longer. Thus, map users could gauge distance by line shape and length.

In addition, map users required local knowledge to trace and evaluate Anishinabek authorship. Anishinabek map-makers may not have signed their work by name; authorship could be inferred from totemic symbol. Densmore claimed that low population density allowed Anishinabek readers to identify authorship by birth and marriage patterns (or totemic groupings) etched onto records of land use.⁹⁸ The cartographers who produced Sheet No. 4, by contrast, are clearly identified: “Adolph F. Meyer and Arthur V. White.” Further, Meyer and White made their credentials visible – “Consulting Engineers” is scrolled across the top of the map. Magrath, Powell, and Migneault could read and evaluate this submission. Given the cartographers’ printed accreditation, Magrath, Powell, and Migneault could assume that what was legible was also accurate. An alternative mapping tradition meant that Anishinabek (wo)men faced material – in addition to legal – barriers to participation in IJC hearings. Federal

⁹⁷ Grace Rajnovich, *Reading Rock Art: Interpreting the Indian Rock Paintings of the Canadian Shield* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., 2002), 92.

⁹⁸ Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 176.

representatives lacked the knowledge to read and evaluate Anishinabek representations of space. Limited recognition of alternative forms of mapping are evident in the IJC's claim that "[p]rior to the reference, the only surveys in the Lake of the Woods watershed were the ordinary public-land surveys, and they did not extend over the entire area."⁹⁹ The absence of evidence here suggests the disparity between Anishinabek and non-Indigenous standards made it difficult to communicate spatial knowledge across cultures – historians know that Anishinabek maps of the Winnipeg River drainage basin exist(ed). Records kept by the *waiâbishkiwedig* reveal that Anishinabek maps were unrecognized during the IJC's decision-making process.

Non-Indigenous men occasionally filtered Anishinabek knowledge for submission to the International Joint Commission. Captain J. T. Hooper of Kenora, for example, attributed his ability to judge water fluctuations on local environmental knowledge. Hooper developed his "standard" high water mark through conversations with "the Indians." Anishinabek informants told Hooper that Lake of the Woods reached "extreme high water" levels in 1876. Hooper made reference to this "Indian" standard in a letter to Arthur White. He also suggested that representatives of the Commission could assess the standard themselves by travelling along Lake of the Woods. Nature had recorded the high water mark: water had stained cliff faces along the lakeshore. Many of the 14,000 islands on Lake of the Woods, it seems, recorded the same details that local Anishinabek passed on orally.¹⁰⁰ Alternatively, Hooper suggested that representatives of the Commission

⁹⁹ International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 12.

¹⁰⁰ LOWM, "Arthur White to Captain J. T. Hooper, 14 April 1913," Lake of the Woods – Levels. Captain Hooper also appears to have referenced local rock during the oral hearings. According to the *Kenora Miner and News*, "Hooper stated with particular reference to the high water mark on the rocks that he had seen the water higher before the construction of these dams than it has even been since." No indication of the regularity of such high water levels is provided. "High Water Levels a Necessity," *Kenora Miner and News*, 15 September 1915, 1.

could turn to Hudson's Bay Company records: "The Indians *and* the Hudson's Bay Co. claimed it was higher than it had been for some years in 1876."¹⁰¹ Text could be and was privileged over alternative forms of evidence (material and oral) that would have facilitated Anishinabek participation. Hooper's submission thus allows us to better imagine exclusionary evidentiary norms. There is no known record of White corroborating multisensory evidence with textual records along the north shore, or of recognizing Anishinabek ways of knowing. Anishinabek evidence of water fluctuations, if presented, was indirect.

Not all witnesses included Anishinabek findings in their testimony as did Hooper. White and Meyer deepened Anishinabek exclusion by obscuring Anishinabek patterns of land use from submitted maps. For example, White and Meyer assessed soil grade by non-Indigenous standards. They did not account for distinct patterns of environmental use, specifically the adaptive planting and harvesting techniques that allowed Anishinabek families to grow in soil labelled unusable by federal agents. To ensure production in such harsh environs, Anishinabek families planted on islands or along the lakeshore. Here, the moderating effects of the water attenuated frost.¹⁰² In 1819, the Hudson's Bay Company factor at Fort Lac la Pluie found that it fell on the women "to do all the laborous work" along the shore. He watched them "busily employed gathering and drying corn" amidst a garden of potatoes, pumpkins, onions, and carrots.¹⁰³ And yet, White and Meyer suggested that Garden Island had no agricultural value.¹⁰⁴ This finding

¹⁰¹ LOWM, "Arthur White to Captain J. T. Hooper."

¹⁰² D. W. Moodie and Barry Kaye, "The Northern Limit of Indian Agriculture in North America," *Geographical Review* 59 (1969), 528.

¹⁰³ Unidentified Hudson's Bay Company factor quoted in Moodie and Kaye, "The Northern Limit of Indian Agriculture in North America," 518.

¹⁰⁴ White and Meyer, *Atlas to accompany Report to International Joint Commission*, Sheet No. 4.

conflicts with the local place name – Garden Island – that emphasized soil productivity.¹⁰⁵ Seeds planted on Garden Island may have been more resistant than southern varieties. Corn planted in Lake of the Woods, for example, appeared “so stunted that [it is] more like [a shrub] than the plant which is common to more southerly latitudes.”¹⁰⁶ Its strange shape is tied to genetic modifications. “Indian corn” planted and consumed by Anishinabek families originated in southern Mexico. To allow the crop to spread north, tribes to the north (including the Anishinabek) had to develop frost-resistant strains through careful seed selection. No known attempt was made to understand Anishinabek seed and garden management or to consider the science behind Anishinabek harvests on otherwise unusable lands. No known attempt was made to reconcile local place names (borne of Anishinabek land use) with Western science. An opportunity to assess potential damages to Anishinabek land users thus went unnoticed.

¹⁰⁵ Anthropologist Keith Basso, in *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), argued that the landscape is not simply a backdrop for cultural activities. Instead, the landscape functions as a sort of living history project. Apache place names oftentimes encapsulated the cultural activities that happened there. According to Basso, “[p]lace-based thoughts about the self lead commonly to thoughts of other things – other places, other people, other times, whole networks of associates that ramify unaccountably within the expanding spheres of awareness that they themselves engender” (107).

Charles E. Cleland has similarly argued that “the entire essence of their cultures [Anishinabek] is based upon the notion of geographic place which embodies their human origin, historical identity, and the way they conceive their cultural reality” (quoted in Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, *Gidakiiminaan (Our Earth): An Anishinaabe Atlas of the 1836 (Upper Michigan), 1837, and 1842 Treaty Ceded Territories* (Odanah, WI: Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission Press, 2007), 1.).

Missing from the IJC Hearings was a sense of how Anishinabek peoples constituted their landscape. In this formulation, the name “Garden Island” reflected and defined Anishinabek socio-economic activity in that space. In the United States, the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission is attempting to reconstruct how the Anishinabek of Lake Superior lived by collecting local place names and circulating them in the *Gidakiiminaan (Our Earth): An Anishinaabe Atlas of the 1836 (Upper Michigan), 1837, and 1842 Treaty Ceded Territories*.

¹⁰⁶ “Frost-Proof Corn Grown by Indians,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 25 October 1924, 2.

According to Lake of the Woods and Aulneau Adventure Tours, *The Explorers’ Guide*, Garden Island was previously known as “Cornfield.” Presumably, this name appears “[o]n maps that pre-date 1900.” It is known that a “five acre cornfield and three acres of potatoes, squash and pumpkin” covered the interior when the Dawson and Hind survey party passed through Lake of the Woods in 1858 (98).

In sum, the International Joint Commission thrice silenced Anishinabek voices. Firstly, Anishinabek (wo)men faced legal barriers to self-representation at the IJC hearings. The Indian Act defined Anishinabek (wo)men as legal wards of the state – there was no legal imperative for their inclusion. Secondly, Anishinabek (wo)men held an alternative mapping tradition. Individuals who knew the territory may have been unable to relate their knowledge to the *waiâbishkiwedig*. Lastly, accepted maps evaluated (contested) Anishinabek lands by non-Indigenous standards. Consulting engineers do not appear to have considered local place names and Indigenous land use in their assessments. Expert findings thus favoured the *waiâbishkiwedig* and their patterns of economic growth. Land along the north shore was believed to have little economic value in its “natural state.” Lumber and flour mills, however, produced a marked profit. With skewed data, the International Joint Commission conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the Norman Dam. The Commissioners ruled overwhelming in favour of Canadian operations; the IJC valued the continued development of the Norman Dam over the abortive potential of its removal.¹⁰⁷

THE RESULTS OF DE FACTO EXCLUSION: ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND ANISHINABEK ADAPTATIONS TO THE CASH ECONOMY

¹⁰⁷ Ray has written a detailed critique of “expert witnesses” and Canadian misrepresentations of Indigenous histories focusing on the contemporary courtroom. Comparisons can be drawn with the hearings of the International Joint Commission on the Lake of the Woods question. Ray notes that “judges typically have little or no previous experience with Aboriginal rights litigation” (281). Commissioners, by contrast, had little experience with Anishinabek peoples or territorial claims; they travelled to Lake of the Woods from across Canada. Ray further claims that “facts” are introduced in an arena (courtroom) that has long disrupted Indigenous access to resources. Similarly, Commissioners had little interest in acknowledging competing Anishinabek interests in water resources in the Winnipeg River drainage basin; instead, they were to determine whether the operation of the Norman Dam negatively impacted competing industries. Ray further notes that court officials are not required to stay up-to-date with historical trends (282). As Captain J. T. Hooper’s testimony reveals, Commissioners were not required to engage with alternative history-keeping methods. Arthur J. Ray, “‘History Wars’ and Treaty Rights in Canada: A Canadian Case Study,” *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest*, edited by Alexandra Harmon (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2008), 279-96.

The International Joint Commission recommended that an elevation of 1061.25 feet (323.47 metres) above sea-level, be set as the maximum water level on Lake of the Woods.¹⁰⁸ Canadian industry benefited from this recommendation, gaining considerable flexibility in its operations. The IJC concluded that “water may be drawn from the lake by the appropriate authority in Canada for the benefit of Canadian interest [between 1056 and 1061 feet or 321.87 and 323.39 metres].”¹⁰⁹ Only if Canadian industry raised the lake to 1061 feet (323.39 metres) was international – that is, American and Canadian – consultation required. A new governing body, the Lake of the Woods Control Board, was to determine how much water to “waste” or to “conserve” at either extreme. Fluctuations of up to five feet (1.52 metres), however, were deemed acceptable by Commissioners. How did this decision change the watershed? It was not until the 1920s – with the IJC’s *Final Report* (1917) already submitted – that media reports directly linked compromised ice travel to dam operations at the north shore. Damage to Anishinabek transit routes only became visible once Canadian industry was protected.

In December 1924, Mayor John Brenchley of Kenora issued a warning to Kenora residents through the *Kenora Miner and News*. The article acknowledged that “prior to the enlarging of the east branch of the Winnipeg River, the current was not so strong towards the Tunnel Island shore.”¹¹⁰ The article further identified that changing ice patterns may confuse regular ice travellers. The popular “short cut” across Kenora Bay, from Tunnel Island to town, had posed “little danger” in years past.¹¹¹ The reliability of

¹⁰⁸ International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 27.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ “Don’t Risk Crossing Ice to Tunnel Island,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 27 December 1924, 5.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

ice travel across the bay informed the “local habit of crossing the ice.”¹¹² Brenchley’s public announcement was designed to revise local understandings of Lake of the Woods and surrounding area. He stated that “since the capacity of the power plant is more than three times what it was, more water of course goes through the east channel [which causes] a stronger current and thin ice.”¹¹³ In this quotation, Brenchley attributes changes in ice quality to the Kenora Power Dam, a facility that was constructed in 1902 and enlarged by Kenora in 1906.¹¹⁴ It is strange that the Norman Dam is not identified by Brenchley’s quotation – the Norman Dam is located on the west side of Tunnel Island while the Kenora Power Dam is located on the east. Both systems draw water from Kenora Bay. Despite this occlusion in Brenchley’s public warning, it is clear that dam operations jeopardized local ice travel along the north shore of Lake of the Woods and down the Winnipeg River.

By 1925, public warnings against “short-cuts” hardened. The *Kenora Miner and News* published absolutist warnings against ice travel near the Norman Dam – not recommendations for alternative use: “The ice towards the Tunnel Island shore is never safe, at any period of the winter, because of the strong current which runs underneath [caused by releasing water into the Winnipeg River] to the eastern outlet of Lake of the Woods.”¹¹⁵ Dam operations, as Mayor Brenchley’s announcement first revealed, compromised the structural integrity of ice roads near town. The Kenora Dam (and, although never explicitly identified, the Norman Dam) made dangerous the final leg of Anishinabek travel from reserve into town; the dams not only compromised ice stability,

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Lake of the Woods Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 61.

¹¹⁵ “Skating on Thin Ice,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 11 November 1925, 3.

they damaged Anishinabek improvements to their roads. Pine markers, for example, may have sunk as rising water levels opened packed routes.

The Norman Dam caused more than environmental change. By compromising Anishinabek ice roads, the Rollerway and later the Norman dams jeopardized Anishinabek access to capital (through trade) and public services. Reserves were effectively land-locked by industrial operations. Remember that Anishinabek families managed large dog populations because alternative methods of transit (aside from foot) were unavailable to riverine communities such as Dalles 38C, Whitedog, and Grassy Narrow reserves. In Riding Mountain, MB, east of Dalles 38C, Anishinabek families replaced dogs after horses were introduced, presumably by the *waiābishkiwedig* in the 1870s.¹¹⁶ According to Marilyn Peckett, wagon travel became the most popular form of transit and the sled fell into disuse.¹¹⁷ No such change occurred at Dalles 38C. Elder Matilda Martin maintained that “Not many Indians will keep a horse, you know.”¹¹⁸ She recalled only one man with a horse during her youth on reserve (1885-1908). Given that no road connected Dalles 38C to town until the 1980s, there was no practical incentive to replace dogs with horses. Water travel remained the best transit option in the often rocky and sometimes boggy Precambrian Shield.

Train service was also largely inaccessible to Anishinabek residents of Dalles 38C. During the Treaty #3 negotiations (1873), Anishinabek leaders attempted to secure

¹¹⁶ Marilyn Peckett claimed that the Anishinabek occupied Riding Mountain since the early nineteenth century, although evidence of early Indigenous occupation exists. Peckett suggests that settler-colonial presence increased in the 1870s, shortly after Manitoba was surveyed (8-9). While horses may have been traded before this time, the *waiābishkiwedig* brought domesticated work animals (like horses) with them into Riding Mountain. Between 1870 and 1901, Peckett claims that colonial land pressures increased as “[c]olonists settling in the area required lumber for houses, barns, fences and firewood” (10). Peckett does not provide a date for the arrival of horses (or their origin point); however, it seems likely that Anishinabek horse use would increase with availability. Peckett, “Anishinabe Homeland History.”

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁸ Elder Martin, interview by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 27 July 1972.

free and unlimited travel on the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in exchange for shared access to their territories. Commissioner Alexander Morris denied their request, indicating that he represented the Queen, not the corporation.¹¹⁹ Train stations were eventually built around, rather than on, reserve. Chief Kawitaskung (Thomas Lindsay), who was escorted to Winnipeg, MB by the Indian Agent at Kenora, relied on the ice road to access more “modern” transit services. He was taken by dog sled to the agent’s house in town.¹²⁰ While locomotives may have connected important cities in the North-West and Manitoba, reservations remained off the track. Ice roads retained their importance as thoroughfares to Anishinabek families. After the Rollerway Dam and Norman Dam, however, the risk of winter travel increased.

Winter had always proved difficult for Anishinabek families. During the winter months, families faced the greatest risk of rabbit starvation. Rabbit starvation refers to an acute form of malnutrition caused by an overreliance on lean proteins.¹²¹ These proteins

¹¹⁹ Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, Including the Negotiations of which They Were Based, and Other Information Relating Thereto* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke & Co. Publishers, 1880), 50.

¹²⁰ Elder Martin did not identify the year that Chief Kawitaskung (Thomas Lindsay) travelled to Winnipeg for eye care in her oral interview. It is likely that this trip occurred between 1902 and 1904. According to Hazel Martin-McKeever, Kawitaskung had a stroke and went blind in 1902 (27). It is likely that the trip happened before 1904 as Martin transported her grandfather to town by sled alone (without spousal support). Elder Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, summer 1972.

¹²¹ In “‘Ould Betsy and Her Daughter’: Fur Trade Fisheries in Northern Ontario,” in *Fishing Places, Fishing People: Traditions and Issues in Canadian Small-Scale Fisheries*, edited Daniel Newell and Rosemary E. Ommer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), Arthur J. Ray identifies Indigenous food preferences in the central subarctic culture area before 1905. This culture area overlaps with the territories covered by Treaty #3. Ray notes that Indigenous peoples, particularly the Cree, favoured large game such as caribou (83). Deer and moose, however, were more plentiful in Anishinabek territory. Ray also notes that the Cree prized beaver meat (83). Oral testimony introduced in Chapter 6 suggests that beaver was also prized in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Indigenous peoples in the central subarctic culture area ate, as Ray identifies, a wide variety of fish throughout the year such as sturgeon, whitefish, northern pike and sucker (83). Oral testimony from the Winnipeg River drainage basin suggests that *name* (sturgeon) was perceived as a “rich fish” instead of a lean fish (Ratuski, “Gathering Traditional Knowledge,” 3). An anonymous Elder explained that “Sturgeon was mostly eaten in the summer but would also be stored for winter by digging deep holes... in the ground.... Ice stored in ice houses was sometimes used to help preserve the raw sturgeon” (3). Testimonies indicate that Anishinabek families ate this “rich fish” in small portions (3, 5). Others suggest that Anishinabek families used this “rich fish” medicinally (8,

need to be coupled with carbohydrates (or fat) to stave off hunger. To help facilitate survival as resources dwindled during the winter months, Anishinabek families broke into smaller groups. The ushering in of the modern era and modern machinery (i.e. Norman Dam) did little to ease the winter burden for Anishinabek families. In October 1922, Indian Agent Captain Frank Edwards reminded Kenora residents that local Anishinabek were “almost destitute in the winter” and “suffer[ed] very greatly from the cold.”¹²² The first wave of hydroelectric development on Lake of the Woods exacerbated seasonal difficulties. From December to February, Anishinabek families relied on trapping and big game hunting. Unreliable ice, however, meant that trap lines established before the Rollerway or the Norman may not have been accessible for the duration of the season. Male providers who relied on ice roads to reach their lands took substantial risks to check the lines. As found in Elder Alice Kelly’s testimony, male providers occasionally drowned trying to provide for their families.¹²³

Male providers who reached their trap lines, however, were more likely to face disappointment than their predecessors. In spring 1925, the Norman Dam released large amounts of water, killing thousands of muskrats on Lake of the Woods. Indeed, low lake levels nearly “deplet[ed] the lake;” it caused “their houses [to freeze] up and thousands of

14, 17) or on special occasions (9, 11). *Name* preserved for winter use would allow Anishinabek families to couple an oily fish with garden produce or stored *manomin* to help prevent rabbit starvation.

¹²² “The Peoples’ Forum,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 18 October 1922, 2.

¹²³ The *Kenora Miner and News* recorded drownings and near-drownings in areas of the Winnipeg River drainage basin used by Anishinabek families. For example, in December 1923, “a couple of people broke through, but fortunately they were able to get out” near Tunnel Island. In November 1925, a drowning occurred on the Winnipeg River near Minaki, Ontario. The *Kenora Miner and News* noted that “the drowned man broke through the thin ice while walking across the river, as the current is quite rapid in spots at that point.” “Don’t Risk Crossing Ice to Tunnel Island,” 5; “Body Found at Minaki,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 25 November 1925, 1; Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

rats were frozen to death along the shore and shallow inlets.”¹²⁴ By May 1925, the *Kenora Miner and News* announced that winter 1924 wrought economic disaster: “Many of the Indians of the district are experiencing a period of hard times... as there has been very little doing in their line.”¹²⁵ While the correlation between the operation of Norman Dam and low muskrat populations was first discussed in the local newspaper in 1925, Anishinabek families had likely experienced shortages since at least 1895. Hungry Anishinabek families recognized the fragility of their harvesting economy in the face of environmental change – especially after fluctuations of up to 1.5 metres (between 1056 and 1061 feet above sea level) were recommended by International Joint Commission in 1917. Economic adaptation resulted: the increase in Anishinabek saving activities after blueberry season may have been a direct response to the instability of fall and winter food supplies (or income generating activities such as trapping).

By 1917, when the International Joint Commission submitted its *Final Report... on the Lake of the Woods Reference*, Anishinabek (wo)men living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin knew that their interests had been – and, would likely continue to be – underrepresented by federal agents. Flood damages likely influenced local Anishinabek families’ decisions to open personal saving accounts – a pattern of saving that emerged within five years of the IJC’s pro-industry recommendations. In 1921, “Indians Starting Bank Accounts” headlined the *Kenora Miner and News*.¹²⁶ This article noted that “[n]o less than forty-six [Indians] have started savings bank accounts.” Initial deposits, particularly investments made by individuals from Dalles 38C, Rat Portage 38B Indian

¹²⁴ “Low Water in Lake Kills Thousands of Muskrats,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 22 April 1925, unpaginated.

¹²⁵ “Local Items: Indians Out of Work,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 23 May 1925, unpaginated.

¹²⁶ “Indians Start Bank Accounts,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 5 October 1921, 1.

Reserve, and Big Island Indian Reserve came from on-reserve timber sales. These individuals decided to bank the \$25 per head that Indian Agent Captain Frank Edwards distributed for the loss of wood resources.¹²⁷ Given historian Robin Jarvis Brownlie's findings in *A Fatherly Eye*, it is tempting to interpret bank use as evidence of departmental interference. Indian agents determined whether and how to distribute funds to "deserving" band members. The *Kenora Miner and News* suggested that Captain Frank Edwards encouraged saving to shield families from seasonal shortages or "the recurrent dull period."¹²⁸ Did Edwards threaten to withhold payment pending the establishment of bank accounts? It is difficult to determine. Could Anishinabek families have benefited from building on the initial deposit that Edwards' recommended? Absolutely – Edwards had the power to distribute band monies, but Anishinabek investors may have exercised some control over their cash deposits.

Early saving (circa 1921) also followed a "prosperous blueberry year."¹²⁹ As Elders Alice Kelly and Marjorie Nabish have explained, blueberry crops have been relatively protected from flood damages.¹³⁰ Early newspaper reports affirm these claims. In 1899, for example, shortly after Ontario paid the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company to install stop logs at Norman Dam, the Rat Portage Railroad Station managed to ship "from 4 to 10 tons of blueberries every day" out of the district.¹³¹ Given that blueberry plants have a lifespan of twenty to fifty years, crops unaffected by lake fluctuations of roughly one metre would have been protected (albeit unintentionally) by

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012. Elder Marjorie Nabish, interview with author, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, 9 August 2012.

¹³¹ "Profitable Blue Berries," *The Rat Portage Miner and Rainy Lake Journal*, 10 July 1899, 3. See also International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 17.

IJC recommendations. Blueberries thus became a reliable source of income in the face of environmental change. Elder Matilda Martin remembered picking berries at Ena Lake (or nearby Corn Lake) for over forty years. Her first reference to berry-picking dated to approximately 1906, a time when her son, John Kipling Jr., was still in his *tikenagan* (cradleboard). Her last berry-picking season occurred around 1955. At age seventy, Martin reported that she “was getting old” and that her “feet were tired walkin[g] up the hill.”¹³² The same elevation that prevented Martin from picking in her seventies protected the crop from water fluctuations during her picking career.

It is difficult to estimate the size of investment berry sales would have allowed. Few official records of berry sales exist in the Winnipeg River drainage basin as individuals purchasing harvested goods directly from “status Indians” risked persecution under the Indian Act. And yet, throughout Martin’s lifetime, individuals like Ben Ratuski and Homer Duggan took the risk of dealing directly with local Anishinabek. In 1915, the *Kenora Miner and News* estimated that these transactions earned local Anishinabek “thousands of dollars.”¹³³ Ten years later, it was anticipated that the blueberry business in Kenora produced a net profit of \$50,000 to \$75,000.¹³⁴ Reflecting on her individual earnings, Martin claimed less than \$200 for her baskets as an active picker in the 1920s.¹³⁵ According to Abdul Rashid, however, the average annual wage in 1920 was approximately \$124.88. The average Canadian woman earned less than her male counterpart – approximately \$75 per annum. Rashid suggested that the average annual

¹³² Elder Martin, interview by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 July 1972.

¹³³ “Local Items,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 6 July 1915, 3. Elder Martin identified blueberry purchasers in an oral interview. Elder Martin, interview by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 July 1972.

¹³⁴ “Blueberry Crop Above Average,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 29 July 1925, 1.

¹³⁵ Elder Martin, interview by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 July 1972.

wage (for Canadians at large) decreased by 11 percent in 1930 and remained depressed until 1940.¹³⁶ Few families thrived on these annual wages; the cost of living outpaced average earnings across Canada. And yet, compared to her non-Indigenous counterparts, Martin earned a sizeable income as a married woman. Saving these cash earnings must be seen as an adaptive strategy as Anishinabek families saw fit to “prepar[e] for the inevitable raining day.”¹³⁷ Bank savings supplemented seasonal rounds.

But, how can this be seen as adaptation? It marks a cultural shift in temporal thinking. According to anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell (1955):

[T]emporal orientation [for the Saulteaux Ojibway] depends upon the recurrence and succession of concrete events in their qualitative aspects – event, moreover, which are indications, preparatory symbols, and guides for those extremely vital activities through which the Saulteaux obtain a living from the country which they inhabit.¹³⁸

Environmental cues, argues Hallowell, allowed the Anishinabek to “keep time,” to transition between economic activities and/or seasonal grounds. Heavy reliance on environmental cues meant that temporal orientation was local. Hallowell suggests that Anishinabek reacted to present cues – as such, Anishinabek functioned in relation to the immediate future or recent past. Anishinabek communities did not save or reserve time for daily tasks. Hallowell writes, “Their rhythm is elastic.” Only hunger or necessity, he believed, induced Anishinabek to function on a set schedule.¹³⁹ The opening of bank accounts thus suggests that necessity motivated Anishinabek living in Winnipeg River drainage basin to think in relation to the distant future. This action suggests that

¹³⁶ Note: the Inflation Calculator, a program available through the Bank of Canada, was used to estimate the average annual income in 1920 as Abdul Rashid used “current dollars [1993]” in his estimates. Abdul Rashid, “Seven Decades of Wage Changes,” *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 5, no. 2 (Summer 1993).

¹³⁷ “Indians Start Bank Accounts,” 1.

¹³⁸ A. Irving Hallowell, *Culture and Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 233-34.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

Anishinabek economic expectations had changed by the early 1900s. Anishinabek (wo)men seemed to anticipate lower yields with industrial water fluctuations.

And yet, there was no identifiable shift in labour. Trapping and foraging continued to have greater significance to local Anishinabek than wage employment. While Anishinabek families sold their berries for money, survival between 1893 and 1950 did not yet demand seasonal employment in industries operated by the *waiâbishkiwedig*.¹⁴⁰ Instead, Anishinabek families continued trying to eke out a living from the land. Saving activities reveal that local Anishinabek were proactive; they “[got] away from their general practice of spending their money as soon as it [was] received” and sought new strategies for winter survival.¹⁴¹ Saving allowed for the continued use of ancestral territories. It simultaneously marked the beginning of an in-between life for many Anishinabek – life between water fluctuations of 1056 and 1061 feet (321.87 and 323.39 metres), between subsistence and cash economies, between town and reserve. Income produced during the berry harvest could be banked in town to shield Anishinabek families from winter scarcity. Cash could be withdrawn and flour, tea, and canned goods could be purchased in town. The risk of travelling along unstable ice to withdraw cash and to shop remained. Ironically, environmental change increased Anishinabek reliance on saving accounts while increasing the risk of accessing them.

CONCLUSION

¹⁴⁰ Alternatively, it could be argued that the Norman Dam prompted Anishinabek families in the Winnipeg River drainage basin to adopt a modal economy. While Anishinabek berry-pickers were never formerly employed by Ratuski and Homer Duggan, they relied increasingly on Ratuski’s and Duggan’s purchases for capital. One’s interpretation depends, perhaps, on whether annual berry sales are identified as a form of independent trade or informal contract labour.

¹⁴¹ “Indians Start Bank Accounts,” 1.

What can we conclude from an examination of the International Joint Commission's Hearings on the Lake of the Woods question? We discover that definitions of "nation" and "citizenship" conceptually barred Anishinabek participation both on the committee and in the hearings themselves. The Department of Indian Affairs was to represent Anishinabek interests, although limited textual evidence is found in the *Final Report of the International Joint Commission* (or related media coverage) to suggest an active or sustained address of Indigenous concerns. We also learn that Anishinabek participants faced material challenges. The International Joint Commission demanded a non-Indigenous standard of evidence – Anishinabek forms of mapping and oral testimonies were not assessed. Captain J. T. Hooper poignantly reveals the IJC's heavy reliance on textual sources when he encouraged Arthur V. White, a consulting engineer, to travel along the water and to scan cliffs for the high water mark – but, Hooper then provided a substitute for Anishinabek ways of knowing: the Hudson's Bay Company records. Federally-appointed commissioners, however, may not have been cognizant of these exclusionary norms. Alexander Magrath, Henry Absalom Powell, and Pierre-Basile Mignault lived outside of the Winnipeg River drainage basin. They lacked local knowledge about the waterways, about who used them and how. Instead, they brought to the Lake of the Woods question an ideological investment in Canadian industrial development.

These exclusionary norms matter to the history of hydroelectric development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The International Joint Commission set a precedent for industrial water development on Indigenous lands (here, Anishinabek lands). It clearly favoured industry over extra-market, primarily Anishinabek, use. There is little

evidence that ice roads – critical to the economic, biological, and social functioning of Anishinabek communities – were evaluated by the International Joint Commission. Subsequent cost/benefit analyses, like those conducted by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission in the 1950s, would continue to ignore Anishinabek land use. As in 1917, developers in the post-1945 era devalued extra-market land use and framed their cost/benefit analyses in relationship to non-Indigenous economic uses. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission would base their decision to build Whitedog Dam on “not only all practicable uses to which these waters can be put on their own watershed [i.e. agricultural, fishing, transportation], but also all beneficial uses which the energy developed thereon may serve in the adjacent territory.”¹⁴² The International Joint Commission effectively established a framework through which to evaluate industrial incursions in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

Further, the International Joint Commission did not create an inclusive space – a place where Anishinabek voices could be heard. Anishinabek families did not react passively to the IJC’s recommendations. As water levels changed, so too did Anishinabek spending habits. Perhaps at the behest of Captain Frank Edwards, Anishinabek families banked timber (and likely berry) monies to “[provide] for a Rainy Day.”¹⁴³ This adaptation allowed Anishinabek families to continue their seasonal rounds for another generation. Then, in the 1950s, hydroelectric developers, particularly the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, would silence Anishinabek voices once again. The HEPC would follow a pattern of development facilitated by the International Joint Commission, relying heavily on federal representation of the state’s “Indian wards.” The earliest

¹⁴² International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 11.

¹⁴³ Indians Start Bank Accounts,” 1.

assessment of flooding damages on Lake of the Woods did not call for an evaluation of Anishinabek lands, a hearing of Anishinabek interests. Moving forward, future developers did not develop a system for listening to bands. What resulted was a pattern of consultation that tilted in favour of developers to the obvious exclusion of Anishinabek interests.



Figure 7: AN ACTIVE ICE ROAD IN KENORA (2014)¹⁴⁴

Note the use of jack pine, a coniferous tree, to mark the edge of the transit route. Please also note the high density of jack pine in the forest visible in the background of each photograph.

¹⁴⁴ Photographs by author, “An Active Ice Road in Kenora, Ontario (2014).” Note the use of jack pine, a coniferous tree, to mark the edge of the transit route. Also note the high density of jack pine in the forest visible in the background of each photograph. This ice road was constructed south (upstream) of the Norman Dam.

RAT PORTAGE SOUVENIR GUIDE.



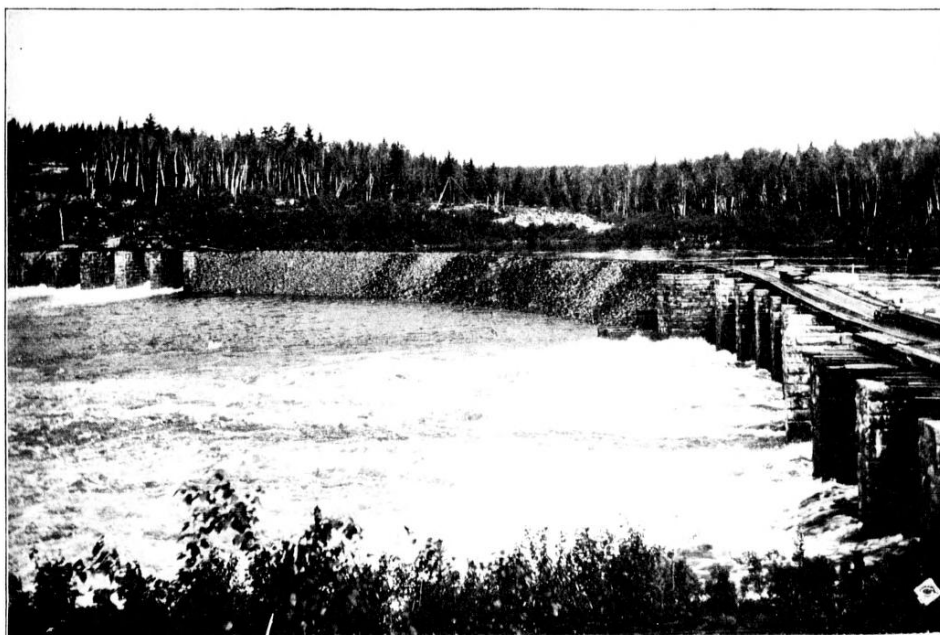
GROUP OF NATIVES—BLUEBERRY PICKERS.
(55)

Figure 8: GROUP OF NATIVE BLUEBERRY PICKERS (C. 1897)¹⁴⁵

Blueberry picking is a critical part of the Anishinabek economy. This photograph of Anishinabek harvesters – captured before 1897 – suggests that it was of vital importance to Anishinabek communities: women and children across age groups are featured, suggesting widespread practice.

¹⁴⁵ Image from Hugh Hughes, *Souvenir, Diamond Jubilee Guide: Rat Portage and Lake-of-the-Woods* (Martel & Tilley, 1897), 55, https://archive.org/details/cihm_04839. The Diamond Jubilee Guide had to be in circulation by June 1897. Unless this image was staged, the latest the photograph could have been taken was summer 1896. Blueberries generally ripen in the upper Winnipeg drainage basin between July and August.

RAT PORTAGE SOUVENIR GUIDE.



NORTH AND EAST GATES OF DAM, WINNIPEG RIVER – ONE OF THE GREATEST WATER POWERS ON THE CONTINENT.
(39)

Figure 9: NORTH AND EAST GATES OF DAM, WINNIPEG RIVER – ONE OF THE GREATEST WATER POWERS ON THE CONTINENT (C. 1897)¹⁴⁶

In 1897, this image was labelled as “One of the Greatest Water Powers on the Continent” in the *Diamond Jubilee Guide*. According to the International Joint Commission, between 1899 and 1913, the Norman Dam increased natural water levels on Lake of the Woods between 0.9-6.3 feet or approximately 0.2-2.0 metres.¹⁴⁷ Its continental effects were known as early as 1895 when American officials like Colonel Naff of the General Land Office actively investigated Minnesotan complaints that the Norman Dam had inundated valuable agricultural lands in the United States.

¹⁴⁶ Image from Hughes, *Souvenir, Diamond Jubilee Guide*, 39.

¹⁴⁷ International Joint Commission, *Final Report*, 17-8.



Figure 10: NORMAN DAM (DATE UNKNOWN)¹⁴⁸

H.A. Langley captured this image between 1898 (when the Norman Dam was constructed) and 1926 (when the Backus-Brooks Company built the powerhouse). Since the 1890s, water management at the Norman Dam has compromised Anishinabek ice roads. Poor ice quality has, in turn, limited Anishinabek mobility in the Winnipeg River drainage basin during the winter months.

¹⁴⁸ H. A. Langley, "Norman Dam, Kenora, Ontario (date unknown)," from Andrew Cunningham, September 25, 2014, <http://www.ipernity.com/doc/wintorbos/35175107>.

SOUTH DIRECTION

A PLACE OF STRENGTH AND VIGOUR

CHAPTER 3

“THE LAW [IS SUCH THAT] INDIANS TAKE CONDITIONS AS THEY FIND THEM”: CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AS A PREDICTOR OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN THE WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, 1950-1965

In 1917, environmental policies that facilitated electrical production at the northern outlet of Lake of the Woods were recommended by Canada and the United States in the *Final Report of the International Joint Commission on the Lake of the Woods Reference*. Employees of the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company might have felt relieved. The *Final Report* seemingly guaranteed prosperity in and around Kenora – or, at least, its economic stability. Add to this Ontario’s claim to have freed waterways from Anishinabek occupants (circa 1915), and we find that New Ontario was open for business.¹

By 1919, water availability had attracted more industrialists to the north shore. That same year the Province of Ontario granted Edward Wellington Backus and William F. Brooks, two American financiers, timber rights on the English River. Backus and Brooks also won permission to develop a hydroelectric generating station at White Dog Rapids on the Winnipeg River.² Instead, Backus and Brooks purchased Norman Dam from the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company and constructed a power station at the western outlet of Lake of the Woods. These two American financiers also purchased the

¹ “New Ontario” is another name for “Northwestern Ontario.” “New Ontario” received popular usage in the early twentieth century, perhaps in response to the Ontario Boundary Dispute. In 1884, the Privy Council in Great Britain confirmed Ontario’s western boundary “along the western shores of Lake Superior, thence westerly along the said boundary to the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods.” The Privy Council also set Ontario’s northern boundary at the Albany River. In 1912, Ontario’s borders were pushed north to Hudson Bay. Conceptual understandings of “New Ontario” expanded accordingly. See: United Kingdom. *Canada (Ontario Boundary) Act*, 1889, 52-53, Vict, c. 28; and Ontario, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, “The Changing Shape of Ontario,” 28 December 2011, accessed 1 September 2015, <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/maps/ontario-boundaries.aspx>.

² Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 63.

Kenora Power Dam from the Town of Kenora. With provincially sanctioned access to wood and water, Backus and Brooks began construction of a pulp and paper mill in 1922. Almost 2000 able-bodied men poured into Kenora seeking employment.³ Forests in the Winnipeg River drainage basin filled with song. Lumberjacks felled trees to the tune of “Once More A-Lumbering Go.” The Winnipeg River filled with sawn logs and echoed their “thud.” But, it was not to last. Provincial grants did not protect Backus and Brooks from the stock market crash of 1929. After only seven years of operation, their Kenora mill fell into receivership.⁴

The Great Depression stymied industrial development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Mill operations slowed as the demand for newsprint fell in the 1930s. Industrial demands for electricity declined in turn. Ken Collins, employed by a plant in Dryden, ON, recalled that “Within a few short weeks of the stock market crash of October 1929, many of the orders for paper products cancelled.” There was no need to develop White Dog Rapids when, as Collins explained, “every square foot of space at the mill became storage areas filled with unsold paper products.”⁵ Mill operators could meet Kenora’s energy demands with electricity generated by the Norman Dam and the Kenora Power Dam alone. Canadian energy demands did not increase for almost a decade. Then, in 1939, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King’s Liberals determined that paper

³ Figures 11-12 depict the Kenora Powerhouse under the control of the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 61, 63. See also “Historical Timeline,” <http://www.lakeofthewoodsmuseum.ca/collectionsandresearch/HistoricalTimeline.aspx>.

⁴ Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 63. See also Graeme Rodden, “Boise Paper – 100 Years of Paper Making,” *PPI Mills and Technology*, 24 March 2011, accessed 1 April 2015, <http://ppimagazine.com/mills/north-america/boise-paper-100-years-papermaking>.

⁵ Interview with Ken Collins, Kenora Patricia District School Board, “A Brief History of Dryden during the Depression,” accessed 1 April 2015, <http://dhseagles.kpdsb.on.ca/about/theGreatDepression/TheGreatDepression.html>.

production was critical to Canada's war effort. The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, a Canadian "outgrowth of the reorganization of [MANDO]" took over mill operations shortly thereafter.⁶ Machinery switched on. Electrical demand increased. And, once again, Ontario took notice of "underdeveloped" water resources in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Thomas Henry Hogg, Chairman and Chief Engineer of Hydro-Electric Power Commission (1937-1947), envisaged major post-war expansion and planned to invest in new generating facilities. The HEPC eyed White Dog Rapids accordingly. Ontario had already compromised Anishinabek claims to water resources in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. After World War II, the HEPC worked to eliminate non-Indigenous competition for water resources in northwestern Ontario.

This chapter explores how the Hydro-Electric Power Commission communicated with competing water users in the Winnipeg River drainage basin during the development process (1950-1958). Prior to the construction of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, the HEPC conducted considerable research on the Winnipeg River (which drains Lake of the Woods). The goals of this research were (1) to determine peak operating levels for a head pond, or reservoir, that would stretch from Whitedog Falls Generating Station to the Norman Dam; (2) to estimate the damages that established water users might incur as the HEPC raised the Winnipeg River to peak operating levels; and, (3) to identify who had a right to compensation – and, if so, of which type of compensation they deserved (equivalent energy returns, subsidized relocation, or cash settlement) – for flood damages. As a result of this research, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission identified at least two competing interest groups: the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company and

⁶ "Reorganization of Local Paper Mill is Announced: Will be Known as Ontario and Minnesota Paper Company; Kenora and Fort Frances Plants are in the New Company," *Fort Frances Times and Rainy Lake Herald*, 1 May 1941, 1.

the Anishinabek Nation (particularly families living at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, One Man Lake Indian Reserve, and Whitedog Indian Reserve). The HEPC would not treat these competitors equally. The Commission orchestrated two distinctive communication strategies. The HEPC sought to pacify the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, the largest employer in Kenora, through negotiations. By contrast, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission actively ignored Anishinabek families to streamline dam construction and operation.

What enabled the Hydro-Electric Power Commission to negotiate with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company but refuse to consult with First Nations? The socio-political climate of the 1950s allowed the HEPC to adopt two distinctive communication strategies – one for industry and another for ‘Indians’ – without fear of public censure. After World War II, as historian Michael Bliss illuminated, the Canadian federal government “committed to unprecedented levels of state involvement in the economic order.”⁷ According to Bliss, Canadians believed that “state involvement in the economic order” would curb economic recession. King’s Liberals responded to public demand by incentivizing economic growth with federal loans to small businesses and export credit insurance. They also sought to improve employment opportunities in Canada by extending their support to unions.⁸ In this socio-political climate, the HEPC could not ignore grievances from the mill: federal policy had primed the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company for expansion. If the mill perceived the HEPC as a

⁷ Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 454.

⁸ Ibid., 454. Ontario also supported industrial expansion in the northwest. The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company received approximately \$300,000 from the province to finance expansion. Provincial monies allowed the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to install “4 new 3A Bird screens, Bauer stock cleaning equipment, new Valley head box and slice and a new mixing pump, plus related equipment.” “O&M Production Will Increase,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 11 March 1955, 7.

threat to its operations, to the steady employment of hundreds of unionized men, the HEPC – a publicly owned utility – would be pressured to establish equilibrium. This chapter explores how the HEPC managed its communications with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to neutralize the mill as a political threat. Two notable strategies to be discussed include (1) the redirection of rights-related questions from mill officials to provincial authorities with the right to extend or veto resource use. Whenever possible, the HEPC did not allow the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to clarify its position on contested waterways like White Dog Rapids. Instead, the HEPC asked regulatory bodies like the Department of Lands and Forests to settle land questions. This strategy prevented mill officials from jockeying for position. And (2), the HEPC withheld critical information like damage estimates that might have allowed mill officials to put an embargo on dam construction. This strategy forced the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company into a cooperative position: once the HEPC reduced head (the difference in height between the reservoir and the tailwater) at Norman Dam by raising levels on the Winnipeg River, the mill depended on energy purchases to continue operations. Through redirection and secrecy, the HEPC guaranteed operational support from the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company.

First Nations did not pose the same political threat as the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Band members living at Dalles 38C, One Man Lake, and Whitedog reserves were political non-entities: band members were denied the right to vote until 1960. Anishinabek voices were also suppressed at the local level. Band members had limited control over governance on reserve. In 1966, journalist Heather Robertson observed that, “The [federal] government... sets down how band meetings are to be

conducted, makes regulations about who shall preside at meetings... and the number of persons constituting a quorum. The agent can, and frequently does, rule that a quorum consists of himself and the chief."⁹ Little existed in law to pressure the HEPC into direct consultation with band members. And so, the HEPC frequently (and legally) directed land questions to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch.¹⁰ Historical practice also eliminated the incentive to consult with band members. In 1915, the Ontario Legislature claimed that First Nations did *not* have a right to waters running through reserve through consultation with Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs. Two years later, the International Joint Commission conducted a cost-benefit analysis of Norman Dam without direct Anishinabek input on the Canadian side. The local business culture did nothing to pressure the HEPC to negotiate with First Nations. Patterns of development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin had normalized industrial incursions onto Anishinabek territories since the early 1900s.

Additionally, federal Indian policy in the 1950s was not necessarily at odds with industrial damages to reserve lands. Active assimilatory programmes included urban

⁹ Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, 120.

¹⁰ The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was established in 1966. From 1950 to 1965, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was responsible for Indian Affairs. In 1951, Canada approved substantive amendments to the Indian Act. While First Nations now had the right to bring a land claim against Canada, oral testimony suggests that the Indian Affairs Branch did not actively communicate this change to band members living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Furthermore, many Anishinabek communities in the Winnipeg River drainage basin lacked the monies to hire legal aide. In theory, the 1951 amendments allowed First Nations to pursue land claims against the government. In practice, however, material hardship (and a lack of information) prevented immediate action. Luby, "Regulating Capital, Creating Christians," e-lecture, 29 September 2015.

Olive Patricia Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, Second Edition (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2010), 248-49, similarly notes that "the revised [Indian] Act of 1951 can hardly be called revolutionary," explaining that an Indian "band could now spend its monies as it wished, unless the Governor-in-Council expressed reservation." While Indian bands could theoretically fund lawsuits against Canada or Ontario after 1951, they would not gain "complete control over their funds" until 1958. Dickason's findings confirm that material hardship prevented immediate action against settler-colonists.

relocation. Anishinabek Elder Lewis Debassige of M'Chigeeng First Nation remembers being offered off-reserve housing prior to the 1969 White Paper.¹¹ It was, however, Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau's 1969 White Paper that made visible federal attempts to vacate reserve lands. In this document, Trudeau proposed the conversion of reserve land to private property that could be sold by the band or its members.¹² It is unlikely that the Hydro-Electric Power Commission feared government censure for destroying lands whose exclusive use by Anishinabek families was to be phased out. Public censure may have been further limited by Canadians' overwhelming optimism for federal programming. According to historian Michael Bliss, Canadians in the post-war era truly believed that government could and would protect them from "the worst consequences of the old free market system."¹³ Logic dictated that the HEPC, as a publicly owned utility, would not abuse those who it was designed to serve. Freed from the socio-political pressure to consult with band members, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission adopted two communication strategies to limit its contact with First Nations. Firstly, oral testimony indicates that the HEPC grossly exaggerated (and misused) permissions to access reserve territories that may have been granted by Chief and Council. For example, the HEPC appears to have stretched permission to build an access road to Whitedog Indian Reserve to include flooding both Whitedog and One Man Lake reserves.

¹¹ Elder Lewis Debassige, "Linking the Academy with the Community" (comments, *Anishinaabewin Eko-Ngodwaaching* VI, Sudbury, ON, 14 May 2015). Lewis Debassige's claim aligns with circulars approved by Guy Favreau, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, in the early 1960s. In a ministry-approved circular, William Dunstan noted that "An Indian employment placement program was inaugurated in 1957 with the appointment of regional specialists at Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver. Its primary object [was] to establish carefully-selected individuals in permanent urban employment." By 1963, placement officers were "employed by the Indian Affairs Branch in all nine regional offices" in Canada. William Dunstan, "Canadian Indians Today" (Ottawa, ON: The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, 1963), 11.

¹² "The White Paper 1969," Indigenous Foundations, 2009, accessed 1 May 2015, <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-white-paper-1969.html>.

¹³ Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 454.

Secondly, the HEPC modified its “normal operating procedure” to establish environmental barriers between employees and band members: Whitedog Falls Generating Station was to be remotely controlled.¹⁴ After 1958, when Whitedog Falls Generating Station was completed, automated control would make it increasingly difficult for band members to interact with Hydro employees. By comparing the HEPC’s treatment of Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to that of First Nations, I argue that strategic communication activities reflected and reinforced social and environmental inequities in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

This chapter allows us to challenge historical tropes about the geographic distribution of the impact benefits of hydroelectric development. It has been widely assumed to date that “southern-based industries and consumers reap the benefits of the development of relatively inexpensive power.”¹⁵ By contrast, Indigenous peoples “bear the brunt of the impact” in Canada’s sparsely populated northlands.¹⁶ James B. Waldram examined twentieth-century land grabs in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, arguing that the doctrine of the “common good” justified shoddy negotiations between hydro operators and Indigenous competitors. Manitoba Hydro, for example, withheld information from residents of South Indian Lake to ensure the completion of the Churchill-Nelson River

¹⁴ Archives of Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Toronto, ON, Memorandum, “Whitedog Falls Generating Station: Operations Access Road, Kenora T. S. to Minaki, 9 March 1956,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, OHSC – Central Records 8-6-242, FP3-10726, Item 153.

¹⁵ Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources*, 17.

¹⁶ Summative statement made by Ibid. Recent works by Joy Parr and Tina Loo have also shown that non-Indigenous inhabitants of low density regions have shared the burden of southern energy demands. Parr explores the inundation of valuable farming lands in Nakusp, British Columbia, caused by the damming of the Columbia River. Loo suggests that non-Indigenous residents objected to the damming of the Columbia River and were willing to forgo “a greater range of goods and services” to maintain small-scale agriculture (associated with economic independence). In addition to increased dependence on the continental food system, Loo reveals that non-Indigenous residents also lost recreational spaces. Joy Parr, “A River Becomes a Reservoir: The Arrow Lakes and the Damming of the Columbia,” *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environment, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 103-35; and Tina Loo, “People in the Way: Modernity, Environment, and Society on the Arrow Lakes,” *BC Studies* 142 (Summer/Autumn 2004): 161-96.

Hydro Project in 1974.¹⁷ Over 10,500 Indigenous and Métis peoples were affected by the flooding of about 40,470 hectares of land in service of southern Manitoba's anticipated electrical demands.¹⁸ Impact benefits reaped by southern-based industries and consumers included "a vital source of cheap, renewable energy" and thus "higher export bills" and "affordable electricity bills."¹⁹ More recently, Caroline Desbiens argued that Quebecers living in the Saint Lawrence Valley laid claim to James Bay, a provincial northland inhabited predominately by Cree families, by visualizing La Grande Dam. Cree hunters and trappers would bear the brunt of development as "[s]cientific representations of the North made it difficult for southern Quebecers to see and understand the area as its indigenous inhabitants did."²⁰ James F. Hornig's edited collection, *Social and Environmental Impacts of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project*, introduces the diverse losses – dietary, economic, environmental, and socio-cultural – alluded to by Desbiens.²¹

¹⁷ For a brief summary, see Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources*, 19. For more detailed analysis, see Waldram, "South Indian Lake and the Churchill River Diversion Project," *As Long as the Rivers Run*, 115-67.

¹⁸ Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources*, 17.

¹⁹ In *As Long as the River Runs*, Waldram charges that the benefits like "cheap, renewable energy" were not directed at First Nations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. He writes, "Hydro projects designed to serve southern provincial interests, and even to provide power for export, have largely failed to serve the interests of the northern Native people, the promises and 'benefits' notwithstanding. For them, there has been, and remains, nothing common about the 'common good'" (173). The supposedly "common" benefits of hydroelectric development are summarized by "The Nelson River Hydroelectric Project: A History of Lake Winnipeg Regulation," Know History Inc., 2015, accessed 28 May 2015, <http://www.cccmanitoba.ca/resource/hearings/33/The%20Nelson%20River%20Hydroelectric%20Project.pdf>.

²⁰ Caroline Desbiens narrowed the parameters of her research to how Quebecers constructed and perceived of the James Bay Project. She clearly indicates that *Power from the North* is not designed to illuminate Cree experiences of or responses to development, writing "this is not an ethnography" (10). Despite these claims, Desbiens makes recurrent references to the unequal division of impact benefits along geographic lines: benefits accrue in the south (non-Indigenous majority) and damages accrue in the north (Cree majority). Graeme Wynn, foreword to *Power from the North: Territory, Identity, and the Culture of Hydroelectricity in Quebec*, by Caroline Desbiens (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), xviii.

²¹ Dietary changes are discussed, in brief, by B. D. Roebuck who identifies the methyl mercury contamination of predatory fish species (75, 89). Economic losses are explored by Stanley Warner who details losses in fur income and the parallel decline of subsistence food production (97). Environmental losses include habitat destruction and the consequent reduction of the region's bio-productivity covered by Raymond Coppinger and Will Ryan (69). Lastly, socio-cultural losses include, but are not limited to, the inundation of "special places" which are also discussed by Warner (105). Roebuck, Warner, Coppinger and

The geographic division of impact benefits illuminated by Waldram and Desbiens raises the question of how impact benefits are divided within the north.

My comparative analysis studies a place where Indigenous and non-Indigenous economies operated in close proximity. In the case of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, we find that the “brunt of the impact” is shared by Anishinabek communities within forty-eight kilometres of non-Indigenous industries and consumers. This finding complicates our understanding that geographic distance and the failure to identify local realities have shaped environmental inequalities. We find instead that socio-economic definitions of “deserving” and “undeserving” labourers, of “valuable” and “undervalued” industries, determined who benefited from hydroelectric development on the Winnipeg River.

This comparative analysis is based on the HEPC’s internal records, which are archived by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) in Toronto. Public access to these records is currently limited by OPG. In summer 2008, I was granted access to business records shortly after OPG settled with Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. While the terms of the settlement between Ontario Power Generation and Dalles 38C were never made public, OPG agreed to provide educational support to band members.²² As the daughter of Allan Luby (Ogemah), a registered band member and former chief, I was granted educational support in the form of document access. Since that time OPG has continued to uphold its education promise to Dalles 38C and to interpret this promise broadly. In 2010, OPG supported the erection of a memorial on reserve to teach future generations about “the

Ryan published their findings in James F. Hornig, eds. *Social and Environmental Impacts of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999).

²² Lloyd Mack, “Utility Chairman Apologizes to Dalles Members,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 4 July 2008, accessed 1 October 2015, <http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/2008/07/04/utility-chairman-apologizes-to-dalles-members>.

suffering” of band members whose lands were first flooded by Whitedog Falls Generating Station in the 1950s.²³ My research is made possible by OPG’s commitment to resolving the grievances described in this dissertation. My ability to tell this story, to access archival material, is the outcome of historical trauma experienced by my paternal ancestors. I derived the Hydro-Electric Power Commission’s communication strategies from a sample of memoranda, reports, and letters produced by the Hydraulic Generation Division and General Counsel between 1950 and 1965. The Hydraulic Generation Division devoted human and financial resources to designing Whitedog Falls Generating Station and to producing damage estimates. General Counsel reviewed proposals submitted by hydraulic engineers and other planners and advised planners on their communications in the pursuit of their development goals. My research is limited by an incomplete archival data set. Internal correspondence allowed me to identify the Hydro-Electric Power Commission’s objectives for Whitedog Falls Generating Station and to determine how communication was orchestrated to ensure project completion. Oftentimes missing, however, were records of complaint issued by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company and band members. Complaints had to be reconstructed from records of the HEPC’s response to them. Thus, at times, this chapter reads between the lines, speculating on the nature of mill and Anishinabek complaints through the solutions proposed (or rejected) by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission.

REDIRECTION AND SECRECY: HOW THE HEPC ORCHESTRATED COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE ONTARIO-MINNESOTA PULP AND PAPER COMPANY

²³ Mike Aiken, “Flood Memorial at Dalles,” 19 October 2010, accessed 1 October 2015, <http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/2010/10/19/flood-memorial-at-dalles>.

Long before negotiations with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill began, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission orchestrated site development through creative communications with permission-granting authorities like the Department of Lands and Forests and the Department of Public Works. In particular, the HEPC worked with the Department of Lands and Forests (a provincial body) to pressure the Department of Public Works (a federal body) into approving site plans for Whitedog Falls Generating Station. As early as August 1955, the HEPC envisioned “a powerhouse, housing four 18,500bhp units at a rated head of 50 feet, a main dam, headworks, sluiceways, block dams, channel improvements and... approximately 17 miles of access road.”²⁴ To achieve this end, the HEPC reached out to the Department of Lands and Forests. The HEPC gained permission to build an access road on lands leased from Ontario. However, the HEPC’s decision to seek provincial permissions for land use *before* site approval from the Minister of Public Works ran counter to Lorne McDonald’s legal counsel. In September 1955, McDonald wrote to J. R. Montague, Director of Engineering, to inform his division of revisions to the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*. McDonald explained that “The Provisions of the Act preclude the Governor in Council from approving the site and plan of work after construction had commenced.” He advised Montague to wait for the Minister of Public Works to review plans for Whitedog Falls Generating Station before approving site plans internally.²⁵ The Department of Hydraulic Engineers disregarded McDonald’s counsel. The HEPC approved site plans for “three 27,000bhp

²⁴ OPG, N. A. Brooks, “Summary of Estimate: Generating Station, 5 August 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Folder No. 1 [FP3?] 10-1-228, Item #1042.

²⁵ OPG, Lorne McDonald, Counsel, to J. R. Montague, Director of Engineering, “Application under the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, 16 September 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, “*Navigable Waters Protection Act*,” FP3-10-9-312, Item 165, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-243.

units with a total capacity of 81,000bhp” in summer 1955.²⁶ By September 1955, the HEPC had started clearing an access road.²⁷ This moment is the first known instance of ‘redirection’ in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The HEPC only contacted the Department of Public Works once the Department of Land and Forests had a vested interest (i.e. income) in Whitedog Falls Generating Station.

N. E. Tregaskes, Generation Engineer, asked B. C. Howard of the Generation Department to submit an application for Whitedog Falls Generating Station and block dam to the Department of Public Works in fall 1955. Tregaskes emphasized the HEPC’s working relationship with the Department of Lands and Forests in his request. He wrote, “These sites [i.e. Whitedog Falls] are on Crown land and the Department of Lands and Forests has indicated its willingness to lease the necessary land to the Commission.”²⁸ At this juncture, the cost of disapproval had increased for both Ontario and the HEPC. If the Minister of Public Works, James Hartley, rejected site plans for Whitedog Falls Generating Station, the Department of Lands and Forests would lose projected revenue in the form of lease payments. The HEPC, by contrast, stood to lose capital already invested in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The HEPC could not recover wages paid for roads already cleared. Further, men hired to clear the access road faced unemployment before the completion of the proposed dam. When public policy on a national scale emphasized economic growth and full employment, Hartley’s team had few options outside of site

²⁶ OPG, “M. War, System Planning Engineer, to F. Grovesnor, re. “System Planning Development: Notification of Approval and Request for Preparation of Work Orders,” 25 July 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Folder No. 1 [FP3] 10-1-228, Item #1042.

²⁷ OPG, Memorandum, “Whitedog Falls Generating Station: General Description and Design Requirements, 13 September 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Folder No. 1 [FP3?] 10-1-228, Item #1042.

²⁸ OPG, “N. E. Tregaskes to B. C. Howard Legger, re: Whitedog Fall GS Application for Approval under the Navigable Waters Protection Act, 14 October 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, “Navigable Waters Protection Act,” FP3-10-9-312, Item 165, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-243.

approval. The HEPC's application to the Department of Public Works highlighted Ontario's economic interest in development. The application concluded with reference to Ontario's "willingness to lease" required lands to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. The HEPC reminded the Minister of Public Works that Ontario hoped to generate money and hydroelectricity at Whitedog Falls.²⁹

Subsequent communications between the Department of Public Works and the HEPC masked violations of the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*. Both parties presented their actions in alignment with federal procedure, writing as if a breach of the 1955 revisions had not occurred. For example, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission filed for site approval on 8 November 1955. The Crown Corporation cited an outdated version of the act – particularly the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, R.S.C. 1952, Chapter 193 – in its application.³⁰ G. B. Anderson, District Engineer of the Department of Public Works, did not formally acknowledge this application error. Anderson appears to have taken the HEPC's application into consideration despite clear limits on the grandfather clause in the revised *Navigable Waters Protection Act*: projects commenced before 1 June 1938 were not subject to penalty.³¹ Anderson also glanced over physical violations of the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* when it became clear that the Hydro-Electric Power Commission had started construction. For example, Anderson indicated that Department approval might be granted for site development in a letter to W. G. Baggs, the HEPC's resident engineer. Manchul, a member of Anderson's staff at Fort William (present-day

²⁹ OPG, "E. G. Easson to Secretary, Department of Public Works, Ottawa, ON, "RE: Whitedog Falls GS, Winnipeg River, District of Kenora, Navigable Waters Protection Act," 8 November 1955," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, "Navigable Waters Protection Act," FP3-10-9-312, Item 165, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-243.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ OPG, "Lorne McDonald to J. R. Montague, 16 September 1955."

Thunder Bay) was to consider Easson's request by visiting Whitedog Island.³² This ruse of the HEPC's participation in the state's regulatory framework became absurd in December 1955. Baggs, the HEPC's Resident Engineer, offered to facilitate Manchul's travel to the 'proposed' site for Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Baggs wrote, "[I]t is now possible to land a plane at our camp on Roughrock Lake and drive by Jeep the five miles from there to the dam site at Whitedog Falls."³³ While the camp was land-based (and thus dependent on provincial leasing arrangements), Manchul's letter reveals substantive environmental modifications without approval from the Department of Public Works. Further, "the site" is referred to as a physical rather than imaginative space. Manchul is not being asked to approve a plan; Manchul is being asked to approve a working site. These violations are not mentioned by either party. Instead, the federal cabinet, using an Order-in-Council, approved the 'site plan' without penalty on 12 April 1956 on the recommendation of the Minister of Public Works.³⁴ From the start, the HEPC relied on the Department of Lands and Forests to limit the negotiating potential of 'outsiders' (here the Department of Public Works) to help ensure the construction of Whitedog Falls Generating Station.

The Department of Public Works, however, did not pose a serious political threat to hydro operations. Both Canada and Ontario were committed to economic growth. The

³² OPG, "G. B. Anderson, District Engineer, Department of Public Works to W. G. Baggs, Resident Engineer, Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, 1 December 1955," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, "Navigable Waters Protection Act," FP3-10-9-312, Item 165, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-243.

³³ OPG, "W. G. Baggs, Resident Engineer, Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, to G. B. Anderson, District Engineer, Department of Public Works, 5 December 1955," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, "Navigable Waters Protection Act," FP3-10-9-312, Item 165, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-243.

³⁴ OPG, "Copy: P. C. 1956-756 Privy Council, 12 April 1956," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, "Navigable Waters Protection Act," FP3-10-9-312, Item 165, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-243.

Hydro-Electric Power Commission had to protect itself from industrialists who might launch competing, policy-oriented claims to Winnipeg River. In spring 1955, the Generation Department requested that W. S. Campbell, Assistant Solicitor, “investigate land rights or other land interests that might be affected by the development of Whitedog Falls power site.”³⁵ Research was the first step in identifying competitors in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. In response to Ireson’s request, Campbell launched a fact-finding mission, tracing Crown leases and patented lands. The first two pages of Campbell’s memorandum appear to be a simple status notification on lease and license types in the immediate area. Indeed, the report is formatted as a numbered list. Point (6), however, breaks the mold. Point (6) is not a status notification, but a nuanced interpretation of Edward Wellington Backus’ Whitedog Rapids lease. During the summer of 1920, Ontario Premier Ernest Charles Drury had made a hotly contested deal with E. W. Backus. On 30 September 1920, as per Drury’s recommendation, the Minister of Lands and Forests granted Backus “a lease of White Dog Rapids, together with all water power privileges” as well as “the right to flood crown lands.”³⁶ Backus’ lease – over 30 years old – made the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company a competitor in the Winnipeg River drainage basin; the paper mill could launch a claim to Whitedog Falls if the HEPC failed to question its leasehold.

Aware of this threat, counsel drafted a legal argument for the nullification of Backus’ lease in Point (6). Assistant Solicitor Campbell suggested that the water power

³⁵ OPG, “[E. T. Ireson], Generation Engineer, to W. S. Campbell, re. Winnipeg River: Whitedog Power Site, 29 April 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10101-8, V. 1, OHSC Central records 8-3-242.

³⁶ OPG, “Assistant Solicitor (illegible, presumably W. S. Campbell) to E. T. Ireson, re. Winnipeg River – White Dog Power Site, 6 May 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP#-110101-8 V. 1, Item #114, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-242.

lease was tacked onto the Lake of the Woods and English River Pulpwood Limits: water rights were never, counsel implied, one of Backus' genuine interests. Campbell argued that "the White Dog Power Site becomes enormously tangled up with the much greater controversies over... timber limits."³⁷ Such conclusions were drawn without consulting with Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. A close reading thus reveals that 'investigative' work was deeply intertwined with the HEPC's larger goal of establishing positional power (or, authority) in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Internal correspondence labelled the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company an uninterested party. Ireson appears to have circulated Campbell's memorandum within the Generation Department, ensuring that the HEPC employees understood Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company as a mill with timber (not water) interests. When this position was adopted, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission had yet to receive approval for Whitedog Falls Generating Station from the Department of Public Works. By presenting the mill as having secondary interest in Whitedog Rapids, the HEPC positioned itself as the most deserving recipient of "water power privileges." The HEPC claimed primary interest in the site. Employees were versed in counsel's language of primary and secondary interest. This hierarchy of rights was then linked to public demand: province-wide consumption had increased from 4,000 kW to 1,558,500 kW between 1910 and 1939 alone.³⁸ Of the two companies, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission claimed the greatest need for and genuine interest in Whitedog Rapids.

The HEPC's hierarchy of interest was used to rationalize the redirection of rights-related questions away from the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Internal

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ontario Hydro, *Ontario Hydro a Proud Tradition 1906-1999* (Toronto: Ontario Hydro, 1999), 26.

correspondence emphasized that Backus failed to develop Whitedog Rapids during his leasehold. Counsel presented this failure as evidence of Backus' supposedly limited interest in water. While Backus' agreement with Ontario (circa 1920) did not specify an expiration date, Assistant Solicitor Campbell argued that "Backus would have lost any rights in the power site through a possible default in carrying out his...obligations."³⁹ Campbell urged the Generation Department to confirm default through the Department of Lands and Forests. Campbell suggested that the HEPC had no legal or ethical responsibility to contact the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company: "it seems to me [Counsel], that it would be primarily the obligation of the Dept. of Lands and Forests to inform the Commission whether or not there still existed any commitments to the Backus interest with regard to this power site." Conveniently, the Crown as represented by Beniah Bowman, Minister of Lands and Forests, retained the right to nullify the 1920 agreement.⁴⁰ E. T. Ireson was instructed to contact the minister "and specifically ask for his assurance that there is no outstanding obligation to the Backus interests or any successors of them [e.g. Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company]." While both the HEPC and the Department of Lands and Forests served provincial interests, Campbell emphasized that "[t]he Government should give a ruling on this point rather than the Commission's Legal Department."⁴¹ Access to Whitedog Rapids was orchestrated by counsel. Firstly, the HEPC's legal team identified the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company as a competitor. Campbell then emphasized Backus' timber interests to neutralize the mill as a political threat. He advised the Generation Department to

³⁹ OPG, "Assistant Solicitor W. S. Campbell to E. T. Ireson, re. Winnipeg River – Whitedog Power Site, 6 May 1955," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP#-110101-8 V. 1, Item #114, Return to OHSC – Central Records 8-3-242.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

communicate with Ontario instead of the paper mill. Campbell emphasized Backus' seemingly limited interest in Whitedog Rapids to rationalize this exclusionary approach. By writing the Minister directly, the HEPC evaded negotiations about water rights with the mill. Ontario revoked Backus' lease and gave the HEPC "water power privileges." With no further right to Whitedog Rapids, the paper mill could only demand compensation from the HEPC for flooding damages and capital losses. The HEPC thus ensured site access through legal, non-confrontational routes. During the early stages of development, the HEPC improved its positional authority by establishing itself as the rightful leaseholder of Whitedog Rapids.

Research not only allowed the Hydro-Electric Power Commission to identify competitors and to establish a hierarchy of interest at Whitedog Rapids, it normalized the HEPC's claim to them. General descriptions of Whitedog Falls Generating Station – circulated as early as 1955 – included a brief history of dam development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, particularly at the northern outlets. This historical synopsis encouraged a particular way of viewing water resources, which in Lake of the Woods had changed hands as community needs changed. Consider that the historical synopsis begins with reference to the "natural discharge" of Lake of the Woods into Darlington and Rideout bays on the lower Winnipeg River. Nature was the first to control water resources. But, control changed hands in 1879 when John Mather, unnamed by the HEPC, developed water power for his sawmill. The anonymous corporate author emphasized that water flowed between users – from Nature to Mather to Backus – writing, "Various power plants were progressively built, abandoned and rebuilt by

various agencies.”⁴² Change was presented as the only constant in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The anonymous author inserted the Hydro-Electric Power Commission into this ‘progressive’ pattern. Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company was also part of this ‘progressive’ pattern – but, its interests were fading. Backus had (likely) defaulted on his lease of Whitedog Rapids. Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company’s hydroelectric presence on the north shore (e.g. at Norman Dam and the Kenora Powerhouse) was presented as impermanent. The corporate author explained that, “The two main presently operating plants... are now the property of the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Limited.”⁴³ His (or her) use of “presently” and “now” downplays the paper mill’s right to water resources. History dictated change. History became a tool through which to rationalize losses incurred by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company: ‘progress’ had long-demanded that upstarts in the Winnipeg River drainage basin wrest water resources from established users. Water ought to flow from Backus.

Such rationale was critical to dam development – the Hydro-Electric Power Commission anticipated that the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company would suffer damages once Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operations. As early as August 1955, N. E. Tregaskes, Generation Engineer, demanded a supplementary study of “lands bordering the Winnipeg [R]iver upstream from Whitedog Island to Norman [D]am at Kenora.”⁴⁴ Research conducted by the legal department in 1954 had been limited to

⁴² OPG, Memorandum, “Whitedog Falls Generating Station: General Description and Design Requirements, 13 September 1955.”

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ OPG, “N. E. Tregaskes, Generation Engineer, to W. S. Campbell, re. Whitedog Falls Generating Station: Property, 25 August 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10101-8, V. 1, Item #114, OHSC-Central Records 8-3-242.

lands in the vicinity of Whitedog Island. Tregaskes assumed that raised tail water would “reduce the head of the hydro plants at Kenora by one foot and the Commission will probably have to make compensation in some form for the power so lost.” The use of the phrase “have to” is of particular interest. It suggests that the HEPC had an obligation to pay for environmental change.⁴⁵ Although Backus may have defaulted on his lease and the HEPC’s legal department used history to justify the Commission’s claim to Whitedog Rapids, hydro employees knew that it could not jeopardize mill operations. Damages could be rationalized – political threats could be neutralized – if the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company accepted the HEPC’s compensatory scheme. “Energy returns” were presented as one possible form of compensation. Although the modifier “probably” suggests a top-down exchange of hydro services (i.e. energy in recognition of loss), Tregaskes’ proposal reveals that the HEPC was swayed by industry. The mill, it seems, retained the right to question hydro’s operations and had the political clout to demand change in hydro’s operations. Secrecy would help to manage industrial outcry before Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operations.

When the Hydro-Electric Power Commission entered into conversation with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill it withheld damage estimates. Internally, hydro employees detailed how the reservoir for Whitedog Falls Generating Station would reduce the power potential at Norman Dam and Kenora Dam, two generating stations owned by the paper mill. By September 1955, internal reports confirmed Tregaskes’

⁴⁵ Ibid.

In 1957, O. E. Johnston, Generating Engineer, confirmed that “The water level upstream from The [sic] Dalles to Kenora will... be about one foot [0.30 metres] higher than the natural high water.” OPG, “O. E. Johnston, Generation Engineer to Mr. A. E. Huddleston, re: Whitedog Falls G.S. Property Damages, 9 May 1957,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10101-8, V. 1, Item #114, OHSC-Central Records 8-3-242.

belief that operations at Whitedog Falls Generating Station would raise tail waters at Norman Dam. Design plans indicated that water would back up through Dalles Channel – at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve – and into Darlington and Rideout Bay at the northern outlets of Lake of the Woods.⁴⁶ How would this increase in water levels impact the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company? The paper mill’s hydroelectric generators depended on the kinetic energy of water dropped from Lake of the Woods into the Winnipeg River. The United States Corps of Engineers explains that “[a] hydraulic turbine converts the energy of flowing water [kinetic energy] into mechanical energy. A hydroelectric generator converts this mechanical energy into electricity.”⁴⁷ The bigger the drop between Lake of the Woods and Winnipeg River, the greater the amount of kinetic energy captured by the hydraulic turbine. The higher the levels of kinetic energy, the greater the levels of electricity converted by the hydroelectric generator. By raising tail waters (or “reducing head”) at the Norman Dam, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission jeopardized the paper mill’s ability to independently power pulp and paper production. In September 1955, hydro employees knew that the operation of Whitedog Falls Generating Station would stymie paper production or make the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company dependent on energy purchases. The HEPC predicted a complete reversal in the division of economic power in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Five years prior, the HEPC purchased power from the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to service Dryden.⁴⁸ The paper mill also serviced residents in Kenora. Whitedog Falls

⁴⁶ OPG, Memorandum, “Whitedog Falls Generating Station: General Description and Design Requirements, 13 September 1955.”

⁴⁷ U.S. Geological Survey, “Hydroelectric Power: How It Works,” *The USGS Water Science School*, accessed 12 May 2015, <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/hyhowworks.html>.

⁴⁸ “Hydro Power Turned to Monday – Customers Served,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 7 February 1950, 1. See also “Council Will Sign 2-Year Power Agreement with MANDO,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 11 January 1955, 1.

Generating Station, however, would make the paper mill dependent on its former customer.

To reduce the impact of Whitedog Falls Generating Station on mill operations, hydro employees imagined how they might provide equivalent energy returns to the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Commission Approval 7273 authorized the construction of Whitedog Falls Generating Station and a circuit breaker at the Kenora Service Station to incorporate Whitedog Falls into the Northwestern Division. Plans also included “a three-breaker 115kv station for the supply of the Ontario-Minnesota Paper Co.”⁴⁹ The Hydro-Electric Power Commission approved these plans without informing the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company of anticipated damages. When the HEPC entered into negotiations with the paper mill in spring 1956, hydro employees failed to detail upcoming changes to water levels at Rideout and Darlington Bay. Instead, hydro employees negotiated additional power sales with mill officials. The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company agreed to purchase energy from the HEPC as early as 1958.⁵⁰ The HEPC connected the paper mill to their electric grid and expected future dependency. The paper mill, by contrast, agreed to purchase additional power to expand

⁴⁹ OPG, “Facilities at Kenora SS and for the Incorporation of Whitedog Falls GS into the Northwestern Division, 4 November 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Folder No. 1, 10-1-228, Item #1042.

⁵⁰ The *Kenora Miner and News* reported on energy purchases, confirming that the HEPC had taken over some of the load by December 1958. The focus of the article was price inflation. An unidentified reporter feared that “The Paper Company buys power from Hydro, and re-sells it to the Town at a profit.” There was no indication that the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company had lost the ability to produce sufficient hydroelectricity at Norman Dam to service Kenora and mill operations. “Why You Should Vote ‘Yes’ for Power Changeover,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, unpaginated.

In 1960, F. C. Lawson, Assistant Director of Operations, confirmed that the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company was an active energy consumer: “The Company’s mill at Kenora is already connected to Hydro’s Northwestern Region system for the purpose of supplying the Company, as a paying customer, with the power and energy needed beyond the capabilities of their Norman Dam and Kenora powerhouses.” OPG, “F. C. Lawson, Assistant Director of Operations, to L. R. McDonald, General Counsel, re: Preparation of Agreement with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, 26 September 1960,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

operations. Secrecy ensured that the HEPC had the paper mill's support for Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Only once locked into a service agreement would the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company realize that its continued operation depended on energy purchased from the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. The HEPC reduced mill functionality, leaving the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company with few options other than cooperation.

The HEPC continued to withhold information from the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company after the service agreement (1956) was signed. Secrecy may have been rooted in the HEPC's definition of the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company as a political threat. In January 1957, S. Crowley asked the Generation Department to predict "gain in power at Whitedog" and "loss in power at Kenora" at varying water levels. H. M. McFarlane responded. He began his calculations at 1034 feet (315.16 metres) above sea level – the "natural" level of Winnipeg River, which is the level at which Norman Dam was designed to operate. McFarlane appears to have selected 1038 feet (316.38 metres) above sea level for experimental purposes. The HEPC's License of Occupation, granted by the Department of Lands and Forests, only gave clearance up to 1036 feet (315.77 metres) above sea level (the "natural high water mark").⁵¹ "Gain in Power" implied a benefit for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. It referred to improved functionality. "Loss of Power" referred to reduced functionality in Kenora, which would have negatively impacted power production by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Table 1 shows McFarlane's results:

⁵¹ OPG, "J. B. Bryce, Hydraulic Engineer, to J. S. Crerar, Senior Design Engineer, "Whitedog Falls Generating Station: Effects of Regulated Water Levels at Minaki on Power Output at Whitedog Falls Generating Station and on Power Plants at Kenora," 8 March 1957," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10901, 65, 21-117, OHSC – Central Records 8-2-240.

ELEVATION AT MINAKI	DISCHARGE (CFS) TOTAL RIVER	DISCHARGE (CFS) PLANT FLOW	GAIN AT WHITEDOG HEAD (FEET)	GAIN AT WHITEDOG HORSE-POWER	LOSS AT KENORA HEAD (FEET)	LOSS AT KENORA HORSE-POWER	NET GAIN IN HORSEPOWER [IN NORTHWESTERN DIVISION]
1038	10,000	10,000	5.51	5312	2.40	2314	2998
1037	10,000	10,000	4.46	4300	1.75	1687	2613
1036	10,000	10,000	3.38	3258	1.20	1157	2101
1035	10,000	10,000	2.26	2179	0.75	723	1456
1034	10,000	10,000	1.08	1041	0.36	347	694

TABLE 1: Gain in Power at Whitedog, Loss of Power at Kenora and Net Gain in Power for Various Regulated Water Levels at Minaki [Sample at 10,000 CFS]

This study presents the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company as an adversary, not a business partner. McFarlane discovered that the HEPC would experience improved operational functionality if the paper mill experienced reduced operational functionality. This adversarial frame made open negotiations (or information-sharing) a high-risk activity. The HEPC stood to lose power (electrical) if the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company pressured the Department of Lands and Forests to maintain clearance levels. McFarlane maintained that “natural” levels (1034-1036 feet or 315.16-315.77 metres above sea level) would result in “undesirably low forebay levels at Whitedog Falls Generating Station.”⁵² To ensure optimal functionality, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission needed the Department of Lands and Forests to change clearance levels. It would be easiest to gain clearances from Ontario without competing

⁵² OPG, “H. M. McFarlane, Memorandum: Whitedog Falls Generating Station: Effects of Regulated Water Levels at Minaki on Power Output at Whitedog Falls Generating Station and on Power Plants at Kenora, 5 March 1957,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10901, 65, 21-117, OHSC – Central Records 8-2-240.

industrial demands. McFarlane's study presented new clearance levels (1037-1038 feet or 316.08-316.38 metres above sea level) as an optimal solution for industry in general. Consider that McFarlane devoted a column to "net gain." At 1036 feet (315.77 metres) above sea level, for example, generating stations in Kenora would lose 1157 horsepower; however, the Northwestern District would make a net gain of 2101 horsepower. Using McFarlane's calculations, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission argued that it could offset the losses at Kenora. This argument was strongest in isolation – where the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company could not highlight the cost of equipment or the risk of economic dependency. It was easiest to argue for the 'greater good' of the Winnipeg River drainage basin (think "net gains") when the greatest losers were silent.

In February 1958, the Whitedog Reservoir (or head pond) reached an operating elevation of 1036-1037 feet (315.77-316.08 metres) above sea level.⁵³ As Tregaskes and McFarlane predicted, hydroelectric generation at the Norman Dam and the Kenora Powerhouse – the Ontario Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company's power plants – declined. The paper mill tried to adapt to riverine change by increasing the amount of water drawn from Lake of the Woods. Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company operated at 100 percent turbine gate opening.⁵⁴ But, a 1.24-foot (0.38-metre) reduction in head decreased the commercial efficiency of Norman Dam and Kenora Powerhouse. Elevated tail water levels meant that turbines collected insufficient kinetic energy to meet the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company's electrical needs. The paper mill then

⁵³ OPG, "H. M. McFarlane, Hydraulic Design Engineer, to J. B. Bryce, Hydraulic Engineer, re: Winnipeg River: Effect of Operation of Whitedog Falls Headpond on Tailwater Elevations at the Lake of the Woods Outlets, 15 January 1960," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

⁵⁴ OPG, "A. K. Aeberli, Turbine and Governor Engineer, Filing Memorandum: Kenora and Norman Dam Generating Stations, 4 April 1960," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

purchased additional electricity to supplement power produced by corporate dams. But, Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company's solution did not restore operational efficiency. In 1960, the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company finally approached the Hydro-Electric Power Commission to demand compensation for recurring losses. Despite predicting these losses, the HEPC responded with a call for research. The HEPC suggested that engineers had "computed increased tail water elevations," but that further research was necessary to "investigate the actual conditions...since the Whitedog headpond was raised to its operating levels."⁵⁵ Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company's damage claim required substantiation. Throughout the investigative process, the HEPC downplayed the causal relationship between Whitedog Reservoir and reduced functionality at the Norman Dam and Kenora Powerhouse. For example, McFarlane suggested that "water levels at the Lake of the Woods plants increased co-incidentally [sic] with the increase in Minaki elevations."⁵⁶ Language is a slippery thing. The use of "co-incidentally" implies an unexpected meeting of two entities (here Whitedog Reservoir and the paper mill's hydroelectric generators). The HEPC wrote chance into its reports, weakening the connection between its operations and the threat that they posed to cost-efficient paper production. It is under the guise of happenstance that representatives from both companies agreed to meet in March 1960. J. Hamer, the HEPC Area Manager, consented to visit the mill site in Kenora, Ontario, and to tour the Norman Dam and Kenora Powerhouse with W. Leyder. Both Hamer and Leyder sought "a mutually

⁵⁵ OPG, "H. M. McFarlane, Hydraulic Design Engineer to J. B. Bryce, Hydraulic Engineer, Internal Record re: Winnipeg River: Effect of Operation of Whitedog Falls Headpond, 15 January 1960," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

acceptable method of providing replacement power.”⁵⁷ And yet, Hamer had positional authority during these friendly discussions. The HEPC’s use of redirection and secrecy in earlier communications put mill employees (like Leyder) in a position of seeking remedy for incurred damages instead of preventing operational loss.

By June 1960 both the Hydro-Electric Power Commission and the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company were prepared to enter a remedial contract. The HEPC “conceded that the tailwater elevation” was “raised to some extent” by Whitedog Falls Generating Station shortly after Hamer’s site visit. Both parties agreed that “replacement power would be acceptable... in lieu of lost head.”⁵⁸ The HEPC entered into preliminary engineering discussions with mill officials to ‘draft’ a recommendation for replacement power. While the language of possibility – *could* and *may* – is laced throughout the HEPC’s recommendation, the plan itself is eerily similar to the 1958 design for an 115 kv circuit.⁵⁹ F. C. Lawson, Assistant Director of Operations, suggested that replacement power could be supplied to the paper mill through a tie-line. The HEPC later deemed an extra tie-line unnecessary: the existing breaker (at the Kenora Station) could carry the compensatory load. By keeping the 1958 designs (and McFarlane’s earlier calculations) secret, the HEPC forced the mill into a dependent position – but, the HEPC spun this dependency as a sign of cooperation. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission framed dated designs as creative concessions to the outside world. There

⁵⁷ OPG, O. E. Johnston, Hydraulic Generation Engineer, “Filing Memorandum: The Effect of Regulation of Whitedog Falls Generating Station Forebay on Operation of Lake of the Woods Outlet Plants, 26 April 1960,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

⁵⁸ OPG, “H. P. Cadario, Director of Engineering, to H. A. Smith, Assistant General Engineer, re: Negotiations with Ontario and Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company and with Lake of the Woods Milling Company Regarding Loss of Generating Capacity at their Lake of the Woods Plants, 20 June 1960,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

⁵⁹ OPG, “F. C. Lawson to L. R. McDonald re: Preparation of Agreement with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, 20 June 1960,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

was no coincidence here. As early as 1957, McFarlane had submitted a cost-benefit analysis that confirmed commercially feasible power production at Kenora would cost the HEPC approximately 2000 horsepower at Whitedog Falls Generating Station.⁶⁰ The HEPC raised water levels knowing that remediation would be more lucrative than damage prevention. It is hardly surprising the Hydraulic Generation Department “recommend[ed] that this Commission and the Companies enter into a formal contract to put this agreement [115 kv breaker and free energy returns] into effect.”⁶¹ The HEPC had been waiting for the opportune time to implement its 1958 design. The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company negotiated with the HEPC from a weak position. Ontario had revoked the mill’s right to generate power at Whitedog Rapids. The HEPC then raised tailwater levels on the Winnipeg River and reduced the amount of power generated at the Norman Dam. Yet, federal policies guaranteed that the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company had a position at the negotiating table. The HEPC could not jeopardize mill functionality when federal policy dictated business expansion and full employment.

Now, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission designed this 115 kv breaker to move electrical energy. But, how much “additional power” was Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company entitled to? In June 1960, the HEPC suggested that energy returns be determined using a simple physics computation: “Since this company already continuously purchases from Ontario Hydro at Kenora an amount of power which is in excess of their own generating capacity there, the question of replacing peak power is...a

⁶⁰ Refer to Table 1 for a detailed record of these calculations. Note that Norman Dam at Kenora operated effectively at 1034 feet (315.16 metres) above sea-level at Minaki. At the time of these estimates, the HEPC had permission to operate at 1036 feet (315.77) above sea-level at Minaki.

⁶¹ OPG, “H. P. Cadario to H. A. Smith, re: Negotiations with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, 20 June 1960.”

minor consideration.”⁶² The “energy return” was to be calculated as follows: $E2 = (E1) (H2) / (H1)$. The HEPC based its computation – to be detailed shortly – on the following environmental truths: Whitedog Falls Generating Station, being very well located, now controlled the water level of the downstream basin (up to and potentially including Lake of the Woods). Ontario Pulp and Paper Company, located at the northern outlet of Lake of the Woods, only diverted a bit of that water. Power production at the Norman Dam and Kenora Powerhouse (owned by the paper mill) depended on tail water elevation. Given its massive influence on the Winnipeg River drainage basin, Whitedog Falls Generating Station raised tail water elevation in Kenora. Tail water elevation impacted the amount of head available to Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company and thus the amount of kinetic energy collected (and converted) at the mill. Whitedog Falls Generating Station thus limited electrical power generation at Norman Dam and Kenora Powerhouse. And so, the proposed compensation scheme went as follows:

1. H1 refers to the “head” at the northern outlet now that Whitedog Falls Generating Station exists.
2. H2 refers to the “head” at the northern outlet “before” Whitedog Falls Generating Station existed. Note that this is a rough estimate.
3. Given environmental modifications, H2 is larger than H1. The difference between H2 and H1 is the measurable impact that Whitedog Falls Generating Station had on Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company.

⁶² OPG, Hydraulic Generation Department, *Report on the Loss of Power Output Plants due to Regulation of the Whitedog Falls Generating Station Headpond and Suggested Method for Replacement of Power*, Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, 13 June 1960, Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3E V.1, O.H.S.C. 8-3-242, VC 9, Item 108.

4. Compute H_2/H_1 (a simple ratio). Use that ratio to infer the potential energy that could have been produced.

So, for example, if H_2 is 30 percent more than H_1 (let us imagine that $H_2 = 130$ and $H_1 = 100$), then you would say that E_2 would be 30 percent more than E_1 . $E_2 - E_1$ is the “loss in energy” that needs to be compensated. This computation scheme makes physical sense. Theoretically, energy output is linear to head. Whitedog Falls Generating Station impacts the energy output in Kenora by raising the tailwater elevation which linearly reduces head and, by extension, energy output. This calculation accounted for Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company’s dependence on the HEPC and ensured that mill operations continued.

A few months after the Hydro-Electric Power Commission proposed the breaker and computation, F. C. Lawson, Assistant Direct of Operations, contacted solicitor Lorne McDonald to prepare a draft agreement for the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Lawson explained that “the purpose of the agreement is to provide that Hydro recompense the Ontario-Minnesota Company for the reduced generation at their Norman Dam and Kenora powerhouse due to raised [tailwater] elevations.” While the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company had long purchased power from the HEPC, the revised contract was to guarantee “[f]ree power and energy is to be the means of recompense.” Lawson suggested that “free power” be determined monthly. More specifically, Lawson recommended that losses at the paper mill “be calculated at the end of [each] month and provided free during the following month.”⁶³ This program for “energy recompense” guaranteed regular communication between hydro and the paper

⁶³ OPG, “F. C. Lawson to L. R. McDonald re: Preparation of Agreement with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, 26 September 1960.”

mill, a competing riverine user. Monthly contact resulted in a mutually beneficial relationship between riverine users: both the paper mill and hydro could operate and generate income. Further, this “energy return” system protected future employees in both industries. Consider that Clause 7 of the agreement bound the Hydroelectric Power Commission to “the parties hereto and their successors.” The Hydro-Electric Power Commission was contractually obliged to compensate the mill until “the Company, its successors or assigns ceases permanently to operate it Kenora and Norman powerhouses.”⁶⁴ The contractual bond, however, did not prompt an acknowledgment of earlier wrongdoing. Ontario Hydro refused to provide retroactive compensation – this agreement was to assure *future* operations, not to compensate for past damages. The HEPC carefully orchestrated communication activities to force the paper mill into this dependent position. And yet, protracted negotiations did allow the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to recover economically. Monthly communications allowed the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to make demands of Ontario Hydro. The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company ‘won’ energy returns and regained functionality – even after the HEPC claimed industrial control over water resources in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Both industries could (and did) operate for many years to come.

EXAGGERATED PERMISSIONS AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTANCE: HOW THE HEPC LIMITED COMMUNICATIONS WITH FIRST NATIONS ALONG THE WINNIPEG RIVER

By contrast, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission invested little human capital into establishing regular patterns of communication with Anishinabek river users. This

⁶⁴ OPG, “Agreement between the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Limited and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, 27 February 1961,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, folder: Legal Department-General OHSC 8-3-242, FP3-10931, Item 162.

part of the chapter focuses specifically on instances where the HEPC exaggerated permissions to access reserve lands and avoided communication with band members at One Man Lake, Whitedog, and Dalles 38C reserves. As demonstrated in the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company example, the HEPC relied on the Department of Lands and Forests, a provincial body, to frame its discussions with the paper mill. The HEPC similarly evaded direct conversation with competing Anishinabek river users and sought permissions from their governing body: the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch. The HEPC's records of written and verbal correspondence with Indian Agents create the impression that the Commission fulfilled its obligation to negotiate access to reserve lands. However, a closer examination of the written record suggests that concerned band members rejected federal (re)definitions of Anishinabek space which aimed at the benefiting the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. It is important to note that reserve boundaries remained fluid in the 1950s as band members married and engaged in resource-sharing activities across federal borders. Historian Jean Manore has also argued that reserve boundaries remained fluid in Cree and Anishinabek territories, particularly in northeastern Ontario. She demonstrates that northern First Nations continued to harvest resources off reserve, using lands and waters claimed by the Crown under Treaty #9. Manore identifies a "profound dissonance between Native and non-Native perceptions of what constitutes Indian lands" that also applies in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.⁶⁵ The *waiâbishkiwedig* longed to segregate First Nations from the general population: reserves, set aside by the Crown, were to become the exclusive domain of Canada's registered Indian population. However, First

⁶⁵ Jean Manore, "Indian Reserves v. Indian Lands: Reserves, Crown Lands, and Natural Resources Use in Northeastern Ontario," in *Ontario Since Confederation: A Reader*, edited by Edgar-André Montigny and Lori Chambers (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 195.

Nations – like the Cree and Anishinabek of Treaty #9 and the Anishinabek of Treaty #3 – believed that their exclusive use of reserve lands did not exclude them from off-reserve territories. Off-reserve territories were to be shared by the *waiâbishkiwedig* and First Nations – Charlie Fisher (b. 1926, d. unknown), for example, an Elder from One Man Lake Indian Reserve, exercised his treaty right to move across survey lines during the planning and construction phase of Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Fisher’s movements further prove Manore’s claim that “reserves are in essence non-Native constructions superimposed over landscapes of more ancient custom and usage.”⁶⁶ As a result, the HEPC’s critics like Elder Charlie Fisher may have voiced concerns about hydroelectric development at Whitedog Indian Reserve, but been registered at One Man Lake Indian Reserve. Anishinabek discontent was not necessarily or exclusively expressed by band members on their reserve.

Let us consider how the Hydro-Electric Power Commission used a Band Council Resolution (BCR) – acquired from Whitedog Indian Reserve in June 1956 – against Anishinabek understandings of reserve lands. A band council resolution is a written decision made by a band council during a council meeting and must have the support of the majority of the council members. Given the power of the Indian Agents, Gordon

⁶⁶ Manore, “Indian Reserves v. Indian Lands,” 196. Terry Tobias, *Chief Kerry’s Moose: A Guidebook to Land Use and Occupancy Mapping, Research Design and Data Collection* (Vancouver: Union of BC Indian Chiefs and Ecotrust Canada, 2000), further breaks down Indigenous land use, locating his analysis in British Columbia. Settlement there was not characterized by treaty as in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario, and so Tobias is less interested in the distinction between on-reserve and off-reserve lands. He explores the difference between land use and land occupancy. Citing Peter Usher, Tobias suggests that active territories (determined by land use) can be mapped through hunting, fishing, and berry picking activities. First Nations may be required to travel to active territories. Occupied territories, by contrast, are determined by continuous habitation. First Nations are more likely to have named and storied occupied territories. Tobias notes that active territories are much larger than occupied territories. Further, overlap between First Nations is more likely on active territories (where resources may be shared) than occupied territories (demarcated by family use). While Elder Charlie Fisher occupied One Man Lake Indian Reserve, he was active off reserve. Anishinabek expressions of discontent must be taken seriously throughout active lands. If we limit our scope to reserve lands, we risk defining and quantifying damages by standards set by the *waiâbishkiwedig*.

Cooper held determining authority during the council meeting (over which he presided). The Hydro-Electric Power Commission requested a meeting with the Indian Affairs Branch to seek permissions to clear an access road six miles long by 100 feet wide (approximately ten kilometres by 30 metres) through Whitedog Indian Reserve. The HEPC also asked for permission to modify the access road according to ground conditions.⁶⁷ The Band Council Resolution was worded so that the HEPC could regulate the movement of band members from One Man Lake through their off-reserve lands. The HEPC extended permissions to clear an access road through Whitedog Indian Reserve to general clearing for the reservoir at both Whitedog and One Man Lake reserves. Fisher considered permissions flawed. He testified that ten families occupied One Man Lake Indian Reserve in 1956. These families considered themselves independent from Whitedog Indian Reserve – but, they lacked an elected chief to represent band interests in June 1956. Fisher implied that the HEPC required an additional BCR from One Man Lake Indian Reserve to clarify land use. And yet, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission could not acquire a BCR under the Indian Act: One Man Lake Indian Reserve did not have an elected council and thus could not achieve a council majority. Cooper, however, was considered the final arbiter of reserve lands.⁶⁸ He appears to have fixed Ontario Hydro's categorical problem by allowing Whitedog's Band Council to speak on behalf of One Man Lake.

⁶⁷ It is unclear why Gordon Cooper from the Indian Affairs Branch at Fort Frances presided over this meeting. Eric Law is known to be the active agent at Kenora circa 1960. OPG, "Band Council Resolution, Islington Band of Indians, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, 27 June 1956," Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10726, Item 153, OHSC 8-3-242.

⁶⁸ Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, 112.

Indeed, Cooper – responsible for “set[ting] down how band meetings are to be conducted [and] what notice shall be given”⁶⁹ – does not appear to have alerted the ten families living at One Man Lake Indian Reserve of Ontario Hydro’s call. Nor do records exist to suggest that the HEPC independently sought their attendance. In June 1956, band members living at One Man Lake Indian Reserve were unaware of the meeting scheduled by the Indian Affairs Branch and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. Representation was accidental. Fisher explained to attorney Andrew Chapeskie that “I just happen to be there. I didn’t specifically went to hear... I just happened to drop in there.”⁷⁰ Fisher’s exclusion from the negotiating table – and that of the community he represented – aggravated social tensions between Whitedog Indian Reserve and One Man Lake Indian Reserve. Fisher accused Whitedog’s chief and councillors of becoming ‘Yes Men’: “We [band members of One Man Lake Indian Reserve] had no dealing with anybody, other than the deal they made at Whitedog, that, to give ‘em okay’s.”⁷¹

However, Whitedog’s Chief and Council may have been un(der)informed about the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 120

⁷⁰ Elder Charlie Fisher, interview with Andrew Chapeskie, Kenora, Ontario, 22 March 1995.

⁷¹ Ibid. In *A Poison Stronger than Love: the Destruction of an Ojibwa Community* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1985), Anastasia Shkilnyk identified a parallel critique of band leadership in the post-World War II era at Grassy Narrows Indian Reserve. After 1945, Chief and Councillors were accused of being “government people, just like white people” by band members (99). Shkilnyk suggested that traditional leaders had actively engaged and communicated openly with community members. She also claimed that traditional leaders placed great emphasis on maintaining a minimum standard of living among community members (100). Interference by the Indian Affairs Branch, however, changed leadership dynamics in the mid-twentieth century. By the 1960s, “new chiefs were all relatively young men, distinguished... by their ability to speak English and relate to the Department of Indian Affairs” (102). Shkilnyk charges that “they became, in practice, an extension of the bureaucracy of Indian Affairs” (102).

In *Strong Hearts, Native Lands Anti-Clearcutting Activism at Grassy Narrows First Nation* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), Anna J. Willow suggests that band members at Grassy Narrows Indian Reserve continue to question whether Chief and Council represent community interests at large. Grassy Narrows Environmental Group (GNEG), for example, claimed that “the Chief and Council’s externally imposed Indian Act foundations render the elected leaders’ claims to legitimate representation contestable” (160). Analysis of the 1956 Band Council Resolution passed by Whitedog Chief and Council reveals that a lack of information – rather than political and ideological alignment with the Indian Affairs Branch – may have prevented elected leaders from protecting community interests along the Winnipeg River – just a few kilometres away from Grassy Narrows Indian Reserve.

specific content of the BCR. Consider that Fisher claims that the Indian Affairs Branch and the HEPC coordinated a single meeting with local Anishinabek. Council believed that the HEPC wanted a road. Council believed that a road “might help us [Whitedog Indian Reserve] with our transportation to go and get our groceries in town.”⁷² They did not anticipate flood damages. The HEPC did not invest substantial energy into developing a rapport with Chief and Council. Fisher testifies that this consultation meeting lasted approximately 60-90 minutes.⁷³ Given Council’s focus on town access and groceries, it seems unlikely that anticipated environmental changes were explained in full. Internally, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission deemed prolonged conversations with local Anishinabek unnecessary. As early as 1955, the Hydraulic Generation Department “[did] not anticipate any trouble in so far as Crown land was concerned” – the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, who held Crown lands “in trust for the Indians” supported provincial expansion goals.⁷⁴

The HEPC relied heavily enough on federal support to begin construction at Whitedog Indian Reserve and One Man Lake Indian Reserve without obtaining signatures from Chief and Council. This oversight went unnoticed until February 1967 when O.E. Johnston, Hydraulic Development Engineer, noted: “we do not believe any

⁷² Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

⁷³ Ibid. Unfortunately, a lack of consultation is not unique to One Man Lake and Whitedog Indian Reserves. Myrle Ballard and Shirley Thompson have revealed that the Fairford Water Control Structure, installed in 1961, was built without consultation with Lake St. Martin First Nation. Citing their previous research, Ballard and Thompson claim that “The construction and operation of the water control structure were carried out by the Province of Manitoba without FN [First Nations] communities being warned, consulted, or compensated.” Ballard and Thompson reveal that Manitoba Hydro, much like the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, failed to consult with band members about their plans to regulate water levels in active Anishinabek territories. See Myrle Ballard and Shirley Thompson, “Flooding Hope and Livelihoods: Lake St. Martin First Nation,” *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research* 1, no. 1 (spring 2013): 48.

⁷⁴ OPG, “E. T. Ireson, Generation Engineer, to Mr. H. Hustler, re: Whitedog Falls Generating Station: Property Damage, 12 September 1955,” Whitedog Fall Generating Station, OHSC-Central Records 8-3-242, FP3-10101-8, Item 114.

agreement was signed.”⁷⁵ Despite engaging – for approximately one hour – in the Band Council Resolution process, the HEPC employees did not ensure its completion. The HEPC found an acceptable method to minimize direct engagement with competing Anishinabek river users; it appears that the HEPC depended on the Indian Agent, a functionary vested with “total authority over reserve land” to ignore (or tacitly allow) development on reserve lands.⁷⁶ In 1967, the HEPC appears to have shifted responsibility for road permissions to the Department of Public Works: the Department of Indian Affairs was to negotiate a solution to the unapproved road to Whitedog Falls Generating Station with the Department of Public Works. Such tactics were not unique to the Winnipeg River drainage basin. An unidentified Indian quoted by Heather Robertson complained that “[a]ny plans or policies formulated by the department are not revealed to the Indians... we question the need to be kept in the dark.”⁷⁷ The written record suggests that Chief and Council did not function as ‘Yes Men’ in June 1956. Band members at Whitedog Indian Reserve and One Man Lake Indian Reserve were un(der)informed of major environmental modifications to their territories.

⁷⁵ OPG, “O. E. Johnston, Hydraulic Development Engineer, to W.G. Wigle, Department of Highways, re: Caribou Falls Generating Station, Whitedog Falls Generating Station Access Road from Minaki, 9 February 1967,” Whitedog Falls G.S. FP3-10726 Item 153 OHSC 8-3-242.

⁷⁶ Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, 112.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 107. Research by Rhonda Telford on Wikwemikong First Nation suggests that the Department of Indian Affairs manipulated Council process to facilitate development by non-Natives on reserve lands in Ontario as early as 1865. Indeed, the use of unsigned Band Council Resolutions by resource developers (and, perhaps more importantly, the failure of the Department of Indian Affairs to challenge their use) is not unique to Treaty #3. Telford reveals that Charles T. Dupont, Indian agent at Manitowaning, authorized non-Native development of unrelinquished petroleum products by licencing William Baby without a council vote. As the Telford article shows, what is peculiar about the Hydro-Electric Power Commission example is the date (circa 1956) rather than the style of federal mismanagement. For more details, please see Rhonda Telford, “The Wikwemikong First Nation and the Department of Indian Affairs’ Mismanagement of Petroleum Development,” in *Ontario Since Confederation: A Reader*, edited by Edgar-Andre Montigny and Lori Chambers (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 40-54.

Much like their dealings with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission sought permission to access lands from governmental authorities who were invested with the power to represent, or speak on behalf of, potential competitors. Unlike the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company case, however, the HEPC did not anticipate long-term dealings with Anishinabek in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Indeed, the HEPC established physical barriers between Anishinabek river users and hydro employees that limited dialogue about contested land use. This strategy was adopted at One Man Lake Indian Reserve (where the HEPC ineffectually launched the band council resolution process) and at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve (where there was no recorded attempt to seek access permissions).

Let us turn to the example of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve and off-reserve lands occupied by band members, particularly the Kelly family. In September 1955, Ontario Hydro applied for “right-of-way 100 feet wide located in the District of Kenora running northerly from a point on the Canadian National Railway some two miles west of Minaki to Whitedog Falls, a distance of 14 miles.”⁷⁸ The Department of Lands and Forests responded with a License of Occupation. Granted to the HEPC in 1955, this License of Occupation included policing rights. Minister of Lands and Forests, Clare E. Mapledorm, had to modify the standard form to grant policing rights to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario (see Figure 14). The modified license allowed the HEPC to police “all unalienated Crown Lands lying within a strip of land 2 miles in width, being one mile measure perpendicularly from and on opposite side of an Access Road extending from Minaki on the Canadian National railways to a point in the vicinity of the

⁷⁸ OPG, Province of Ontario, Department of Lands and Forests, *Application for Land Permit Use*, September 28, 1955, Toronto, Ontario. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, ITEM 106, FP3-B, OHSC Central Records 8-3-242.

most south-westerly bay of Rough Rock Lake.”⁷⁹ Oral testimony reveals that the Kelly family built and occupied a few trapping cabins therein. Elder Roberta Jameson testifies that these cabins were active in the 1950s, but had been active at least three generations prior – Jameson’s great-grandmother had buried her children near Minaki, ON.⁸⁰ Band members at Dalles 38C refer to an island long occupied by Jameson’s relatives as “Kelly Town.” Although Jameson’s relatives were displaced by the HEPC, ancestral use remains visible on Google Maps: “Kelly Town” appears as “Kelly’s Island” today.⁸¹ Before 1955, it is believed that the Kelly family used “Kelly Town” as a base for winter and spring trapping activities. Jameson did not map her relatives’ trapping grounds during the interview process, but indicated that her family moved seasonally, joining other band members for summer activities like berry-picking.

Conflict over territorial use and the rights of access erupted between competing river users – e.g. the Kelly family and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission – shortly thereafter. The Kelly family, representative of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, understood that Treaty #3 granted Anishinabek participants and their descendants the right to continue harvesting activities on unoccupied Crown Lands.⁸² The “right to pursue their

⁷⁹ OPG, Province of Ontario, Department of Lands and Forests, *Licenses of Occupation*, No. 7194, January 25, 1956, Toronto, Ontario. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Item 106, FP3-B, OHSC Central Records 8-3-242.

As early as December 1955, A. S. Bray, Chief of the Division of Lands, agreed to license “the area adjacent to the White Dog [sic] Falls Generating Station, containing 27 miles... to the Commission for policing purposes.” He requested that E. T. Ireson “favour the Department [of Lands and Forests] with a cheque for \$150.00” so that a Licence of Occupation could be prepared. OPG, “A. S. Bray, Chief, Division of Lands, Department of Lands and Forests, to Mr. E. T. Ireson, 9 December 1955.”

⁸⁰ Elder Roberta Jameson, interview with author, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, Ontario, 27 August 2012.

⁸¹ Google Maps (2015), *Kelly’s Island, Ontario*, retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Kelly's+Island,+Kenora,+Unorganized,+ON+P0V/@49.9843957,-94.6554055,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x5295f9c17d3e60cb:0xea6e25567faf07e4>.

⁸² Manore, “Indian Reserves v. Indian Lands,” identified “cognitive dissonance” between “Native and non-Native societies” in northeastern Ontario. She found that Cree and Anishinabek families living in the Treaty #9 district considered it their right to continue harvesting activities in surrendered lands.

avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered” as specified in Treaty #3 was believed to preserve generational use of “Kelly Town.”⁸³ “All unalienated Crown Lands” referenced in the License of Occupation must be seen active off-reserve lands; “unalienated” did not mean unoccupied. Before 1955, the Kelly family maintained trapping cabins in accordance with Anishinabek understandings of Treaty #3. When the Department of Lands and Forests granted policing power to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, they gave the HEPC the right to displace Anishinabek families from lands protected by Treaty #3. Anishinabek families living in accordance with Treaty #3 became “trespassers” on their ancestral lands. As early as 1 January 1956, the HEPC had legal authority to remove “trespassers” (here Anishinabek families) from the protected zone.⁸⁴ Removal allowed the HEPC to construct Whitedog Falls Generating Station without engaging in meaningful conversations about Anishinabek treaty rights or land use. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission could curtail negotiations by physically removing Anishinabek competitors from the permit zone. The policing permit also limited the ability of Anishinabek families to file complaints against the Hydro-Electric Power Commission: any damages to trap lines or trapping equipment within the licensed area were ‘unlawfully’ placed (by provincial rather than Crown definition). While amendments to the Indian Act in 1951 granted status Indians the right to contest the expropriation of reserve lands, it did not grant status Indians the right to contest the expropriation of off-reserve lands. As journalist Heather Robertson observed in 1966,

Traditional land use was not to be curtailed unless the state required “such tracts... for settlement, mining, lumbering, trading or other purposes” (Treaty #9 qtd. 199). The Crown, however, routinely dismissed Cree and Anishinabek rights to off-reserve lands. Despite attempts by settlers-colonists to segregate First Nations on reserve, Anishinabek and Cree families of Treaty #9 – like the Kelly family in Treaty #3 – continually exercised harvesting rights off reserve (200).

⁸³ “Treaty 3 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Saulteaux Tribe of the Ojibbeway Indians.”

⁸⁴ OPG, *Licenses of Occupation*, No. 7194, January 25, 1956.

“By removing legal handicaps, the government cannot remove Indian poverty; it cannot make white people erase their prejudices.”⁸⁵ The Hydro-Electric Power Commission did not challenge its prejudice. The HEPC did not engage with Anishinabek land questions. Instead, the HEPC chose removal, a silencing strategy, over participation in post-war debates about minority rights in Canada.

The targeted exclusion of Anishinabek families from the licensed area is made evident in the HEPC’s internal correspondence about how to best exercise its policing permit. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission did not want to prevent Canadian and American cottagers from accessing their seasonal properties; indeed, the cottage industry generated substantial revenues in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The local economy depended on cottagers who spent their dollars in Ontario during the summer, which created a challenge: how could the HEPC limit Anishinabek use of the Winnipeg River, but continue to attract revenue-generating cottagers? The HEPC explained, “[the road] was never intended to exclude the owners or licensees from use as far as their property.”⁸⁶ The key word in this quotation is property. While there is no explicit racial bar, property owners were most often Anglo-Canadian or Anglo-American. Members of the Kelly family, for example, lacked ownership papers for their trapping cabins in “Kelly Town.” Homes had been constructed according to Anishinabek definitions of Treaty #3.

The Hydro-Electric Power Commission categorized individuals without ownership papers – like Anishinabek river users – as “public.” All members of the public

⁸⁵ Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, 9.

⁸⁶ OPG, “O. E. Johnston, Hydraulic Generation Engineer, to J. L. Alexander, Operations Division, re: Whitedog Falls Generating Station – Public Use of Pistol Lake Road, 12 March 1959,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10726, Item 153, OHSC Central Records 8-3-242.

had to apply for “special permission” to enter the HEPC’s policed zone.⁸⁷ The permission process designed by the HEPC made it difficult for Anishinabek river users to qualify for entry. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission required that all members of the public have insurance. Under the Indian Act, individual band members could not own land on reserve. All property was held in trust by the Crown. Without property, individual band members struggled to register for home and contents insurance. Given that foot and boat travel were most common from reserve to town, neighbouring communities, or harvesting areas, it is unlikely that the Anishinabek public would hold vehicle insurance. Should an Anishinaabe person qualify for insurance, s/he would have struggled to harvest fur-bearing animals from ancestral grounds: clause 6 of the HEPC’s application form read, “I undertake that I shall not transport... firearms... in my vehicle when using said road.” More problematically, individuals may have been barred from walking the trap line. Clause 6 further specified, “nor shall I drive into any camp area but shall restrict my operations to the road system proper.”⁸⁸ It makes little sense to establish a trap line along “the road system proper.” According to Elder Nancy Jones, fur-bearing animals tend to avoid access roads. The clearing process – here, a strip sixteen miles in length – tends to destroy nests and borrows, forcing the animals to move further inland.⁸⁹ The permission process thus de-incentivized Anishinabek use of the policed zone. If a permit was granted, economic use was complicated.

Adaptive Anishinabek responses were curtailed by how the Hydro-Electric Power Commission defined ‘proprietorship.’ Owners or licensees, individuals whom the HEPC

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ OPG, The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, *Application* (1956), clause 6. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10726, Item 153, OHSC Central Records 8-3-242.

⁸⁹ Nancy Jones, interview with author, Fort Frances, Ontario, 1 August 2012.

“never intended to exclude,” had to have purchased their lands before September 1956. More specifically, qualifying proprietors had purchased their lands within approximately six months of the HEPC’s License of Occupation. Construction manager A. J. G. Leighton explained, “We are allowing bona-fide residents to use our access road under certain conditions [i.e. fully insured and without transporting firearms]. We do not propose however, to permit the use of the road to any individuals who have secured property in this area subsequent to September 26, 1956.”⁹⁰ While there is no recorded attempt to purchase Crown land on Kelly’s Island (or near familial trap lines), Anishinabek families were unlikely to qualify as “bona fide residents.” Anishinabek families secured the bulk of their income during the summer months. Able-bodied Anishinabek men acted as fishing guides for tourists. Able-bodied Anishinabek women worked as cleaners at local resorts or harvested blueberries for commercial sale. Families who engaged in traditional harvesting activities were most likely to be berry-picking or ricing away from their trapping grounds. Indeed, few families would have used their trapping cabins in the licensed area before October or November. Families who planned to move to their trapping cabins during the fall of 1956 would have discovered (1) that they could be legally barred from their seasonal homes by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, and (2) that they no longer qualified for road access should they attempt to purchase them. Many Anishinabek families would have simply lacked the financial means to purchase their lands before September 1956. The tourist season slowed between August and September, leaving Anishinabek wage earners seasonally underemployed at the same time that they became ineligible to purchase blocks of land leased by the HEPC

⁹⁰ OPG, “A. J. G. Leighton, Construction Manager, to L. Ringham, District Forester, Department of Lands and Forests, 9 April 1956,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-B, Item 106, OHSC – Central Records 8-3-242.

from the Department of Lands and Forests. In 1959, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission revealed that policing rights were secured “in order to keep unauthorized and undesirable persons away from the road and station during the construction.”⁹¹ Given the association of “desirable” with property, this quotation is heavily racialized. The HEPC acquired policing rights to keep “undesirable” – uninsured, un-propertied, predominately Anishinabek – “persons away from the road.” Spatial barriers reduced Anishinabek opportunities for on-the-ground negotiations with the HEPC. It became difficult for Anishinabek families to discuss land use as “trespassers” who could be forcibly removed from off-reserve lands.

Why was land access critical to Anishinabek negotiations with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario? Land access allowed Anishinabek men and women to engage in face-to-face conversations with hydro employees. Elders have described these encounters as critical to knowledge development in a legal environment that allowed the HEPC to bypass band members and communicate instead with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch. Elder Jacob Strong (1930-circa 2004) of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve testified that developers rarely shared their plans with band members. To elucidate his point, Strong selected the blasting of the Dalles Channel (circa 1950) as an example. This environmental modification predated the construction of Whitedog Falls Generating Station by five years. Strong “just heard about it [when labourers] brought machinery through [the] bush.”⁹² Fisher also learned that the HEPC would modify his community through informal discussions with company

⁹¹ OPG, “O. E. Johnston, Hydraulic Generation Engineer, to J. L. Alexander, Operations Division, re: Whitedog Falls Generating Station – Public Use of Pistol Lake Road, 12 March 1959,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10726, Item 153, OHSC Central Records 8-3-242.

⁹² Dovetail Resources. Elder Jacob Strong, interview by Cuyler Cotton, Kenora, Ontario, 2 October 1992, Dalles 38C, Elder Interview Collection.

labourers. Fisher explains, “they [hydro workers] didn’t cut the trees down [at my father’s place], they wanted to see how high the water was going to come up.”⁹³ Fisher learned that hydro workers expected the water to rise by talking about which trees were to be cut and why. Anishinabek men and women learned construction details through face-to-face contact. Given limited outreach from white-collar staff, Anishinabek men and women relayed their concerns to low-level employees during these same conversations. On-the-ground communication between band members and labourers thus became the most accessible (and most frequent) site for discussion about environmental modifications.

Low literacy rates on reserve increased the importance of these face-to-face interactions with hydro labourers. In 1966, Heather Robertson bemoaned that “61 per cent [of all status Indian students] fail to reach grade eight; and 97 per cent fail to reach grade twelve.” Problematically, “grade attained is often no indication of the level of the Indian child’s achievement, since he is often promoted on the basis of size and age rather than competence.”⁹⁴ In the Winnipeg River drainage basin, teachers salaried by Indian Affairs invested more energy teaching trades rather than literacy skills. Male pupils were responsible for caring for work horses and dairy cows, my great-grandfather (John Kipling Jr.) having once been assigned to the dairy at a competing Presbyterian school in Kenora. The photographic record from St. Mary’s Residential School suggests that girls were also trained for menial (here, domestic) labour. Girls are captured sweeping, cooking, and sewing on camera.⁹⁵ A focus on trade skills was not unique to the Winnipeg

⁹³ Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

⁹⁴ Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, 29.

⁹⁵ Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, *St. Mary’s Indian Residential School: Kenora, Ontario, Treaty 3 (1873) Territory* (Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario: Algoma University and Children of Shingwauk

River drainage basin. Teachers across Canada assumed that Indigenous youth were best-suited for labour jobs.⁹⁶ As a result of Indian Affairs' limited investment in Indian literacy, Robertson estimated that "35,000 adult Indians [were] considered illiterate" circa 1966.⁹⁷ Who was to write to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission on their behalf?

Educational barriers that made it difficult for Anishinabek families to write down their complaints increased the importance of contact between band members and hydro employees. Face-to-face conversations were not necessarily effective; they are important because they happened, not because Anishinabek river users reached their outcome objectives. Indeed, Anishinabek river users failed to establish a feedback loop with the HEPC like the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company had done. The record indicates that, at times, hydro labourers refused to engage in meaningful dialogue with

Alumni Association, April 2012), 38, 69-71, 68, 105, 107, <http://archives.algomau.ca/main/sites/default/files/StMary1.pdf>; The Shingwauk Project and Algoma University College, photograph, "In the Kitchen, 20th century," *Residential Schools: The Red Lake Story, Community Memories in Virtual Museums of Canada*, accessed 15 December 2015, http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?id=search_record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000353&rd=86702&sy=loc&st=St.+Mary%27s+Indian+Residential+School%2C+Kenora%2C+Ontario%2C+Canada&ci=; The Shingwauk Project and Algoma University College, photograph, "In the Kitchen, 20th century," *Residential Schools: The Red Lake Story, Community Memories in Virtual Museums of Canada*, accessed 15 December 2015, http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?id=search_record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000353&rd=86714&sy=loc&st=St.+Mary%27s+Indian+Residential+School%2C+Kenora%2C+Ontario%2C+Canada&ci=; The Shingwauk Project and Algoma University College, photograph, "Sewing, 20th century," *Residential Schools: The Red Lake Story, Community Memories in Virtual Museums of Canada*, accessed 15 December 2015, http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?id=search_record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000353&rd=86703&sy=loc&st=St.+Mary%27s+Indian+Residential+School%2C+Kenora%2C+Ontario%2C+Canada&ci=.

⁹⁶A. Littlefield, "Learning to Labour: Native American Education in the United States, 1880-1930," in J. Moore eds. *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 43-59. Speaking to the Canadian context, Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta similarly found that "the boys would be trained for farm work... while girls would receive instruction in 'the rudiments of household science,' with a view to equipping them to take employment as domestic workers or as workers in hospitals or institutions. As many Indian News features made clear, the most basic vocational training would be the norm while post-secondary training would be the exception." Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta, "Making Aboriginal People 'Immigrants Too': A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s-1960s," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 90, no. 3 (2009): 446.

⁹⁷ Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, 28.

band members (much like their superiors). Attorney Andrew Chapeskie asked Elder Charlie Fisher, “Did you have any conversation with the guys who were slashing around One Man Lake?” Fisher responded in the negative: “No, because they were always busy.”⁹⁸ And yet, Fisher pushed back when labourers shut down conversation. Face-to-face contact allowed Fisher to challenge perceptual barriers of lack of interest. “We tried,” he maintained.⁹⁹ Sustained communication attempts occasionally resulted in altercation. For example, Fisher attempted to negotiate an alternative to the relocation of One Man Lake Indian Reserve. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission allocated funds to move families from One Man Lake to Whitedog Indian Reserve (a merger approved by the Indian Affairs Branch). Fisher approached an anonymous hydro employee to discuss relocation plans. Fisher proposed moving One Man Lake Indian Reserve to higher ground; he rejected amalgamation plans designed by government men. This hydro employee – who may have lacked power to enact change – refused to hear Fisher’s proposal. Conversation shut down when this hydro employee asserted “All you guys [Anishinabek] just have to fuck off and that’s it – no more.”¹⁰⁰ This example is important because it shows that Anishinabek river users (“you guys”) used physical proximity to challenge legal distances (i.e. the HEPC could and did direct communication through the Indian Affairs Branch and avoided dialogue with band members). During the construction process, however, physical proximity ensured that Anishinabek families were heard – even if their utterances were rejected or ignored by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Opportunities for communication (although never fully realized) existed on-the-ground.

⁹⁸ Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

In June 1958, with the construction of Whitedog Falls Generating Station complete, communication between Anishinabek and hydro labourers declined significantly. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission developed a site management plan that entrenched company resistance to dialogue with Anishinabek competitors. Consider that Whitedog Falls Generating Station was designed to be “remotely controlled from Kenora, with no resident attendants.”¹⁰¹ The HEPC operated few remote-controlled dams in the 1950s. A 1956 filing memorandum revealed that “the decision to make the Whitedog Falls plant remotely operated from Kenora T. S. was a ... great departure from normal operating procedure.” To facilitate this deviation, the HEPC allocated monies to maintain a “minimum costs jeep type road.”¹⁰² Fisher suggests that the HEPC also used “jeep type” roads to transport materials from Kenora to dam sites.¹⁰³ After 1958, road maintenance allowed for 24-hour access to the dam in emergency situations. New operating procedures meant that the HEPC had a transitory presence at Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Headquarters argued that sporadic attendance (for site checks) was necessary: there were no “satisfactory” candidates for employment living near Whitedog Falls Generating Station.¹⁰⁴ Once the dam was completed, the HEPC dismantled its work camp and evacuated employees who had shared the dam site with Anishinabek families living along the Winnipeg River. Given that Whitedog and One Man Lake reserves were the largest population centres near Whitedog Falls Generating Station, “satisfactory”

¹⁰¹ OPG, Memorandum, “Whitedog Falls Generating Station: General Description and Design Requirements, 13 September 1955.”

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

¹⁰⁴ OPG, “Minutes of Meeting re: Whitedog Falls G. S. and Deer Falls G. S. Methods of Operation, 7 September 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Item 1042, 10-1-228.

implies non-Indigenous labourers. A refusal to hire Anishinabek men reduced opportunities for sustained communication between band members and the HEPC.

The design of Whitedog Falls Generating Station further minimized contact opportunities between hydro employees and Anishinabek competitors during site checks. The timing and duration of site checks varied with seasonal or climatic conditions. For example, hydro men occupied the Powerhouse “when high flows [were] anticipated... or when flash floods [were] forecasted.”¹⁰⁵ During these times, however, hydro men were relatively isolated from nearby Anishinabek communities. The HEPC recommended short-term accommodations for up to twelve men on-site. Hydro men were to occupy “three four-man rooms.”¹⁰⁶ Bunking rooms were located inside the powerhouse. Interestingly, the design team proposed building rooms “without windows in view of unattended operation.”¹⁰⁷ Maintenance personnel were to be physically enclosed by their workspace. Washroom and cooking facilities were also located inside the Powerhouse.¹⁰⁸ The Hydro-Electric Power Commission imported food from town by boat.¹⁰⁹ Basic human needs – food, water, and sleep – could be met entirely within the Powerhouse. By

¹⁰⁵ OPG, “M. Ward, System Planning Engineer, to E. T. Ireson, re: Whitedog Falls Generating Station and Deer Falls Generating Station – Method of Operation, 30 August 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-L, Item 112, 8-3-242.

¹⁰⁶ OPG, “Minutes of Meeting re: Whitedog Falls G. S. and Deer Falls G. S. Methods of Operation, 7 September 1955.”

¹⁰⁷ OPG, Memorandum, “Whitedog Falls Generating Station: General Description and Design Requirements, 13 September 1955.”

¹⁰⁸ OPG, Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, “Minutes of Meeting re: Whitedog Falls G. S. and Deer Falls G. S. Methods of Operation, 7 September 1955,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Item 1042, 10-1-228.

¹⁰⁹ “The Caribou Pushing North from Whitedog,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 15 August 1956, 1. In June 1956, the *Kenora Daily Miner and News* announced that “Hydro at present is shipping considerable supplies from Kenora to Redditt, then by rail to Minaki, and then by truck to the two construction camps.” Please see “An Economic Necessity,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 20 June 1956, 1. Anishinabek families appear to have used the grocery store constructed at the Whitedog Falls campsite to supplement their own food supply. The report of Rex McDonald’s drowning reveals that he was “crossing One Man Lake on [his] way to purchase groceries.” “13 Year Old Indian Drowned Thursday,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 2 May 1958, 1.

funding a maintenance team of up to twelve men, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission reduced the need to seek companionship outside of the powerhouse (i.e. at nearby population centres like Whitedog Indian Reserve). Indeed, maintenance personnel had no physical need (and, limited physical opportunity) to converse with Anishinabek competitors during site visits.

Unable to sustain face-to-face contact with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, Anishinabek families living at Whitedog and One Man Lake reserves attempted to overcome environmental barriers to communication by filing a damage claim through the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch. The first recorded claim was submitted in 1959, just one year after the HEPC dismantled its construction camps and began remote operation.¹¹⁰ In this submission, band members claimed over \$260,000 in damages to their “wild rice, harvesting, fishing, [and] hunting” grounds.¹¹¹ The Department of Citizenship and Immigration represented their complaint as follows:

LOSS OF COMMERCIAL FISHING:	
Caused by drifting material, deadheads and snags resulting from cutting of forested areas. Nets torn and carried away in debris.	
Flooding of spawning beds and possible effect on new beds due to fluctuation water level.	
Loss per year -- \$11,019.00	
Compensation for 10 years	\$110,190.00

¹¹⁰ Indian Affairs Branch quoted in OPG, “Lorne McDonald, General Counsel, to C. F. S. Tidy, Special Negotiator, re: Caribou Falls Development – Flooding – Islington Indian Reserve No. 29 and One Man Lake Indian Reserve No. 29, 6 June 1961,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Item 1042, 10-1-228.

¹¹¹ The Annual Report of the Indian Affairs Branch (LAC, 31 March 1965) reiterated a loss of trapping income: “Rat trapping will not provide a livelihood for many families. Muskrats are not particularly plentiful and prices have been low for the past several years.” In 1959, Whitedog and One Man Lake Indian Reserves anticipated 10-years of economic decline. The Annual Report of 1965 – six years after the initial damage claim – suggests that long-term losses were reasonably predicted. Indian Affairs Branch quoted in OPG, “Lorne McDonald to C. F. S. Tidy re: Caribou Falls Development – Flooding – Islington Indian Reserve No. 29 and One Man Lake Indian Reserve No. 29, 6 June 1961.”

LOSS OF WILD RICE FIELDS:	
Average annual production 15 tons <i>less</i> 15 tones @ 0.35 per lb. - \$10,500.00	
Compensation for 10 years	\$105,000.00
Equipment damaged	\$3,036.38
[TRAPPING LOSS:]	
Muskrat loss - \$2,275.00, 10 year period	\$22,750.00
Beaver loss per year, \$1,998.00, 10 year period	\$19,980.00
TOTAL CLAIM:	\$260,956.00 ¹¹²

This shift from the expression of on-site verbal complaints to the submission of written complaints through an intermediary must be seen as an adaptive strategy. Consider that many band members did not trust Indian agents; Fisher, for example, levelled insults at Chief and Council for participating in federally-directed band meetings. Prior to 1959, band members were most likely to express discontent on-the-ground and without supervision by the Indian Affairs Branch. Historian Rhonda Telford, writing on Wikwemikong First Nation, has suggested that independent economic action – particularly attempts to negotiate the terms of non-Indigenous development on reserve – is an expression of sovereignty.¹¹³ I believe that increased reliance on the Indian Affairs Branch in 1959 was a subversive manoeuvre designed to protect an otherwise diminishing homeland. Relationships between local Anishinabek and federal bureaucrats had long been strained in the Kenora District. Animosity is implicit in Duncan Campbell Scott's "Powassan's Drum," a poem composed on his expedition to James Bay in 1905-1906. It is likely that this poem refers to Chief Powassan of Shoal Lake Indian Reserve, a

¹¹² Indian Affairs Branch quoted in OPG, "Lorne McDonald to C. F. S. Tidy re: Caribou Falls Development – Flooding – Islington Indian Reserve No. 29 and One Man Lake Indian Reserve No. 29, 6 June 1961."

¹¹³ Telford, "The Wikwemikong First Nation," 40-54.

signatory of Treaty #3, whom Scott threatened to disempower and imprison for shamanism. Scott presents Powassan as a “negative force who conjure[d] the hatred and superstition” that prohibited Indigenous assimilation into “the modern, Europeanized world.”¹¹⁴ As a Treaty Commissioner – and, later as Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs – Scott defined Anishinabek in the Kenora District (men like Chief Powassan) as irrational and potentially violent. Anishinabek distrust of Ottawa men like Scott, by contrast, increased as community members were fined (or imprisoned) for practicing their culture. Thus, Anishinabek use of the Indian Affairs Branch does not reflect Anishinabek trust that Ottawa will best represent their interests. Indian Agent Gordon Cooper had already failed One Man Lake Indian Reserve. Instead, we find local Anishinabek creatively trying to force a response from the Hydro-Electric Power Commission.

In 1963, it appears that local Anishinabek continued to use intermediaries to launch complaints against the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Intermediaries remained necessary as the HEPC communicated with residents of Ontario through letters and service announcements. The HEPC’s standards of communication (particularly written communication) put Anishinabek competitors at a severe disadvantage. Let us revisit some of aforementioned education barriers. Captain Frank Edwards, an Indian Agent at Kenora, bemoaned the quality of education provided to Anishinabek children throughout the 1930s. In 1926, Edwards challenged the use of the word “training” as descriptor for Indian education and suggested Anishinabek children received, at best, “casual attention.”¹¹⁵ In 1938, he suggested that “academic training” was useless in a

¹¹⁴ L. P. Weis, “D. C. Scott’s View of History & the Indians,” *Nature, Natural, Naturalists*, special issue of *Canadian Literature* 111 (Winter 1986): 33.

¹¹⁵ Lake of the Woods Museum (LOWM). Captain Frank Edwards, “Records, c. 1926.” Folder: “Anishinaabe – Essays and Papers.”

society that refused to incorporate Indigenous graduates and suggested that Indigenous youth “be given a School training that would enable them to make a living and business out of natural resources.”¹¹⁶ These “casually attended” youth were fully-grown band members seeking recompense in 1963. Perhaps their Indian Agent, Eric Law, contacted William Moore Benedickson, Liberal member of parliament for Rainy River to follow-up on damage claims that same year. Benedickson inquired after “a damage claim by the Indians of Islington [Whitedog] Reserve No. 29 and One Man Lake No. 29.”¹¹⁷ Benedickson’s query prompted a letter exchange between the HEPC’s engineering, property, and legal divisions. Benedickson successfully breached the HEPC’s communication barriers. His query resulted in a flurry of activity, including a memorandum from the Hydro-Electric Power Commission’s Chairman. It did not, however, produce the desired outcome: dialogue and recompense. Instead, the HEPC used the written word to justify its actions on and off reserve. Firstly, the HEPC implicated the Indian Affairs Branch in any failure. The Deputy Director of Property argued that “negotiations were carried on... to arrange proper compensation for rights.” He further claimed that “an agreement was reached with the Indians [in 1956] and approved by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.” The HEPC claimed to have participated in the federal permission process – and, made clear that federal agents sanctioned development on Indian lands. In 1956, the HEPC was presumably unable to estimate the amount of land required for an access road, the amount of gravel and fill needed to fill the rock dam, etc. the HEPC promised, however, to settle with Whitedog

¹¹⁶ LOWM. Captain Frank Edwards, Memorandum, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne, 31 March 1938.” Folder: “Anishinaabe – Essays and Papers.”

¹¹⁷ OPG, “Deputy Director of Property to H. A. Smith, Assistant General Manager, re: Caribou Falls Development and Flooding of Lands, 19 June 1963,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Item 1042, 10-1-228.

Indian Reserve and One Man Lake Indian Reserve “when the surveys had been completed” and “proper compensation” could be calculated. In 1961, the HEPC appears to have unilaterally “compute[d] the amount of the damages” and sent a cheque of \$20,310 to “the Indians through the Government at Ottawa.”¹¹⁸ The Indian Affairs Branch appears to have accepted a cheque valued at a twelfth of the damages estimated by band members themselves. Further, by accepting the HEPC’s cheque, the Indian Affairs Branch suggested that “proper compensation” need not consider ricing or trapping. The Deputy Director of Property then highlighted the HEPC’s additional expenditures to improve the quality of life for damage claimants: the Department of Citizenship and Immigration sanctioned the relocation of ten families from One Man Lake Indian Reserve into “new houses... approved by the Government.”¹¹⁹ Throughout the HEPC’s response, the Indian Affairs Branch was constructed as an informed partner. Earlier written documents – band council resolutions, cheques, and design plans – were listed to end discussion. Written evidence of complacency was used to refuse a conversation about access (and subsequent damages) to reserve lands.

Secondly, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission turned to provincial documents to further counter damage claims. Hydro employees – such as the Deputy Director of Property – emphasized that fishing and ricing damages occurred off reserve, “that is to say on Crown Lands under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Government.” The Deputy Directory of Property appears to have mimicked General Counsel Lorne McDonald’s position on the 1959 claim: the HEPC is “not liable for...damages off of the reserves.” McDonald noted that the Department of Lands and Forests, a branch of the Ontario

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ OPG, “Lorne McDonald to C. F. S. Tidy re: Caribou Falls Development – Flooding – Islington Indian Reserve No. 29 and One Man Lake Indian Reserve No. 29, 6 June 1961.”

government, granted trapping and fishing licenses to local Anishinabek. Under Ontario's licencing system "the law [is such that] Indians take conditions as they find them."

McDonald emphasized that Anishinabek had "no proprietary interest" in their trap lines or fishing grounds; Ontario strictly granted use.¹²⁰ Issued licenses were called on to argue that local Anishinabek could launch "no claim in law against the Commission." The Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, initially countered that Treaty #3 protected Anishinabek "right[s] to pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered" thus entitling them to compensation.¹²¹

According to the Deputy Director of Property, however, the Indian Affairs Branch issued no formal response to Lorne McDonald's opinion (issued in 1961).¹²² Implicit here is the suggestion that Benedickson – pursuing an issue dropped in 1961 – ought to be interrogating the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission had a document collection that suggested negotiations occurred to the satisfaction of the Government of Canada. Anishinabek damage claims, the HEPC argued, had no legal backing. Further dialogue was refused on these grounds.

The Hydro-Electric Power Commission made no attempt to establish a working relationship with Anishinabek living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The HEPC cited provincial documents to bar conversations about treaty rights. Instead, General Counsel Lorne McDonald suggested further complaints might be suppressed through the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ The Indian Affairs Branch's counterargument mimicked the language of Treaty #3 which reads "Her Majesty further agrees with Her said Indians that they, the said Indians, shall have right to pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered." "Treaty 3 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Saulteaux Tribe of the Ojibbeway Indians at Northwest Angle on the Lake of the Woods with Adhesions."

¹²² Such findings are not unique to the Winnipeg River drainage basin. In his analysis of three Indigenous communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, James B. Waldram argued that the Department of Indian Affairs functioned as an "interested observer" and did not effectively defend Indigenous land and water resources against provincial interests. See Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run*, 99.

provision of one-time payments. McDonald wrote that “consideration should be given to some compassionate allowances [for] losses of physical hunting and fishing equipment, small huts and so on.”¹²³ Compensation was to take the form of a one-time payment in recognition of damages to items vital to Anishinabek economic activities. This solution did not take seriously Anishinabek complaints that damage would be sustained for multiple years – Anishinabek requested compensation for a projected ten-year loss. A lack of proprietary interest prevented serious consideration of Anishinabek damage claims. Consider that the HEPC representatives met with employees of the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company and jointly investigated hydraulic equipment. The HEPC identified structural damage to mill properties like the Norman Dam and Kenora Powerhouse. The HEPC sought to understand the long-term industrial impacts of changed water levels. And, because the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company *owned* damaged lands – and, visibly contributed to the local economy – the HEPC felt obliged to restore functionality through energy transfers. No such effort was made to explore territories deemed vital to Anishinabek industry (i.e. trapping and ricing). Instead, we find that the HEPC framed Anishinabek losses as short-term and recoverable (i.e. equipment could be replaced). When the HEPC examined Anishinabek damage claims, they saw individual material damages rather than the loss of traditional industries. This myopic understanding of industrial loss (and a refusal to discuss them with Anishinabek families) stymied economic recovery on-reserve lands. Indeed, the HEPC aggravated and sustained Anishinabek losses by refusing to consider Anishinabek rights to off-reserve lands and Anishinabek demands for financial compensation.

¹²³ OPG, “Lorne McDonald, General Counsel, to C. F. S. Tidy, Special Negotiator, Property Division, 6 June 1961,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Item 1042, 10-1-228.

CONCLUSION

The story of hydroelectric development on the Winnipeg River, in particular the story of how competing users experienced environmental modifications, is, in large part, a story about communication between the Hydro-Electric Power Commission and “Others.” The HEPC engaged in face-to-face negotiations with representatives of the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. The socio-political environment necessitated this contact. The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company had large property holdings in the Kenora District. More importantly, many of Kenora’s able-bodied residents worked in paper production (or, in related industries). With the federal promise of full employment for veterans after 1945 and improved living conditions for all Canadians, the HEPC could not jeopardize mill operations over the long term. The HEPC thus invested human and capital resources into determining the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company’s legal right to Whitedog Falls and damages that would be incurred from site development. Unable to evade negotiations, the HEPC worked to establish positional authority before negotiating with mill representatives.

To help ensure ideal operating conditions, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission used the Department of Lands and Forests to claim right of use at Whitedog Falls. The HEPC did not contact the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to discuss its dated leasehold; instead, the HEPC sought assurance of default from provincial authorities. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission subsequently pressured the Minister of Public Works into approving site plans, leveraging the province and local employment prospects against due process. Whitedog Falls Generating Station was thus born of socio-economic pressures stimulated by the HEPC.

As predicted by hydraulic generation engineers, operations at Whitedog Falls Generating Station negatively impacted paper production at the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Raised water levels flooded the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company's turbines at Norman Dam at the outlet of Lake of the Woods. By the 1960s, the paper mill could no longer generate sufficient energy to maintain paper production. As predicted by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission's hydraulic generation engineers, the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company reached out from a position of failure (i.e. failure to generate sufficient electricity). Representatives of the paper mill sought compensation, compromise, from a disadvantaged position: the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company had become dependent on electricity generated by Whitedog Falls Generating Station. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission agreed to a compensatory regime that required monthly communications between the two river users. Through these communications, the HEPC would calculate and provide energy returns free-of-charge. This settlement reveals that the HEPC did not seek to evade dialogue with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Instead, the HEPC forced the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company into a disadvantaged negotiating position: the HEPC created an energy dependency that allowed the HEPC to operate at peak operating levels. And yet, through negotiations (however skewed), the economic stability of both companies – the HEPC and the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company – was assured. The paper mill could continue to operate efficiently as the HEPC “funded” its recovery.

By contrast, Anishinabek competitors did not receive compensation from the Hydro-Electric Power Commission for economic losses. Having estimated at least

\$260,956 in damages to their trapping and ricing economies, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission relied on licenses issued by the Department of Lands and Forests to evade negotiations with Anishinabek living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. This outcome is not surprising. Indeed, the HEPC made a concerted effort to avoid dialogue with local Anishinabek throughout the construction process. Consider that the HEPC acted on an unsigned Band Council Resolution under the assumption that the Indian Affairs Branch would support their developmental goals. The HEPC exaggerated permissions to access reserve lands without fear of reproach. And yet, local Anishinabek rejected the HEPC's tenuous claim to reserve lands. Band members like Elder Charlie Fisher of One Man Lake Indian Reserve communicated disapproval on the ground, in direct conversation with hydro employees. Upon completion of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, the HEPC also closed these informal communication networks. Band members faced a remote-controlled powerhouse with their complaints.

As previously indicated, it is easiest to ignore the illiterate. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario engaged with its public through text. Local Anishinabek struggled to close the gap between Toronto Headquarters and reserve in writing. And so, band members turned to the Indian Affairs Branch and MP Benedickson to stimulate a conversation about Anishinabek losses. Dialogue remained barred: the HEPC cited a document series – from (unsigned) Band Council Resolutions to provincial licenses – to justify its actions and to refuse negotiations with local Anishinabek. Without open channels for communication, local Anishinabek failed to win compensation for their economic losses. As a result, Anishinabek families living on reserve but working off reserve felt flood damages more acutely than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

The story of hydroelectric development on the Winnipeg River thus reveals the importance of communication in economic recovery. A mutually-beneficial relationship emerged between Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. True, dialogue between these competing river users did not limit the HEPC's attempts to establish positional authority, or to maintain a competitive edge in negotiations. It did, however, ensure that the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company had a voice with which to demand compensation (here, equivalent energy returns). Underdevelopment on reserve, by contrast, was fostered by the HEPC's refusal to negotiate with local Anishinabek. This story supports what Heather Robertson first hypothesized in 1966: "Indian poverty is neither a mistake nor an omission. It is a deliberate and inevitable product of Canadian attitudes and social structures."¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Robertson, *Reservations are for Indians*, 10.

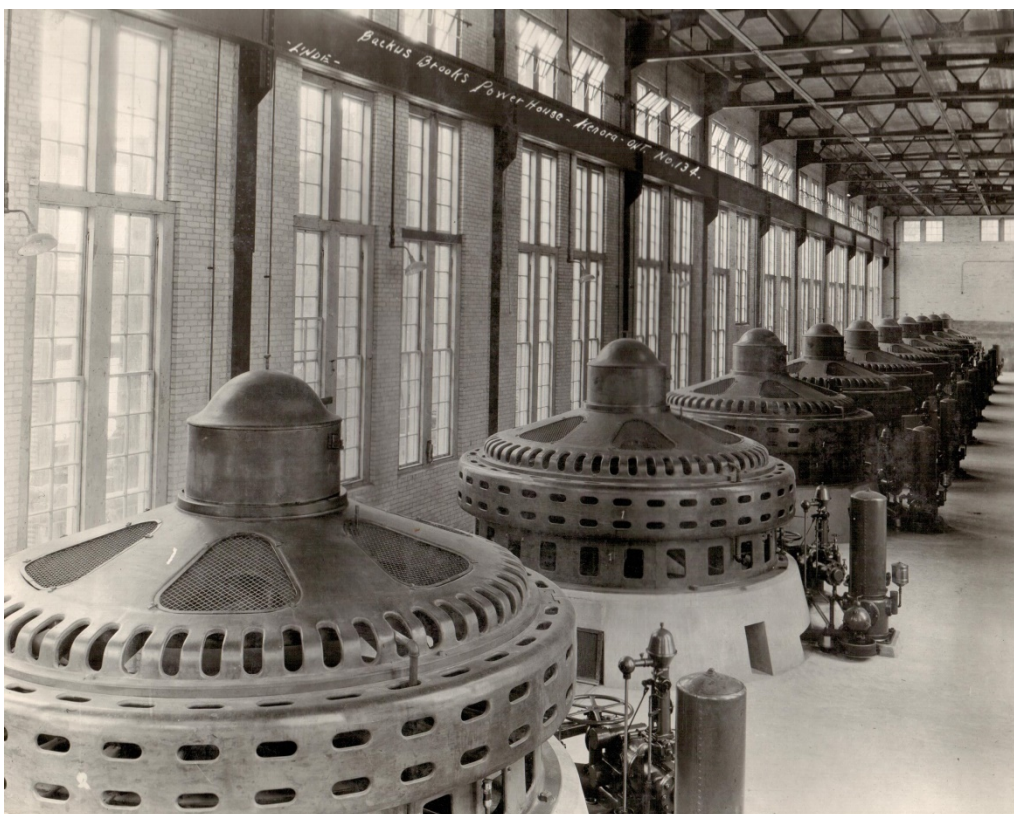


Figure 11: GENERATORS AT THE BACKUS-BROOKS POWERHOUSE (C. 1925)¹²⁵

This image features hydroelectric generators owned by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. These hydroelectric generators were operating at the Kenora Power Dam in the early 1920s. While the powerhouse at the Norman Dam would not be constructed until 1926, this image provides a sense of the layout of company-owned powerhouses in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

¹²⁵ Carl Linde, "Backus Brooks Powerhouse, c. 1925," image donated to the author by Cuyler Cotton of Dovetail Resources, Kenora, Ontario.

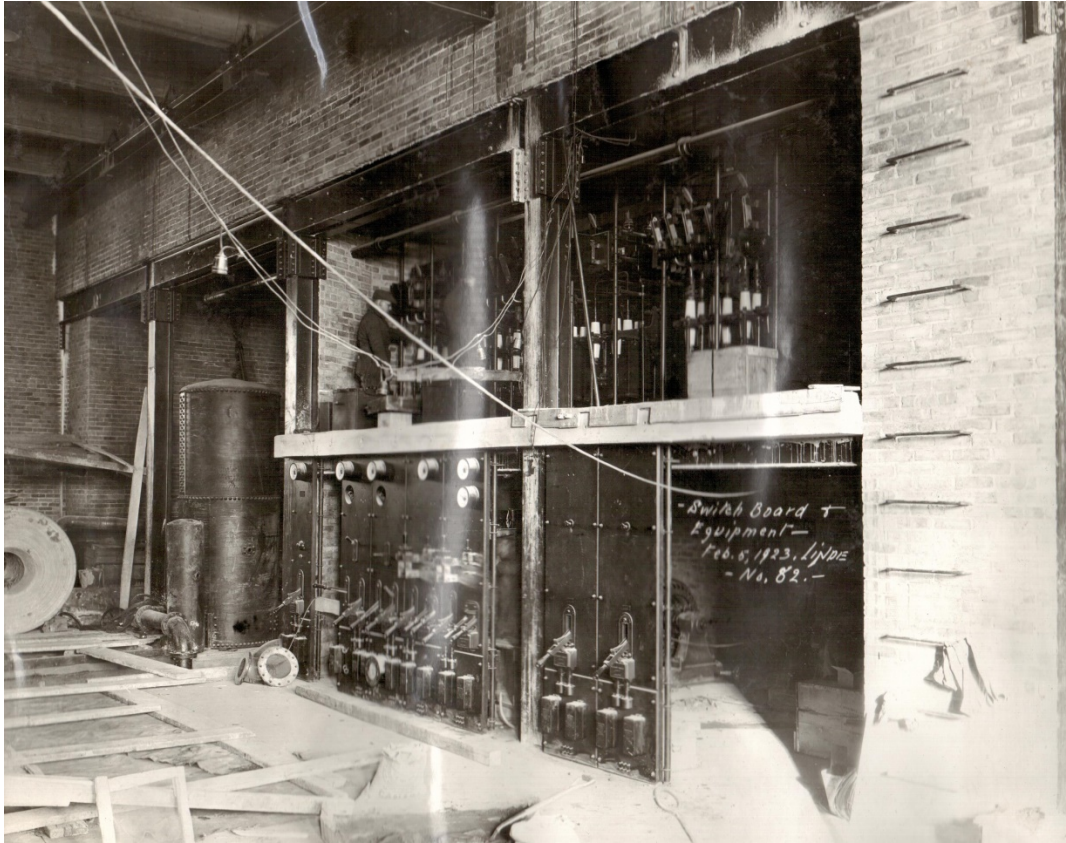


Figure 12: SWITCH BOARD AND EQUIPMENT AT THE KENORA POWERHOUSE (1923)¹²⁶

This image features switch board equipment purchased by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company from the Town of Kenora. This equipment was operating at the Kenora Power Dam in the early 1920s. The Company used this equipment to provide electricity to the Town of Kenora until the Hydro-Electric Power Commission became the dominant service provider in the 1950s.

¹²⁶ Carl Linde, "Switch Board and Equipment," c. 1920, image donated to the author by Cuyler Cotton of Dovetail Resources, Kenora, Ontario.



Figure 13: WHITE DOG FALLS, (C. 1920)¹²⁷

This newspaper clipping is dated 11 December 1920. It features White Dog Falls, a site that Ernest Charles Drury, Premier of Ontario, leased to E. W. Backus in September 1920. Backus never developed White Dog Rapids. Instead, Backus purchased the Norman Dam and the Kenora Power House in 1919. After World War II, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission expressed interest in White Dog Falls and proposed a three unit generating station with a total capacity of 81,000 brake horsepower.

¹²⁷ OPG, "White Dog Falls on the Rainy River near Kenora, Ont., 11 December 1920," 010-Whitedog Falls, Box 91.119, 11-23-71.

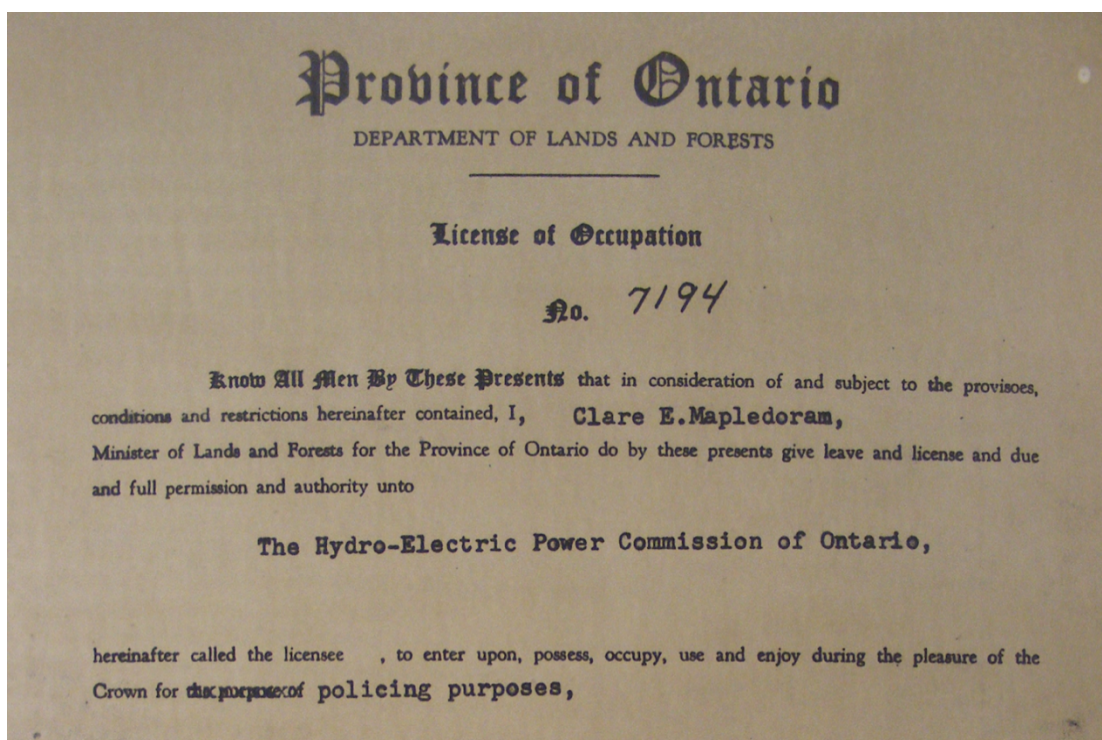


Figure 14: LICENSE OF OCCUPATION (1956)¹²⁸

This modified *License of Occupation* allowed the Hydro-Electric Power Commission to physically remove local Anishinabek from the permit zone. The policing permit thus had the potential to limit communications between Anishinabek families and the HEPC employees on off-reserve lands.

¹²⁸ OPG, Province of Ontario, Department of Lands and Forests, *License of Occupation*, No. 7194, January 26, 1956. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, ITEM 106, FP3-B, OHSC Central Records 8-3-242.

FP3-10726

THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER COMMISSION OF ONTARIO

APPLICATION

The undersigned hereby makes application to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, for permission to operate a road between White Dog Falls and the said road should its condition or the Commission's own requirements render either course of action desirable.

6. I undertake that I shall not transport any alcoholic beverage, firearms or explosives in my vehicle when using the said road nor shall I drive into any dump area but shall restrict my operations to the road system proper.

7. That I shall regard this permission as personal to myself and not assignable.

The description of my motor vehicle is as follows:

Date	Year	Serial Number	Colour

This application submitted the _____ day of _____ 1956 by _____ owner

Accepted on behalf of the Commission and permission to operate subject to the condition outlined above the day of _____ 1956.

Construction Manager,
Whitedog - Carleton Place O.S.

1. That I shall procure from the proper public authorities all licences and permits necessary to the operation of a road service over the said road and shall comply strictly with all statutes, regulations and ordinances governing the operation of such service.

2. That I shall take out insurance on my vehicle for Public Liability, \$100,000.00 one person and \$200,000.00 for more than one person and property damage \$100,000.00 and I shall secure an endorsement to such policy that this insurance policy shall not be cancelled without my having given ten days prior notice of such cancellation to the Commission's Construction Manager at White Dog Falls and I shall furnish the Construction Manager with a certified copy of such policy bearing the said endorsement thereon.

3. That I hereby release the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario from all responsibility and liability with respect to the fitness of the aforesaid road for the passage of my vehicles thereover, and that I will make no claim or demand upon the said Commission for damage, loss or injury to my vehicles whether arising from any defect in the construction or upkeep of the said road or from any negligence of the said Commission, its workmen, servants or agents.

4. That I hereby covenant and agree to indemnify and save harmless the Commission from all actions, claims and demands for damage, loss or injury to property or persons (including loss of life) and whether or not caused by the negligence of the Commission, its workmen, servants or agents arising directly or indirectly out of the services by me of the permission hereby granted.

5. That I understand and agree that the Commission shall reserve the right at any time and in its sole discretion to cancel this permission outright or to temporarily discontinue my use of

Figure 15: APPLICATION TO ACCESS LANDS CLAIMED BY THE HEPC (1956)¹²⁹

During the 1950s, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission recommended an application process that would allow property owners or licensees to move through lands claimed by the HEPC. This document outlines the conditions under which the HEPC allowed “bona-fide residents to use [the] access road.”¹³⁰ The HEPC required applicants to be fully insured. Applicants were also barred from transporting firearms. These two conditions, as detailed in Chapter 3, limited Anishinabek access to and economic use of off-reserve lands claimed by the HEPC.

¹²⁹ OPG, The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, *Application* (1956). FP3-10726. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10726, Item 153, OHSC Central Records 8-3-242.

¹³⁰ OPG, “A. J. G. Leighton, Construction Manager, to L. Ringham, District Forester, Department of Lands and Forests, 9 April 1956,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-B, Item 106, OHSC – Central Records 8-3-242.

CHAPTER 4

"KEEPING IT [RESERVE] ALIVE": ANISHINABEK LABOUR FOR THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER COMMISSION IN ITS NORTHWESTERN DIVISION, 1950-1958

In February 1958, Unit 1 of Whitedog Falls Generating Station began to produce electricity for the Northwestern Division of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. In 2014, Ontario Power Generation, an outgrowth of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, suggested that “it seemed natural that the Winnipeg should become a source of power for the province” – the Winnipeg River, on which Whitedog Falls Generating Station is built, was once known for its rapids, falls, and cascades.¹ This outcome, however, did not seem “natural” in the aftermath of World War II. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission had feared power shortages northwest of Marathon and southeast of Kenora. Technological innovations like transistor radios and electric wringer washers stimulated new household energy demands. High employment rates meant that more Canadians had the capital to purchase and plug in these electric devices. Industrial demands were also on the rise.² When coupled together Canadian households and Canadian industry in the Northwestern District increased power demands by 250 percent

¹ “Whitedog Falls Generating Station,” *Ontario Power Generation Inc.*, accessed 1 July 2015, <http://www.opg.com/generating-power/hydro/northwest-ontario/Pages/whitedog-falls-station.aspx>. In 1974, the HEPC was renamed Ontario Hydro. In 1998, the Energy Competition Act was passed by the province to restructure Ontario Hydro. As a result of the Energy Competition Act, hydroelectric power generation was separated from transmission. Today, Ontario Power Generation is responsible for hydroelectric power generation. Hydro One has assumed responsibility for the transmission of electricity.

² Historian Doug Oram suggests that “unemployment remained well under 4 per cent through the postwar period.” He claims that Canadians born between the “late war and about 1955 or 1956” were the “best-fed” and “best-educated” overall as they belonged to a period of sustained economic growth. Indeed, Oram argues that postwar affluence (and access to more disposable income) fueled both generational consciousness and youth activism during the 1960s. Individuals born during this period expected their standard of living to improve. Oram, *Born at the Right Time*. Journalist Robert J. Samuelson addressed the American case, arguing that Americans began “to take prosperity for granted” (35) in the postwar era. Robert J. Samuelson, *The Good Life and Its Discontents*.

between 1945 and 1957.³ But, the HEPC lacked the necessary infrastructure to service Ontarians at this rate of growth. To avoid power shortages and to streamline construction, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission limited negotiations with competing river users (e.g. Anishinabek families living along the Winnipeg River). Sam Horton, former Vice-President of Ontario Hydro, told Former Chief Allan Luby (Ogemah) in 1992, “We were too busy building a country to think about the Aboriginal people living on the land [that] we would be affecting.”⁴ As the previous chapter demonstrated, the HEPC’s incursions onto Anishinabek territories were, consequently, communicated poorly and occurred rapidly.

The Hydro-Electric Power Commission encroached on Anishinabek territories in the Winnipeg River drainage basin confident that it would receive provincial support for its expansionist program. Leslie Frost became premier of Ontario in 1949. Frost, much like his predecessor George Drew, emphasized better water resource management: Frost wanted energy security for Ontario.⁵ To achieve energy security, Frost established a program of cross-governmental cooperation that allowed for major riverine modifications such as the St. Lawrence Seaway. Frost committed Ontario to dam construction if Ottawa agreed to finance canal construction. Cost-sharing resulted in construction of the seaway between 1954 and 1959. The seaway, in turn, guaranteed an additional 912,000 kW for

³ “Progress Scenes at Whitedog-Caribou Falls,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 4 September 1957, 1.

⁴ Former Chief Allan Luby (Ogemah), email message to author, 15 July 2015. In his submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1993), Sam Horton, then Vice-President of Ontario Hydro’s Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Branch, echoed these same sentiments. Horton noted that “Ontario Hydro is really a company which failed to respect the Aboriginal people.... In short, we’ve pursued our own interests in our own ways and the result is that, while Ontario Hydro and its customers have enjoyed low cost-hydro electric energy, the life sustaining capabilities of many of the watersheds have been destroyed in the process” (4-5). See: “Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Presentation by Sam Horton, Vice-President, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Branch, Ontario Hydro,” *Our Legacy*, 3 June 2003, <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/solr?query=ID%3A31496&start=0&rows=10&mode=view&pos=0&page=5>.

⁵ Whitcomb, *A Short History of Ontario*, 59.

Ontario's power supply.⁶ It was in this cultural climate – and under the threat of energy shortages in the Northwestern Division – that the municipality of Kenora pushed for a power arrangement with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. There was little need to think about “the Indians” when over 9000 citizens were demanding service south of Whitedog Falls.⁷

As early as 1950, Kenora residents anticipated an industrial boom in the Northwest Division with a “revival of mining on Lake of the Woods” and, as indicated in the previous chapter, a renewed demand for pulp and paper in North America.⁸ The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company increased production during the war years and planned to expand its operations. In 1955, the paper mill announced a “\$17,000,000 enlargement and development program” that would take up to three years to complete.⁹ Company officials estimated that the enlarged paper mill would require more electricity than the Norman Dam and Kenora Powerhouse could produce. Expansion required energy. Rumours circulated that the Hydro-Electric Power Commission might enter the Winnipeg River drainage basin to service new industrial demands. The *Kenora Miner and News* optimistically printed that “the possibility of work being started on the Boundary Falls power development should also bring new business.”¹⁰ In an attempt to

⁶ Ontario Hydro, *Ontario Hydro a Proud Tradition*, 40. See also, Whitcomb, *A Short History of Ontario*, 59.

⁷ In January 1950, C. S. McGimsie, Kenora's town assessor and tax collector, noted that the population had reached an “all-time high” of 9012. By 1955, the population had grown to 9367. “Our Growing Population,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 3 January 1950, 4. See also “Kenora's Population Edging near 10,000,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 4 January 1955, 4.

⁸ In 1955, Robert Faegre, the executive vice president of the Minnesota and Ontario Paper Company, predicted a strong demand for paper and related products. Post-war consumer demand stimulated a “direct demand for newsprint and... labelling.” Faegre associated growing demand for consumer goods (and packaging products) with “[t]he apparent increase in spendable income... coupled with population increases.” “MANDO Anticipates Strong Demand for Products with National Business Increase,” *The Kenora Miner and News*, 13 January 1955, 1. See also “Our Growing Population,” 4.

⁹ “Industrial Prospects Considered Excellent,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 25 March 1955, 1.

¹⁰ “Our Growing Population,” 4.

provide more income opportunities for families in northwestern Ontario, James George White, member of the provincial parliament for Kenora-Rainy River (1948-1951), advocated for the electrification of rural districts.¹¹ The *Kenora Miner and News* encouraged its audience to actively support White, suggesting that “Hydro brings [the] development of communities and the added business of appliances in the new resorts and private camps.”¹² Citing an American study, the editorial team suggested that new industry could put an additional \$360,000 per annum into local circulation.¹³ The equivalent sum in 2015 is approximately \$3,250,000. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission, Kenora residents were encouraged to believe, would create jobs in energy production and thus stimulate retail business. Public pressure on James George White to secure power for the Kenora-Rainy River riding grew.

By December 1950, White achieved his goal to have sections of his riding electrified. The *Kenora Miner and News* announced that “Hydro power was assured for the Kenora district, either through a possible development at Boundary Falls, or a hook-up with the Thunder Bay circuit through Dryden and Atikoken.”¹⁴ Over the next ten years, the HEPC engaged in the “largest extension program it [had] ever undertaken in northwestern Ontario with six separate projects... under construction”¹⁵ Two of these projects – Whitedog Falls Generation Station and Caribou Falls Generating Station – were built within a 65-kilometre radius of Kenora. The postwar economic boom had

¹¹ “Grassy Narrows Highway Number One ‘Must’ for District,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 1 April 1950, 1.

¹² “Editorially Speaking: Hydro Extensions,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 25 April 1950, 4.

¹³ “What New Industrial Jobs Mean to a Community,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 25 January 1955, 4.

¹⁴ “1950 Proved Eventful Year for Twin Communities,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 29 December 1950, 1.

¹⁵ “\$26 Million Hydro Station for Lakehead, Caribou Falls; Whitedog Falls; Silver Falls; Manitou Falls; Cameron Fall and Alexander Generating Station,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 4 September 1957, 8.

reached northwestern Ontario. Unfortunately, the HEPC used the pressure to make money and to meet consumer demand to justify development without meaningful consultation with local Anishinabek during a period of economic stagnation on reserve. When the HEPC arrived in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, there was no guarantee that hydroelectric development would benefit First Nations. The HEPC's presence, Anishinabek families argued, could be a blessing or a curse to their communities.

This chapter explores pro-industry responses to the arrival of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, detailing the experiences of Anishinabek labourers on Whitedog Falls Generating Station and Caribou Falls Generating Station.¹⁶ A careful examination of the economic challenges faced by Anishinabek labourers in the years leading up to 1955 is provided to help contextualize Anishinabek decisions to work for pay. A detailed account of the jobs worked by Anishinabek men and the conditions of their labour (often shared with general, non-Indigenous labourers) follows. These descriptions make visible Anishinabek labour on hydroelectric dams. Megan Stanley's *Voices from Two Rivers* is the first academic work to acknowledge Indigenous labour on hydro-electric generating stations in British Columbia. She writes, "[w]hen construction on the reservoir began.... Many Tsek'ene moved to Finlay Forks to take advantage of these opportunities."¹⁷ And

¹⁶ Employment with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission was not universally desired by band members. Elder May Greene testified that her father preferred an isolationist rather than pro-industry approach: "Dad used to keep an eye on the reserve as he did not want any Whiteman to come here" (Dovetail Resources, Interview synopses by Cuyler Cotton, 1993, Dalles 38C, Elder Interview Collection). Unlike the Kabestra family, the Greene family encouraged band members to keep among themselves. This chapter does not tell the Greene's story. It tells the story of men like Robert Kabestra (Anamikipens) who believed that they could earn sufficient income through dam work to continually occupy Dalles 38C Indian Reserve.

¹⁷ Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers*, 110. Megan Stanley, however, is not the first to identify Indigenous peoples' desire to work in the hydroelectric generation industry. In the 1980s, James Waldram argued that First Nations suppressed critiques of Manitoba Hydro in hopes of securing employment at Limestone Generating Station on the Nelson River. Manitoba Hydro started building Limestone Generating Station in 1985 and completed the project in 1990 – two years after Waldram released *As Long as the Rivers Run*. He wrote, "Much opposition by Natives seems to have been silenced, at least for the moment,

yet, Stanley's acknowledgement of job opportunities in *Voices from Two Rivers* is undeveloped. It is suggestive. In 2013, Caroline Desbiens noted an "excessively low" number of Cree and Inuit employees worked for Hydro-Quebec. Indigenous labour experiences were, once again, under-documented.¹⁸ This chapter takes seriously Stanley's and Desbiens' suggestion of an Indigenous labour presence. What follows is an investigation into the working lives of a minority group in Canada's energy industry.

This chapter is based on a series of interviews that I conducted in 2012. Elder Bert Fontaine (birthdate unknown) of Sagkeeng First Nation worked for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission in 1956. Elder Larry Kabestra Sr. testified to his father's (Robert Kabestra (Anamikipinens), 1920-1995) – experiences working with the HEPC during the 1950s.¹⁹ Larry also described his own work in the dam business, particularly cleaning screens at Norman Dam.²⁰ Both Larry Kabestra and Fontaine could name other Anishinabek men who had been employed by the HEPC. However, I was unable to gather further testimony using the snowball technique. When Fontaine was asked to refer his past colleagues, he responded, "They're all dead."²¹ This chapter is constrained by the much lower life expectancy of Anishinabek men. As late as 2000, the average life

by a comprehensive plan to hire Native people for the dam's construction" (12). Political scientist Peter Kulchyski revealed that Manitoba Hydro ultimately failed to alleviate unemployment in First Nations communities. In 2012, Kulchyski observed that "Manitoba Hydro has a racially stratified work force." First Nations employees are offered "low-paid and menial work" and can be found "push[ing] brooms and fill[ing] plates" for non-Indigenous employees. Waldram (1988), like Stanley (2010), identified Indigenous interest in waged labour. Kulchyski (2012) observed that some Indigenous communities supported development in hopes of securing jobs for band members. Unlike Waldram and Stanley, however, Kulchyski associates paid work with failed promises and racial stratification. See Kulchyski, "Flooded and Forgotten: Hydro development makes a battleground of northern Manitoba."

¹⁸ Desbiens, *Power from the North*, 171.

¹⁹ As noted in the introduction, Elder Larry Kabestra was born in 1948.

²⁰ The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company owned the Norman Dam. The paper mill and the province of Ontario coordinated water levels on Lake of the Woods. The Norman Dam was not under the control of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. While under contract with the Department of Lands and Forests, Elder Larry Kabestra Sr. received experience working on hydroelectric generating stations as a screen cleaner.

²¹ Elder Larry James Kabestra Sr., interview with author, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, 6 July 2012.

expectancy of Anishinabek men was only 68.9 years.²² When interviews were conducted in 2012, the Whitedog Falls Generating Station had already been in operation for 54 years. If we assume that the earliest age at which an Anishinabek youth could seek work for pay was sixteen (the age at which school attendance was no longer compulsory),²³ potential interviewees were statistical anomalies. Fontaine and Kabestra thus represent a much larger pool of working Anishinabek men whose testimonies are now, quite literally, buried. I relied on textual sources like newspaper reports and the HEPC's internal records to supplement oral testimony.

In addition to detailed description, this chapter argues that Anishinabek labourers attached higher value to work for pay than their wages. In "Living the Same as White People," Robin Jarvis Brownlie argued that Anishinabek (and Mohawk) women sought paid employment opportunities in southern Ontario during the interwar period. Work for pay, Brownlie argues, should not be conflated with approval of settler land expropriation.²⁴ My research builds on Brownlie's argument, revealing that Anishinabek men in Northern Ontario objected to the expropriation of their lands despite working for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Paid employment was seen as a tool to maintain year-round occupancy on reserve. Both Fontaine and Kabestra worked to reinforce family bonds and, by extension, to strengthen their communities. Work for pay not only represents a response to limited economic opportunities in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, but as Kabestra's testimony suggests, it also represents a vision of the future – a

²² "A Statistical Profile on the Health of First Nations in Canada: Vital Statistics for Atlantic and Western Canada, 2001/2002," *Health Canada*, last edited 16 February 2011, accessed 1 February 2016, <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/aborig-autoch/stats-profil-atlant/index-eng.php#a634>.

²³ Jean Barman, "Child Labour," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last edited 4 March 2015, accessed 24 July 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/child-labour/>.

²⁴ Robin Jarvis Brownlie, "'Living the Same as White People': Mohawk and Anishinabe Women's Labour in Southern Ontario, 1920-1940," *Labour/Le Travail* 61 (spring 2008), 41-68.

future where Anishinabek labourers could ensure the socio-economic stability of reserve life. This vision of the future has yet to manifest on reserve, in part because the Hydro-Electric Power Commission made no attempt to hire general Anishinabek labourers over the long-term (nor was the HEPC legally required to).²⁵ Thus, it was only for a moment (circa 1955-1958) that work for pay with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission was also an act of hope.

“WITHOUT PAYING ANYTHING TO THE INDIANS FOR IT”: ON-RESERVE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, 1900-1950

On-reserve underemployment created an incentive for Anishinabek men to work for pay in the 1950s. Limited infrastructure existed on reserves in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. For example, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, One Man Lake Indian Reserve, and Whitedog Indian Reserve lacked roads, water, or sewage hook-ups that might have stimulated maintenance work.²⁶ On-reserve employment sources were slim. Many able-bodied Anishinabek men accepted seasonal jobs as fishing guides for American and

²⁵ The Hydro-Electric Power Commission had no legal obligation to hire Anishinabek labourers. The term “employment equity” did not come into use in Canada until the 1980s, when the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment coined the term to describe the elimination of discriminatory hiring practices. In 1986, the Commission’s report led to the enactment of the *Employment Equity Act* which seeks to “to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfilment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by... aboriginal peoples.” For more information, see Rosalie Silberman Abella, *Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1984).

²⁶ In 1974, the Ministry of Transportation and Communications examined road conditions leading from Kenora to nearby reserves. At this time, the road to Whitedog Indian Reserve was partly paved – “half [was] a smooth, wide, gravel road.” There is no study of One Man Lake Indian Reserve as the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario spurred its dissolution by raising water levels on the Winnipeg River. The HEPC helped to finance the relocation of band members from One Man Lake to Whitedog Indian Reserve in the 1950s. There is also no record of road conditions to Dalles 38C Indian Reserve at this time, perhaps because band members had abandoned the community due to environmental change caused by Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Of the First Nations communities surveyed in the 1970s, none had fully paved roads. Conditions varied from “surface-treated [road] but in poor conditions with many potholes” to “hard packed gravel” to narrow gravel roads that were “not well maintained.” AO, Transit Projects Planning Office, Project Planning Branch, “Kenora Area Indian Reserves Transit Study, November 1974,” Indian Branch – Indian Lands TO Indian Community Housing, Ministry of Transportation and Communications Ontario, RG 47-138, B212821.

Canadian tourists. Indeed, Captain Frank Edwards, Indian Agent of the Kenora and Savanne Agencies (1920-1948), identified guiding as a “main occupation” among his wards.²⁷ Opportunities for paid employment for fishing guides peaked between May and September, or between Victoria Day and Labour Day.

Anishinabek visibility in the guiding business was tied to market demand. Edwards claimed that few entrepreneurs wanted to hire Anishinabek labourers, but tourists demanded they did. Edwards wrote, “Most camps prefer to hire white men, although the Tourists like to have Indian guides.”²⁸ Consumer preferences even led some camps – like the Canadian Pacific Railway’s Bungalow Camp near Rat Portage Indian Reserve – to hire “Indians almost exclusively for this purpose [guiding].”²⁹ Newspaper reports and magazine articles published across North America increased vacationers’ interest in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, particularly Lake of the Woods. Canadians and Americans pictured lakes brimming with prize-winning fish.³⁰ Visitors to the

²⁷ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, Memorandum, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne, 31 March 1938,” Folder: Anishinaabe – Essays and Papers.

²⁸ Ibid. Claire Elizabeth Campbell, in *Shaped by the West Wind: Nature and History in Georgian Bay* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), found that Indigenous employment stemmed, in part, from a lack of navigation charts at the turn of the twentieth century. A paucity of resources “elevated the importance of experimental mapping, or navigating by memory” stimulating campers’ demand for local (i.e. Indigenous) guides (55). During the interwar era, tourists were drawn to Georgian Bay by the perceived “wildness” of the landscape and its Indigenous inhabitants (101-02). Tourists’ desire to access “*terre sauvage*” likely maintained demand for Indigenous guides. Sharon Wall’s chapter on “Totem Poles, Tepees, and Token Traditions,” pages 216-50 of *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-1955* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), supports this speculative claim. Wall found that Ontario summer camps hoped to create an “Indian atmosphere” (235). Camp organizers believed that children could be cured of urban malaise by reconnecting with nature. In order to facilitate reconnection, some camps – like Ahmek, Keewaydin, Tanamakoon, and Temagami – hired Indigenous guides and canoeing instructors (235). As in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, Indigenous men took advantage of American and Canadian stereotypes, securing “relatively good pay” before fall and winter trapping and hunting began (236).

²⁹ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne.”

³⁰ For example, *Field and Stream* (one of Canada’s most popular sport magazines in the 1950s) awarded multiple “Biggest Fish” prizes to the Kenora District. The biggest reported muskellunge in 1955 was pulled from the English River. The fifth biggest muskellunge was pulled from Lake of the Woods. “Field and Stream Stories Tell of Success in District Waters,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 25

Winnipeg River drainage basin demanded access to Indigenous knowledge of nearby fishing grounds. Unfortunately, seasonal demands for Anishinabek labour did little to counter discriminatory hiring practices year-round (or within the tourism industry itself). Regional entrepreneurs preferred to work with “white men.” Anishinabek labourers were siloed into guiding jobs that ended with the tourist season. Seasonal pay created incentive for Anishinabek labourers to seek out contracts in other industries. For this reason, some Anishinabek families saw the arrival of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission as an opportunity to earn pay year round.³¹

Anishinabek women also found waged work at tourist camps, but as domestic labourers. This finding is not unique to the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Historian John Lutz contends that the decennial census hints that “domestic service was a long-standing employer of aboriginal women.”³² Sharon Wall found evidence that Ontario summer camps hired Indigenous women as kitchen staff to help recreate a “wilderness” experience for attendees (circa 1920-1955).³³ Helen Everson of Shoal Lake Indian Reserve (1908-date of death unknown) suggested that employment opportunities for Anishinabek domestics peaked from May until October in the Winnipeg River drainage basin.³⁴ Hattie Martin (1910-date of death unknown), a non-Status woman from Kenora,

February 1955, 1. A similar observation is made by Rick Brignal, “Lodged in the Past,” *Lake of the Woods Vacation Are*, accessed 24 July 2015, <http://lakeofthewoods.com/stories-from-the-lake/lodged-in-the-past/>.

³¹ In his analysis of “Resource Ontario,” historian Rolf Knight suggested that “ingrained ethnic stereotypes” may have limited employment options for Indian workers in other industries, particularly at the railway camps of northern Ontario. Knight bases his claim on *Bunkhouse Man*, Edmund Bradwin’s account of the lives of stiffs and navvies employed by the Canadian National Railway between 1903 and 1914. Knight, *Indians at Work*, 283.

³² Lutz, *Makúk*, 217.

³³ Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, 235.

³⁴ Helen Everson, *May Whin Shah Ti Pah Chi Mo Win: Indian Stories of Long Ago* (Alexandria, MN: Echo Printing Company, c. 1975), 12. While employment opportunities peaked during the summer months, some Anishinabek women like Helen Everson managed to secure full-time employment. Everson worked as a housekeeper for Eric Holmstrom for two continuous years sometime between 1926 and 1932. *Ibid.*, 13-4.

found work as a cleaner and a cook at Flag Island Resort (circa 1933) on the Minnesotan side of Lake of the Woods. Martin's employee-employer agreement required that she travel approximately 32 kilometres from Flag Island Resort to clean at Portage Bay Camp. As a condition of her employment, Martin moved from Kenora to Northwest Angle, Lake of the Woods, for the tourist season.³⁵ Martin may have learned how to cater to non-Indigenous customers from her mother, Matilda Martin of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. After moving to Kenora, "Matilda... took in washing, hanging clothes on the line outside and sometimes inside.... She folded the shirts and pants with tissue paper in the folds, just like you would buy them in the store."³⁶ According to Hazel McKeever-Martin, her mother, Matilda, out-competed local launderers.³⁷

Anishinabek women without camp employment produced handicrafts to sell to tourists during the summer months. Hattie Martin's mother, Matilda, had made moccasins with floral motifs to sell to "white people" since the early 1900s. By mid-century, Edwards suggested that handiwork was "not as remunerative an occupation for the Indians in this [Kenora] District as it [was] in Eastern Canada."³⁸ Matilda Martin

Helen Everson was born at Shoal Lake Indian Reserve in 1908. Everson does not specify whether she was born at Shoal Lake #39 or Shoal Lake #40. Everson was removed from her community and registered at Cecilia Jaffray residential school around 1915. Everson would not be released from CJ until approximately 1926.

³⁵ Martin-McKeever, *The Chief's Granddaughter*, 72.

³⁶ Ibid., 69.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, "Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne."

Gender historians have revealed that Indigenous women throughout North America used handicraft sales to help manage immigration pressures and settler land grabs. Literature on handicraft sales in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggests that capital earned by female artisans sustained subsistence economies. Historian Colette A. Hyman, *Dakota Women's Work: Creativity, Culture & Exile* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2012), writing on Dakota women's work in present-day Minnesota, has further argued that women's handicraft prevented "cultural annihilation" – profits earned by selling traditional crafts were used to support independent Dakota communities (164-70). Other notable studies on Indigenous women's handicraft include Sherry Farrell Racette, "Sewing for a Living: The Commodification of Metis Women's Artistic Production," *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 17-46; Paige Raibmon, "The Practice of Everyday Colonialism: Indigenous Women in the Hop Fields and Tourist Industry of Puget Sound," *Labor*

similarly remembered being unable to demand more than \$2.50 for her beadwork as a young woman (circa 1900). Limited profit margins may help to explain why Anishinabek women in Treaty #3 adopted commercially produced dye in the 1930s. Anthropologist Ruth Landes observed that fewer “traditional” crafts were entirely homemade: Anishinabek women replaced homemade dye with store-bought colours.³⁹ The use of commercial dye reduced the amount of time needed to produce saleable footwear. Artisans no longer had to factor colour production into their price point. This improved Anishinabek women’s chances of turning a profit in a difficult market. For Anishinabek women waged work in the tourist industry – and income generated in spin-off industries like handicraft production – was limited.

During the fall, guides and domestic workers returned to their home reserves. Many Anishinabek families living at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve maintained at least two homes. Summer housing was often located near the shores of the Winnipeg River where it was easier for women and children to maintain subsistence gardens. These gardens were required to supplement meagre seasonal wages from guiding and/or cleaning. Elder Helen Everson of Shoal Lake Indian Reserve suggested that planting occurred after muskrat-trapping season (April to May).⁴⁰ Planted gardens averaged 0.5 acres. Elder Charlie Fisher of One Man Lake testified that “everyone had a garden” before Whitedog Falls Generating Station inundated his reserve.⁴¹ Anishinabek families in the Winnipeg River drainage basin planted carrots, potatoes, onions, pumpkins and corn for household

Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas 3 (2006): 23-56; Coll Thrush, “The Woven Coast,” *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 105-25.

³⁹ Landes, *The Ojibwa Woman*, 126.

⁴⁰ Everson, *May Whin Shah Ti Pah Chi Mo Win*, 20.

⁴¹ Families who did not garden were considered exceptional. Indeed, Elder Charlie Fisher could remember families who did not garden by name. Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

consumption. Guides and domestic workers likely returned to their summer homes to help harvest and preserve the garden produce that would feed them during the “off-season.”

After the harvest, many Anishinabek families left their riverside homes and moved inland so that able-bodied men could cut wood. Elder David Wagamese remembers moving from the river to the interior of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve throughout his youth. Elder Larry Kabestra of Dalles 38C confirmed this migration pattern. He testified that “there was a [winter] community at the present dump site” that was occupied primarily by Anishinabek men “cutting wood... cutting pulp.” Kabestra suggests that at least seven families actively logged on reserve in the 1950s. Neither Kabestra nor Wagamese could name their father’s employer.⁴² Edwards, however, reported that at least some men “[got] jobs cutting wood and freighting wood for the trading and mining companies” in the 1930s.⁴³ Records exist to suggest that Anishinabek men started logging for pay as early as 1884. Historian Rolf Knight found evidence of Anishinabek bands “getting out railway ties” from Lake Nipissing southeast towards Kenora.⁴⁴ What remained constant at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve was the style of winter employment; the employer changed from year to year as new industries opened and closed in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Winter employment paid off, according to Edwards, who suggested that “some tribes have sustained a very good remuneration from the sale of pulp wood at their Reserves.”⁴⁵ Such claims must be read cautiously:

⁴² Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012. Elder David Wagamese, interview with author, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, 8 August 2012.

⁴³ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne.”

⁴⁴ Knight, *Indians at Work*, 283.

⁴⁵ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne.”

Ontario First Nations did not universally receive “very good remuneration” for their timber stands. For example, historian Mark Kuhlberg uncovered that the Department of Indian Affairs facilitated the

Indigenous loggers did not always receive competitive rates for their timber. And yet, the wood cutting industry ensured pay during the slow winter months.

Water fluctuations at the Norman Dam increased Anishinabek reliance on waged labour long before the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario constructed Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Prior to 1898, before Ontario used Norman Dam to regulate lake levels, Crown agents associated *manomin* harvesting with Anishinabek independence. In 1868, for example, Treaty Commissioner Simon J. Dawson noted that women's careful management of *manomin* (and garden produce) meant that Anishinabek families in the Winnipeg River drainage basin suffered "not so much from the scarcity of food, although game sometimes fails, as from the want of clothing."⁴⁶ Anishinabek families became increasingly reliant on waged labour after the International Joint Commission issued its 1917 recommendations for water regulation on Lake of the Woods. *Manomin* yields declined substantially as a result of the IJC's recommendations.⁴⁷ *Manomin* is highly sensitive to water fluctuations. Journalist Thomas Pawlick and social activist Kathi Avery explain:

Water depth is one of the main determinants in the growth of wild rice. It affects the amount of sunlight which reaches the plants and, if too high at certain points – such as the floating leaf stage in June and July – the plant

exploitation of timber resources by Charles W. Cox, a small timber contractor, at Gull Bay and Long Lac Reserves in the 1920s. Cox avoided paying his timber dues in full by underreporting trees harvested on reserve. Exploitation did not go unnoticed. Local Indian Agent, J. G. Burk, reported Cox's misdeeds to Ottawa in an attempt to improve First Nations participation in the forest economy. However, patronage considerations in Ottawa prolonged Cox's exploitation of First Nations timber stands. See Kuhlberg, "Nothing it seems can be done about it": Charlie Cox, Indian Affairs Timber Policy, and the Long Lac Reserve, 1924-1940," *Canadian Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (2003): 33-64. See also Kuhlberg, "Mr. Burk is Most Interested in Their Welfare": J. G. Burk's Campaign to Help the Anishinabeg of Northwestern Ontario, 1923-1953," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 45, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 59-89, especially pages 64, 75.

⁴⁶ Simon J. Dawson quoted in Tim E. Holzkamm and Leo G. Waisberg, "A Tendency to Discourage Them from Cultivating": Ojibwa Agriculture and Indian Affairs Administration in Northwestern Ontario," *Ethnohistory* 40, no. 2 (spring 1993): 180.

⁴⁷ International Joint Commission. *Final Report*, 27.

expends all its energy in elongation and does not produce seed. Some plants fail to make it above water at all, and die.⁴⁸

Anishinabek harvesters argue that water levels on Lake of the Woods must be maintained between 1058 and 1059 feet (322.48 and 322.78 metres) above sea-level for optimum *manomin* growth.⁴⁹ Records indicate that at no point between 1951 and 1955 – approximately five years before hydro’s arrival – were water levels at Norman Dam regulated to allow for optimum *manomin* growth. Information on water levels between 1945 and 1950 is not readily accessible, but records indicate that Lake of the Woods was kept above 1059 feet (322.78 metres) during June and July (the floating leaf stage) from 1941 to 1945.⁵⁰ Similar conditions led Edwards to note that “[o]wing to the raising of the Lake at the Norman Dam, for commercial purposes, this article of food is becoming very scarce.” As early as 1938, Edwards reported that “there is no wild rice on the Lake of the Woods proper.”⁵¹ With international sanction, Norman Dam regularly drowned *manomin* crops to regulate lake levels after (if not before) 1917. When the Hydro-Electric Power Commission arrived in Anishinabek territories at mid-century, Anishinabek families had been struggling to win both economic and food security for years. Meagre wages and low *manomin* yields were common among band members.

A paucity of sources makes it difficult to determine the effects of water regulation at Norman Dam on trapping and fishing activities along the Winnipeg River before the arrival of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Captain Frank Edwards, however,

⁴⁸ Kathi Avery and Thomas Pawlick, “Last Stand in Wild Rice Country,” *Harrowsmith* 3 (1979): 44.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Lake of the Woods 1941-1945,” *Lake of the Woods Control Board*, 18 June 2009, http://www.rlwwb-temp.lwcb.ca/permpdf/LW/5-Yr_LW-1941-1945.pdf; “Lake of the Woods 1951-1955,” *Lake of the Woods Control Board*, 18 June 2009, http://www.rlwwb-temp.lwcb.ca/permpdf/LW/5-Yr_LW-1951-1955.pdf.

⁵¹ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne.”

suggested that the gradual erosion of treaty rights by Ontario exacerbated economic challenges (e.g. seasonal underemployment, inability to manage native crops) faced by Anishinabek families. Provincial gaming laws “made it harder for the Indian” to subsist in the Winnipeg River drainage basin and prevented Anishinabek families from using country foods year-round. Edwards believed that poverty could be managed if “They [‘the Indians’] should all put up fish and meat for the winter, as they were wont to do in bygone days.” But, “the Ontario Game Laws make this [subsistence living] an impossibility.”⁵² Provincial game laws were not only enacted in the Kenora District, they were enforced. The local police court handed out various convictions for trapping violations during Edwards’ tenure as Indian Agent.⁵³ Frank Belmore confirmed that game wardens were “zealous” in-and-around Kenora. The provincial crackdown on Anishinabek trapping included searching *tikinaguns* – a cradle board used by Anishinabek women – for “illegal” furs during the winter months. Game wardens searched for “preheated muskrat skins [placed] around a child’s feet in the bottom of the *tikinagun*.”⁵⁴ Anishinabek women used muskrat skins to keep their children warm on trips to town. This childcare practice was eradicated around Kenora by mid-century as women “feared being hauled before the magistrate and convicted for out-of-season pelts.”⁵⁵ Zealous officials made it difficult for Anishinabek families to trap in response to need. It is no wonder that able-bodied Anishinabek men sought logging work during the winter months – Anishinabek families may now have required wages to purchase items that had previously been homemade.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ LOWM, Frank Belmore, “The Tikinagun,” undated, Folder: Anishinaabe – Essays and Papers.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Fishing activities on the Winnipeg River do not appear to have been seriously jeopardized until Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operations in 1958 (as detailed in Chapter 5). Anishinabek families' ability to fish commercially, however, may have been complicated by preferential licencing. Edwards explained that "Few tribes have commercial licences."⁵⁶ Without a commercial licence, one's ability to turn a profit was limited: "fish dealers are not allowed to purchase from Indians, unless the Indians have a licence."⁵⁷ Licence acquisition did little to alleviate competition with non-Indigenous fishermen for premium fishing grounds. Competition was fierce in-and-around reserve. Edwards complained that "licences are issued to white men to fish in waters, which are really Indian reserve waters."⁵⁸ Members of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve faced unexpected competition for territory from the Ontario Fish Hatchery. This facility opened in the early 1920s and closed its doors in 1961.⁵⁹ Employee testimony reveals that Ontario set two nets on the Winnipeg River for pickerel each spring. According to Max Foster, one net was set just below the Dalles Rapids. The second net was set about two kilometres away.⁶⁰ Provincial employees managed these nets from April or May until June. Nets that were set at Dalles Rapids were highly productive: the net below the Dalles averaged 800 pickerel a day, but Foster reports that on 10 May 1947 this net average was up to a thousand. He writes, "We had never seen it like that before. We had northern (pike) and 2 sturgeon which were about 150 pounds each. The [second net] averaged about 300 fish a day. This net did not produce like the upper net [in Dalles]."⁶¹ Biography

⁵⁶ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, "Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne."

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ LOWM, "Max Foster letter to the Lake of the Woods Museum, undated," Folder: Fish Hatchery Papers, File 2011.10.6.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

and oral testimony suggest that the site of the “upper net” had previously been used by the Martin family. Hazel McKeever-Martin claims that her mother, Matilda, used to set nets “50 to 100 ft. in length and 6 ft. or so in depth.”⁶² Matilda indicated that her family set their nets “maybe two [or] three miles from [Dalles 38C].”⁶³ Not only did provincial agents displace Anishinabek fishermen for up to three months per annum, no remuneration was offered to band members for reserve access. In 1938, Edwards complained that “the local fish hatchery takes pickerel spawn from Indian waters (Dalles Reserve) without paying anything to the Indians for it.”⁶⁴ Waged work, although discriminatory, provided necessary income in an era of increased resource competition, “zealous” game law enforcement, and declining *manomin* yields.

Unfortunately, the chances of full-time employment in Kenora were slim. Preferential hiring practices made it difficult for Anishinabek men and women to work in town. Complaints that Kenora-based businesses did not hire Anishinabek workers date back to the 1930s. Edwards suggested that Anishinabek pupils graduated from residential school with little hope of employment. Reflecting on high rates of unemployment, he asked, “What effort have we made to assimilate them into our civilization after bringing them up in it?”⁶⁵ Limited community effort had been made to integrate federal wards into town life. Some Anishinabek youth felt pressured to give up their treaty rights for employment purposes. John Kipling Jr., born at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve (1905-circa 1962), found work as a millwright at the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill. According to family lore, Kipling opted for enfranchisement to secure his position.

⁶² Martin-McKeever, *The Chief's Granddaughter*, 23.

⁶³ Elder Matilda Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 30 June 1972.

⁶⁴ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne.”

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Discriminatory hiring practices continued well into the 1960s – at the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill and elsewhere in town. One accomplished Indigenous typist simply stated that Kenora businesses “didn’t hire Indians.”⁶⁶ Records of the Mayor’s Indian Committee from 1968 indicate that few entrepreneurs responded to municipal requests to establish summer employment programs for Indigenous youth (had Edwards still been alive, he certainly would not have been surprised).⁶⁷ Anishinabek complaints concerning discriminatory hiring are substantiated by records from the Ministry of Communication and Social Services. In 1974, the Ministry identified Indian underemployment as one big problem in Kenora. Racism was the root cause: “native people are often not considered to be ‘good’ employees.”⁶⁸ Writing in 1969, Cree activist Harold Cardinal argued that such race-based hiring bars did, indeed, exist and were endemic across Canada.⁶⁹

The Indian Affairs Branch did little to relieve on-reserve poverty that had been aggravated by discriminatory hiring practices in-town, resource competition, low *manomin* yields, and seasonal underemployment. Federal relief adhered to the principles of less eligibility: federal relief was to be so meagre that needy Anishinabek families would have rather worked the lowest paying job than depend on the Indian Affairs Branch for support. The 1966 Hawthorn Report revealed that the Indian Affairs Branch did not consider relief “the right of any Indian” at mid-century. Instead relief was to be

⁶⁶ AO, “Minutes of the Mayor’s Indian Committee Meeting Held on Friday, April 26th, 1968,” File: Indians-Kenora, RG 29-01-1474, B334469.

⁶⁷ AO, W. Welldon, Director, Ministry of Communication and Social Services, Memorandum, “Action on Kenora, 6 August 1975,” File: Kenora Action Recommendations, RG 47-138, B212821.

⁶⁸ AO, “Minutes of the Mayor’s Indian Committee Meeting Held on Friday, April 26th, 1968.”

⁶⁹ Harold Cardinal further claimed that Canadian employers used stereotype to justify their discriminatory hiring practices. He wrote, “[E]mployers... use this stereotype [drunk Indian] as a lever against government enforcement of fair employment standards.” Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 5.

distributed “at the pleasure of the Branch to prevent suffering.”⁷⁰ According to historian Hugh Shewell, Indian agents in the post-war era found little pleasure in providing relief to able-bodied men.⁷¹ This same observation can be made in the Kenora District. Elder Larry Kabestra Sr. claims that his father, a seasonal labourer, “never depended on welfare.” He further explained that “There was no such thing as welfare on this reserve.”⁷² Elder Alice Kelly substantiated Kabestra’s claim during an interview. She believed that her family garden was essential to survival because “they used to have a hard time to get welfare assistance. They have to work. It was hard for them.”⁷³ Federal relief distributed in the immediate aftermath of World War II was most likely to be distributed in-kind. Policy documents written by Colonel H. M. Jones, superintendent of the Welfare Division, Indian Affairs Branch, recommended that “relief [be made] payable... through provision of food, fuel, clothing [and] household equipment.”⁷⁴ Shewell found that even these in-kind payments were restricted “in areas where game and fish are plentiful” and if the applicant was “physically capable of hunting or fishing.”⁷⁵ This policy did not seriously consider provincial game laws (or, in the Kenora District, provincial competition for fishing grounds). As early as 1938, Edwards argued that Indigenous people in-and-around Kenora “are becoming greatly discouraged and

⁷⁰ In particular, the 1966 Hawthorn Report quoted testimony provided by the head of the Welfare Division to the joint parliamentary committee in 1947. Quoted in Hugh Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 231.

⁷¹ More specifically, Hugh Shewell claims that “welfare expenditure remained extremely frugal [for] Indians thought capable of work.” Relief was often denied to these individuals immediately after the war. It is my assumption – given Shewell’s earlier emphasis on “able-bodied” applicants – that “capable” is associated with “able-bodied.” Ibid., 237.

⁷² Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

⁷³ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

⁷⁴ Colonel H. M. Jones, “Welfare and Relief Assistance for Indians” (1952)” quoted in Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive*, 239.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 242.

demoralized at being unable to earn a living.”⁷⁶ Poverty seemed to be a universal condition on reserve during the first half of the twentieth century.⁷⁷

In response to endemic on-reserve poverty, Robert Kabestra (Anamikipinens) of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve routinely asked his wife, “What are we going to do?”⁷⁸ The Hydro-Electric Power Commission provided at least one possible answer: work for pay on the development of Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Faced with few jobs, limited relief, and complicated harvested activities, dam labour offered a chance at economic security. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, a 54,000 kW facility, was to be built on the Winnipeg River. Caribou Falls Generating Station, a twin project of 67,500 kW, was to be built on the English River. These two construction projects created an employment boom in Anishinabek territory: road clearing work followed long-standing transportation routes. Oral testimony reveals that band members from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve learned about Whitedog Falls Generating Station through face-to-face encounters with Hydro employees; Anishinabek families and Hydro employees traversed the same spaces.⁷⁹ By 1956, the HEPC’s surveying team had been joined by approximately 310 men working on an all-weather road between Pistol Lake (three kilometres west of Minaki and very near Dalles 38C Indian Reserve) and the Whitedog Falls (four kilometres from Whitedog Indian Reserve). This same stretch of land (and river) was used by band members. Records from the Diocese of Keewatin (Anglican) reveal that

⁷⁶ LOWM, Captain Frank Edwards, Memorandum, “Indians in the Kenora District and Savanne.”

⁷⁷ Bryan Palmer echoes this claim. Palmer writes, “Native peoples made less money than whites, worked more irregularly, and were confined to the worst-remunerated and least-appreciated employments [in the 1960s].” Discriminatory hiring practices, Palmer explains, meant that “Indigenous peoples were the last in the long line looking for work and the first to be laid off, fired, or reduced to welfare dependency” (Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 374). The example of Anishinabek waged labour in the Winnipeg River drainage basin substantiates Palmer’s claim about national employment conditions for First Nations.

⁷⁸ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

⁷⁹ Dovetail Resources. Elder Jacob Strong, interview by Cuyler Cotton, Kenora, Ontario, 2 October 1992, Dalles 38C, Elder Interview Collection.

members from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve travelled downstream to witness important life events like baptisms and to marry.⁸⁰ Conversely, members of Whitedog Indian Reserve travelled upstream to trade.⁸¹ They also joined members of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve at Ena Lake and Corn Lake for berry picking.⁸² When Anishinabek families saw their lands being surveyed and cleared by the HEPC, they also saw employment opportunities. More importantly, work for pay was available in close proximity – just a boat’s ride away from the reserve. This was at a time when people travelled by motor boat, canoe, or by foot. The accessibility of employment was a major factor in attracting men to the HEPC construction sites. Paid work with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission did not require that men leave their reserve (and their families) for the tourist season (May to September).

“GET SOME GUYS IN THERE”: ANISHINABEK MEN’S WORK FOR THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER COMMISSION, 1955-1958

How did Anishinabek men find work with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission? The *Kenora Miner and News* published the HEPC’s development program in spring 1956. The HEPC emphasized the immensity of the project: over 150,000 HP needed to be installed in the Northwestern District. Roads needed to be cleared. Dams needed to be built. And, once Whitedog Falls Generating Station and Caribou Falls Generating Station were installed, transmission lines needed to be erected to carry electricity. The HEPC broke this immense project down into three mutually dependent units. The work program was envisioned as follows:

⁸⁰ Peter Holdsworth, “Social Network Analysis of Church Vital Records Related to Dalles 38C Indian Reserve near Kenora, Ontario in the Lake of the Woods District” (report, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, 2014), 8-10.

⁸¹ Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

⁸² Ibid.

1. **Whitedog Falls: --**
Access Road, Camp Construction, Cofferdams and Diversion Channel,
Dewatering, Power House
2. **Caribou Falls: --**
Access Road, Preliminary Investigations, Clearing, Cofferdams and Block Dams,
Power House
3. **Planning the Construction Job: --**
 - a. Sidings, warehouses, accommodation, crushing plants, concrete plants, concrete, placing, mechanic shop, carpenter shop, temporary power plants, hospitals, schools, cafeteria, commissary, recreation, fire and police protection, office and accounting.
 - b. Field Engineering
 - c. Planning and Cost Control
 - d. Safety.⁸³

This newspaper announcement suggested job availability in both dam work and community construction. Readers could imagine where, if at all, they might fit in the program. This newspaper announcement allowed able-bodied men to envision their contributions to the HEPC: readers became part of the program.

Oral testimony makes visible Anishinabek labour in all three units. However, Anishinabek labourers did not apply for work in response to newspaper announcements. Anishinabek responded primarily to word-of-mouth and/or sought employment through kin networks. For example, Bert Fontaine was approximately eighteen years old when the HEPC began its expansion project in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. The Indian Affairs Branch had refused to fund Fontaine's return to Sagkeeng, MB from residential school in Kenora (a distance of approximately 220 kilometres). Fontaine's experience was not unique. Indeed, as historian Brenda Child found in the neighbouring state of Michigan, "children were not returned home when expected, sometimes even after their

⁸³ "Work Commences at Caribou Falls," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 8 June 1956, 8.

terms of study had expired.”⁸⁴ The Indian Affairs Branch routinely denied residential school graduates funds required to return to their reserves to encourage assimilation into non-Native communities. Fontaine appears to have been stuck in Kenora by these same assimilationist goals. Fontaine needed wages to fund his return to Sagkeeng First Nation. He explains, “out of school, you need money, you know.”⁸⁵ The newspaper did not draw Fontaine’s attention to employment opportunities with the HEPC. Instead, Fontaine learned about job openings through word-of-mouth. He recollects, “I think it was, somebody mentioned there was two dams coming up. So, I went to the office.”⁸⁶ Fontaine applied at the HEPC in response to local buzz – rather than local reporting – about the project. Through informal channels, Fontaine learned that he might be able to finance his way home.

Robert (Anamikipinens) Kabestra, by contrast, was a father settled at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve in 1956. He had completed some schooling at St. Mary’s Residential School years earlier. Records held by the Notre Dame Parish in Kenora, Ontario, suggest that Anamikipinens originated from Shoal Lake Indian Reserve, but married Flora McLeod from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve at St. Mary’s in July 1940.⁸⁷ The married couple settled along the Winnipeg River, perhaps to be near McLeod’s family. It is unlikely that newspaper announcements prompted Anamikipinens’ job-seeking activities. Interviewed by telephone, Mitch Wolfe, chief editor at the *Kenora Miner and News*, indicated that circulation records have been lost. And yet, a review of the

⁸⁴ Brenda Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 51.

⁸⁵ Elder Bert Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Notre Dame Parish, Kenora, ON, “St. Mary’s, marriage certificate no. 11 (1940), Robert Kabestran [sic] – Flora McLeod.” Indian Family Records.

“Announcements” page from 1950 to 1958 suggests that local Anishinabek were excluded from the paper’s intended audience. The “Announcements” section of the newspaper targeted Kenora proper, Keewatin, and Jaffray Melick. Anamikipinens, it seems, responded to the physical proximity of Hydro work. The idea of approaching the HEPC to secure a temporary contract resulted in his eventual employ. Unlike Fontaine, Anamikipinens sought employment from the periphery.

Having secured his position, Anamikipinens worked to “get some of the guys [from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve] in there to work.”⁸⁸ He appears to have been first link in a chain of reserve workers. Once established on site, Anamikipinens arranged work-for-pay opportunities for family members. Anamikipinens first secured employment for relatives of his wife, Flora McLeod. Larry Kabestra explains that “the McLeods, most of them [got jobs] at Whitedog Dam.”⁸⁹ Work opportunities snowballed for Anishinabek men from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve in this manner: perform as an individual and then vouch for a relative. The use of kin networks to secure employment is not unique to Dalles 38C Indian Reserve; this strategy has been employed by other Indigenous groups. Anthropologist David Blanchard found that Mohawk steel workers frequently worked in family units. He identified “teenage boys working with their fathers and grandfathers” on industrial steel projects.⁹⁰ By contrast, non-Indigenous labourers relied more heavily on

⁸⁸ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ David Blanchard, “High Steel! The Kahnawake Mohawk and the High Construction Trade,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 11, no. 2 (1983): 41-60.

Similar trends are identified in the American southwest. Kurt Peters noted that the Laguna of New Mexico negotiated employment with the Atlantic & Pacific railway circa 1880. By World War II, a number of Laguna families had relocated to California for paid railway work. Women joined their husbands in “permanent rows of boxcar housing” that were established by the railway company. Female employment appears to have mirrored kin networks in Richmond, California. Peters writes, “As Laguna men joined the military ranks away from the Richmond yards, the women filled their jobs” (121). Peters, “Continuing

professional networks like the union dispatch to secure employment.⁹¹ Given that Anishinabek labour had been overwhelmingly seasonal in nature, few able-bodied men were registered to benefit from these professional organizations. For Anishinabek men from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, employment opportunities emerged from familial, not professional, connections.

Walk-ins and kin networks functioned as effective job-seeking strategies for Anishinabek men because the Hydro-Electric Power Commission did not have a rigorous hiring process for manual labourers (Anishinabek or non-Indigenous alike). Fontaine did not remember a formal interview process. He explains, “You just tell them what you can do and you do it.”⁹² Fontaine’s description of this casual hiring process was echoed by other employees. In the post-war era, the HEPC showed greater interest in bodies (male and able) than credentials for labour jobs.⁹³ Indeed, the HEPC expected that labourers would learn by doing. Necessary skills were to be developed on the job. Little time was lost between job application and job performance. The *Kenora Miner and News* suggests that men could be hired and working overnight.⁹⁴ The HEPC’s emphasis on learning-by-

Identity: Laguna Pueblo Railroaders in Richmond, California,” in *American Indians and the Urban Experience*, eds. Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2001), 117-26.

An edited collection, *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), by Doug Brugge, Timothy Benally and Esther Yazzie-Lewis suggests that kin networks also shaped Navajo employment in uranium mines in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. In 1995, Timothy Benally, retired director of the Uranium Education Center, interviewed George Tutt. As a youth, George Tutt used to herd sheep near a uranium mine in Oak Springs, Arizona. He used to “watch the men work” (13). Tutt’s father sought employment at the local mine. Tutt appears to have found work through this family network (13). George Tutt worked alongside other Navajo men that he knew (13, 17). Men from around Oak Springs, Arizona, may have been drawn to uranium mining by the proximity of paid work for companies like Vanadium Corporation of America (15).

⁹¹ Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers*, 90.

⁹² Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

⁹³ For example, John Grieve, a non-Indigenous employee interviewed in England, claims that “[t]he only words I spoke were to introduce myself and to thank him [the interviewer] for the job offer.” There is no indication that John Grieve worked in the Northwestern District between 1950 and 1958. And yet, his testimony reflects the HEPC’s casual hiring process in the post-war era. Ontario Hydro, *Ontario Hydro a Proud Tradition*, 45.

⁹⁴ “Young Hydro Worker is Pronounced Dead,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 16 June 1956, 1

doing made it possible for men like Fontaine and Anamikipinens to walk onto a job (and, in Anamikipinens' case, to secure jobs for others).

Anishinabek men filled a variety of positions. The earliest available labour job was clearing for roadwork. During the clearing phase, trees were felled. Anishinabek men may have owned the necessary equipment to participate in the process from pulp-cutting contracts. In this scenario, the HEPC would not need to purchase extra equipment to hire extra hands: it would have made financial sense to employ Anishinabek men to fell trees. Grubbing, that is, the clearing and removal of stumps and debris, followed. Newspaper records indicate that over 300 men were employed by road construction.⁹⁵ Available oral testimony from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve does not speak to Anishinabek labour on this part of the project.

Clearing work was also required to help create dam reservoirs. The *Kenora Miner and News* published more specific details about Caribou Falls Generating Station than Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Journalists noted that “[o]ne unusual aspect of the new development [is] the clearance of some 19,000 acres of land for the headpond” or reservoir.⁹⁶ The HEPC needed hands to complete “the most extensive [clearing] operation of its kind ever undertaken by the Commission.”⁹⁷ Anishinabek men were active on this phase of the project. Elder Charlie Fisher of One Man Lake Indian Reserve complained that the Hydro-Electric Power Commission hired Anishinabek men exclusively to fell trees, closing off alternative forms of employment. Fisher also felt that Anishinabek labour was confined to reserve. He claims, “We tried to get [talking about the project],

⁹⁵ “310 Men Now Working on Whitedog Project,” 1.

⁹⁶ “Caribou Falls Generating Station Adds More Power for Growing North,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 28 October 1958, 4.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

but they just slashed the reserve, cutting the trees down.... That's all we got to do. Just the reserve part. Other than that we didn't get any, any jobs."⁹⁸ Fisher felt that his job options with the HEPC were heavily restricted: as an Anishinabek worker he was confined to felling trees at One Mane Lake Indian Reserve.

Barriers against Indigenous employment for Whitedog Falls and Caribou Falls generating stations do not appear to have been universally applied. Hydro's big project required big machinery. The *Kenora Miner and News* reported that "Twenty hired trucks, ten bulldozers, six power shovels [were] working on the road and various types of machinery, such as rubber-tired tractors, all makes and sizes of trucks, jeeps, compressors and equipment to no end [could] be seen at the campsites."⁹⁹ J. A. Sherrett of the Kenora Chamber of Commerce, was impressed by the "huge cranes, fifteen ton capacity trucks, bulldozers [and] road graders" being used at Whitedog Falls Generating Station.¹⁰⁰ "Progress Reports" published by the *Kenora Miner and News* featured cranes and sheep-foot rollers.¹⁰¹ What is missing from these reports is a description of their drivers. Larry Kabestra claims that his father, Anamikipinens, drove trucks for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission.¹⁰² This appears to have been Anamikipinens' primary form of employ. Fontaine, by contrast, drove only once:

Fontaine: I'll tell you a funny one. One day this boss comes up to me. He says, 'Hey, Fontaine, can you drive a big truck?'
Just joking, I says, 'Yeah.'
'Well, see that big truck over there? Bring it up!'
[laughter]

⁹⁸ Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

⁹⁹ "310 Men Now Working on Whitedog Project," 1.

¹⁰⁰ J. A. Sherrett, "Impression of a Visit to Whitedog," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 26 October 1956, 1.

¹⁰¹ "Progress Scenes at Whitedog-Caribou Falls," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 4 September 1957, 4.

¹⁰² Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

So, I put in gear – and, I didn’t know the first thing about big trucks. I made it up.

Luby: You made it? You got it?

Fontaine: Oh, yeah. [Luby laughs].

Luby: Did he have you driving lots after that?

Fontaine: No, no, just the one time [laughter].¹⁰³

Fontaine’s driving experience appears to have been in response to an acute labour shortage; no truck drivers were available on site. Full-time or infrequently, Anishinabek men remember (or are remembered) driving the machines that helped to construct Whitedog Falls and Caribou Falls generating stations.

Big machinery required maintenance. The *Kenora Miner and News* claimed that "one of the main requirements [of a remote construction project] is to have a machine shop with facilities adequate to handle almost any repair or fabrication jobs imaginable."¹⁰⁴ Importing new equipment was both difficult and costly. Before the access road was completed, equipment had to be shipped to Minaki by train and then barged to the construction site.¹⁰⁵ In this environment, maintenance men were essential to cost management: they helped to ensure continuous operations by repairing equipment on site. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission invested considerable monies into building cutting-edge facilities for their mechanics. Men were provided with “a fully functioning modern machine shop for all repairs” – mechanics had access to the best tools.¹⁰⁶ Fontaine’s brother appears to have worked under the Mechanical Superintendent. He was primarily responsible for oiling the cranes. Fontaine, by contrast, worked on smaller

¹⁰³ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

¹⁰⁴ “Whitedog’s Machine Shop Carries Big Load,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 26 November 1956, 4.

¹⁰⁵ “The Caribou Pushing North from Whitedog,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 15 August 1956, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Sherrett, “Impression of a Visit to Whitedog,” 1.

machines. He monitored the manual oxygen supply for divers – a job, perhaps, more strongly associated with the Safety Division.

Machines maintained by Fontaine's brother and driven by Anamikipinens remade the Winnipeg and English rivers. Trucks and bulldozers moved over 188,000 tons of rock at Caribou Falls Generating Station alone. Rock featured heavily in the minds of the HEPC's planners. The *Kenora Miner and News* noted that "[the] road passes through some fairly rough country with numerous rock cuts" – blasting regularly predated construction for many jobs on the Canadian Shield. Blasting created a heavy burden of waste. Fontaine facilitated the disposal of this blasted rock. He explains, "[I was] spotting these trucks at night, where they dumped – like rock."¹⁰⁷ "'Dump here!'" was a call Fontaine made on the job.¹⁰⁸

Once the road was cleared and the dam was constructed, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission needed to transmit electricity to the Kenora Switching Station. Anishinabek labour was used both to clear ground for the transmission lines and to construct transmission towers. Fontaine worked on a six-man team to "assemble towers for hydro, the hydro line."¹⁰⁹ Most of his workmates were Hungarian immigrants. He appears to have been the only Anishinaabe crew member. Larry Kabestra remembers an Anishinabek work crew installing transmission towers through Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Kabestra identified none of these crew members by name. And yet, Fontaine's and Kabestra's testimony uncovers an Anishinabek presence across all units laid out by the HEPC's work program. From clearing to machine maintenance, Anishinabek

¹⁰⁷ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

labourers formed part of the team that helped to construct Whitedog Falls and Caribou Falls generating stations.

“YOU’D HEAR THE POPLAR TREES CRACK”: LIVING AND WORKING AT THE DAM SITE, 1950-1958

Seasonal vagaries complicated jobs worked by Anishinabek men and non-Indigenous men alike. The majority of less valued labour jobs, for which Anishinabek men were primarily hired, occurred outdoors. Anishinabek men were found felling trees in the bush (like Charlie Fisher) and spotting trucks (like Bert Fontaine). And, the Northwestern District is cold: the temperature dips well below 0 degrees Celsius for up to six months per annum. Bill Miller worked with a travelling line maintenance crew in the Northwestern District in the 1950s. He remembered winters so cold that “[y]ou’d hear the poplar trees crack.”¹¹⁰ Freezing weather was required to complete certain construction jobs. For example, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission scheduled much of the initial transmission line work – like construction by Fontaine – during the winter months. The HEPC needed its crews to work during the winter so that the line could be erected through swampland.¹¹¹ Winter work reduced the risk of sinking (and potentially drowning) in bio-silt. Fresh water marshes average 0.3 to 1.8 metres in depth. With the ground frozen, Anishinabek men could move more freely through the construction site. Records indicate that work on the transmission line proceeded in December 1956 as planned: “Roads have been bulldozed through the snow in order to complete the work...

¹¹⁰ Ontario Hydro, *Ontario Hydro a Proud History*, 29.

¹¹¹ OPG, “Programming and Control Department: Conference Report, 16 November 1955,” Folder: Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10901, Item 155, OHSC – Central records 8-3-242, Engineering – Head Office – Hydraulic Generation Department.

before the frost leaves the ground.”¹¹² Winter 1956 was particularly harsh. The average maximum temperature was -12 degrees Celsius. The average minimum temperature was -22.5 degrees Celsius (without accounting for the wind chill). When line construction began in December 1956, the bulldozer needed to clear 36 centimetres of snow from the ground. By February 1957, an additional 35 centimetres had accumulated. A total of 71 centimetres was on the ground while Fontaine worked towards line completion. Managerial staff acknowledged that hydro crews were working under “extremely difficult conditions.”¹¹³ Extreme cold was a workplace reality for many Anishinabek labourers and their peers.

Work was both environmentally and physically challenging for manual labourers. Shifts could last for up to ten hours per day and men worked an average of 50 hours per week. Given delays caused by harsh winter conditions in 1956, A. Gusen, a Program Planning and Control Engineer, asked R. G. Wykes, Construction Engineer, “to [step] up the construction program to advance the in-service date” of Whitedog Falls Generating Station.¹¹⁴ Wykes declined. His work crew was already taxed. Wykes explained “the job is already working 53-hours per week.” Manual labourers could be scheduled to work day or night. Wykes indicated that he had a “night shift on the most critical parts.”¹¹⁵ The HEPC officials approved of shift rotations, claiming that maximum production could be

¹¹² William Noden, "Ontario Hydro Activities," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 25 February 1957, unpaginated.

¹¹³ OPG, “F. Grosvenor, Estimate and Cost Engineer, to G. D. Floyd, Assistant General Manager – Engineering, Memorandum, re: Whitedog Falls Generating Station – Forecast of Final Cost, 6 December 1955,” Box 91.119, 11-23-471, Folder 010-Whitedog Falls.

¹¹⁴ OPG, “R. G. Wykes, Construction Engineer-Generation, to A. Gusen, Program Planning and Control Engineer, 18 June 1957,” Box 91.119, 11-23-471, Folder 010-Whitedog Falls.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

achieved by running two ten-hour shifts per day.¹¹⁶ As a result, construction sites were active “24-hours per day for several days at a time” when concrete was being poured into the dam.¹¹⁷ Oral testimony indicates that Anishinabek men accepted shifts around the clock. Fontaine remembers spotting trucks at night while Larry Kabestra remembers his father leaving for work in the mornings.¹¹⁸

Many labour jobs, worked over long hours, were dangerous – even in the summer months. Anishinabek men regularly worked near open water and, according to some reports, on extraordinarily steep river banks.¹¹⁹ Anyone hired at Whitedog Falls Generating Station worked on an incline. The water below was deep, unusually so, for dam works. *The Kenora Daily Miner and News* noted that “The cofferdams are somewhat unusual in that they are being placed in very deep water.”¹²⁰ During the early stages of construction, supervisors lacked sufficient information to accurately describe river conditions to their staff. Engineers struggled to accurately gauge the depth of Winnipeg River. They experimented with new technologies to sound the river bottom. Eventually, engineers confirmed that water was between fifteen and eighteen metres deep at Whitedog Falls.¹²¹ While the HEPC acknowledged the dangers of dam work, less valued labourers were provided with limited safety training. Fontaine chuckled when asked to describe safety protocol during his interview. He summarized, “Don’t go near the

¹¹⁶ OPG, “Program Planning and Control Department Conference Report, re: Whitedog Falls Generating Station, 4 December 1956,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-10901, Item 155, OHSC – Central Records 8-3-242, Engineering – Head Office – Hydraulic Generation Department.

¹¹⁷ OPG, “R. G. Wykes to A. Gusen, 18 June 1957.”

¹¹⁸ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012. See also Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

¹¹⁹ OPG, “Program Planning and Control Department Conference Report, re: Whitedog Falls Generating Station, 22 February 1956,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-L, Item 112, 8-3-242.

¹²⁰ “Cofferdam Construction Proceeds in Spite of Difficult Conditions,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 17 May 1956, 1.

¹²¹ Ibid.

rapids.”¹²² Safety practices – much like work-related skills – were picked up on the job. The power of Winnipeg River, for example, was reinforced when Fontaine’s cousin, Clifford, fell into the water. Luckily, “he had a life jacket.”¹²³ This accident showed both water danger and the importance of personal flotation devices (PFDs). This lesson, however, was not universally shared among staff members.

The *Kenora Miner and News* reported on two drownings from 1955 to 1958. Richard H. Bachmeier, aged 49, died at work at Caribou Falls Generating Station. An anonymous journalist speculated that Bachmeier fell off a “spray machine on the upstream side of the dam.”¹²⁴ Unlike Clifford, Bachmeier was not fished out of the river. It is unclear whether Bachmeier was wearing a PFD. Later that year, Robert Neil Farling, aged 31, “lost his life by drowning at the falls.”¹²⁵ It is suggested that Farling died during his leisure time: “his abandoned boat was found on a beach.”¹²⁶ While the Hydro-Electric Power Commission was not responsible for its employees after hours, Farling did not seem to adopt Clifford’s personal safety protocol. Indeed, it seems that individuals developed their safety practices specific to their role (e.g. the use of PFDs) because the HEPC placed the onus for safety on individual labourers. This tendency was reinforced when W. I. Clifton of the Accident Prevention Division visited Whitedog Falls and Caribou Falls generating stations to conduct a workplace review. His review may have been prompted by the deaths of Bachmeier and Farling. Clifton recommended, in part, that Operations install a dangerous water sign. It appears that superiors did not discuss water safety with staff members. Instead, labourers were to acknowledge the sign and to

¹²² Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ “Hydro Worker Drowns at Caribou Falls,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 12 July 1958, 1.

¹²⁵ “Man Drowned at Whitedog,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 20 October 1958, 1.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

act accordingly. By installing signage, the Commission transferred responsibility for workplace safety to individual labourers, believing that observant workers could (and should) manage the risk they faced.¹²⁷

Safety norms for dam labourers do not seem to have improved substantively over the next decade. Fontaine repeated the message “Don’t go near the water!” when describing workplace safety in the 1950s. In 1968, when Larry Kabestra began working on Norman Dam, Fontaine’s experiential knowledge was now explicitly shared by supervisory staff. Kabestra explains, “That’s how you are trained – to be really careful where you step and how you approach the screen.” It is important to note that Norman Dam was owned by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, not the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. And yet, in Kabestra’s testimony, we find limited change in “best practice” in hydroelectric generation. As in the 1950s, employees learned best practices on the job. Kabestra stated, “You get used to it.”¹²⁸ Labourers learned how to

¹²⁷ This division of responsibility was further reflected by the distribution of safety awards. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission introduced the awards program in the Northwestern District in 1952 – a few years before construction began at the generating stations. Headquarters developed the award as an incentive to reduce on-the-job injuries, reinforcing once again that employee choice influenced safety outcomes. The award, a plaque, was provided to the “foreman and his crew for having completed a calendar year without a lost time injury.” Award distribution reinforced that safety was to be ensured from the bottom-up. R. M. MacDonald, whose crew received four successive awards (1952-1956), reinforced the idea that each worker was responsible for his safety. In his acknowledgement speech, Macdonald “remind[ed] them [his workers] that it was through their efforts that he was able to receive the safety award.” Safety, according to the HEPC, was determined more by employees’ safe conduct than work environment. “Presentation of Safety Awards Made to Hydro Men,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 3 August 1956, 1, 6.

Workplace safety was also made the responsibility of individual workers in other energy industries (e.g. atomic) in the post-World War II era. George Tutt, employed as a uranium miner around 1949, testified that “the Navajo workers did not wear any safety things, like steel-toe shoes or any kind of protection against mining. Some [wore] moccasins” (13). Considerable variability in practice existed. Standard work items included “wheelbarrows, shovels, and picks” whereas safety gloves and boots were not made readily available to Navajo employees of the Vanadium Corporation of America (14). George Lapahie began working as a uranium miner in 1955. His testimony helps to explain variability in employee safety practices. Lapahie explains, “Safety was not told to us.... Safety we did not know about, we did not know what it meant, and we never learned about it” (81). Interview transcripts have been published in Brugge, Benally, and Yazzie-Lewis, eds. *The Navajo People and Uranium Mining*.

¹²⁸ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

move through the site and confidence increased with exposure. An emphasis on experiential learning is also reflected in the dangers that dam labourers raised. Fontaine, reflecting on Clifford's near-drowning, discussed the importance of keeping a safe distance from the water (and, of wearing a life jacket).¹²⁹ Kabestra downplayed the risk of drowning and emphasized the threat of being crushed inside the dam. Kabestra explained, "Well, to go against that screen – you'd have a hard time getting out of there! Bang [Kabestra moves his hand to imitate moving water]! You'd be stuck in there."¹³⁰ In each example, the potential of water to kill is explicit. But Kabestra identified water current as the greatest risk, whereas Fontaine focused more on drowning. This reflects the HEPC's continued emphasis on the labourer to maintain his own safety. For undervalued labourers like Fontaine and Kabestra there was no universal safety standard. How general labourers defined and managed risk related directly to their lived experiences.

**"SO THAT THE PEOPLE CAN MAKE THEIR LIVING FROM THESE RESERVES":
ANISHINABEK LABOURERS' EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVES**

Anishinabek labourers learned that working for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission could be dangerous; they discovered that the hours would be long; and, Anishinabek labourers knew that work would be performed under extreme environmental conditions. What incentive did Anishinabek labourers have for assuming these risks? At least 30 years of suppressed economic activity increased the desirability of accessible paid work. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission offered more than an income opportunity. Anishinabek families attached higher meaning to their jobs. For displaced youth, such as Bert Fontaine, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission provided the wages

¹²⁹ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

¹³⁰ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

needed for family reunification. For local labourers, such as Robert (Anamikipinens) Kabestra, the HEPC provided the wages needed to subsist on reserve.

Let us begin with Bert Fontaine. As previously indicated, the Indian Affairs Branch removed Fontaine from Sagkeeng First Nation, MB, to attend residential school in Kenora, ON. To finance his return to Sagkeeng First Nation, Fontaine moved to a temporary camp near the site of Caribou Falls Generating Station. Geographical isolation meant that municipal services were unavailable. Fontaine remembered, “We lived in tents.”¹³¹ Administrators bemoaned staff conditions, emphasizing a “lack of accommodation and necessary sanitary facilities to house and feed the estimated manpower requirements” during the early stages of development.¹³² For many non-Indigenous labourers, moving into these remote work camps meant “leaving friends and family behind.”¹³³ A counter-narrative emerges for Anishinabek labourers like Fontaine. Some of Fontaine’s relatives –brothers and cousins – had also been relocated from Sagkeeng First Nation to Kenora. These relatives also needed to finance their return journey. And so, Fontaine was not alone in Kenora. Fontaine was stationed with his cousin Clifford on the English River. While Fontaine rarely saw his uncle, Fontaine knew that he could be found working at the main camp for Caribou Falls Generating Station. Fontaine also had family at Whitedog Falls. He explains, “Most of my brothers were [working] in Kenora.”¹³⁴ Two of Fontaine’s brothers worked at Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Hydro camps thus provided a space for displaced relatives to

¹³¹ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

¹³² OPG, “Program Planning and Control Department Conference Report, re. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, 22 February 1956,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, FP3-L, Item 112, 8-3-242.

¹³³ Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers*, 90.

¹³⁴ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

reconnect – an alternative to home in which to strengthen familial bonds. For Fontaine, work was valued both as a vehicle for family reunification, as well as earning money.

For local Anishinabek labourers, such as Anamikipinens, work with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission ensured the continuous occupation of reserve lands. Anamikipinens believed that labour agreements would help to maintain the territorial integrity of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Poor economic conditions had forced band members to leave Dalles 38C Indian Reserve in search of seasonal employment (e.g. fishing guides often left from late spring to early fall). Sometimes poor economic conditions resulted in long-term displacement. John Kipling Jr., for example, migrated from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve to Winnipeg, MB, for waged employment. Kipling later secured a permanent position with the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company in Kenora. His family would not return to Dalles 38C Indian Reserve as full-time residents. Larry Kabestra Sr. remembered that prolonged economic hardship displaced multiple families. He claims that “the life of the reserve was totally damaged. People started moving away.”¹³⁵

The prolonged absence of band members facilitated the claiming of reserve lands by the *waiâbishkiwedig*. When band members left Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, they risked losing their ancestral lands. Anamikipinens, for example, returned from his trap line to discover that a Manitoban cottager has asserted ownership of Anamikipinens’ summer grounds. The *waiâbishkiwedig* had long taken advantage of seasonal rounds to claim Anishinabek territories as their own. Such practices were not unique to the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Indeed, as historian Paige Raibmon noted of British Columbia, “more than one Ahousaht family came home [from seasonal labour] to find a White man

¹³⁵ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

occupying their home.”¹³⁶ This practice stimulated Anamikipinens’ fear that prolonged absences by band members would result in the dissolution of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Paid work with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, however, allowed Anishinabek men to continuously occupy reserve lands. Anamikipinens recognized that seasonal absences facilitated the taking of Anishinabek lands by the *waiâbishkiwedig*.

Anamikipinens sought to protect his ancestral lands. If we accept that boundaries are performed – that to occupy space is to claim space – then the performance of daily life is, at root, an act of sovereignty. Anamikipinens believed that employment was the most effective means to “keep it [the reserve] alive.”¹³⁷ Work had higher meaning than pay. Work was seen as a strategy to protect Anishinabek homelands.

For a time, paid work with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission allowed Anishinabek families to subsist on reserve. Larry Kabestra remembers that Anishinabek labourers made “good money.” Documents shared by Ontario Power Generation did not specify how much was earned by Anishinabek labourers per pay cycle. Labourers earned sufficient income, however, to allow Anamikipinens to “coax some of them [band members] to stay, to try to stay” on reserve and work at Whitedog Falls Generating Station.¹³⁸ Work also created new opportunities to socialize. Anishinabek labourers from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve worked similar shifts (approximately ten hours per day for up to 53 hours per week). As a result of their shared schedules, Anishinabek labourers began travelling to and from work together. Larry Kabestra remembers the men from his

¹³⁶ Paige Raibmon, “Unmaking Native Space: A Genealogy of Indian Policy, Settler Practice, and the Microtechniques of Dispossession,” in *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest*, edited by John Borrows and Alexandra Harmon (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 63.

¹³⁷ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

community piling into the same boat each morning. They travelled, united, to the work site. Bert Fontaine also remembers travel as a communal activity. He and Clifford “used to...come to work, we used to come on the barge.”¹³⁹ These journeys, shared daily, created (and, later reinforced) a sense of shared purpose: Anamikipinens and his team were affirming their territorial grasp on reserve lands. Fontaine and his cousin were financing their return home (familial reunification).

IMMENSE, ORDERLY, EFFICIENT: COMMUNITY AT WHITEDOG FALLS GENERATING STATION AND CARIBOU FALLS GENERATING STATION

The immediate benefits Anishinabek families received from the Hydro-Electric Power Commission depended, in part, on whether one was born in the Winnipeg River drainage basin or displaced by the Indian Affairs Branch. The HEPC established camps for its overwhelmingly transient male workforce. Records indicate that its permanent camp at Whitedog Falls featured a “cafeteria, fire hall, school, hospital... and recreation facilities.”¹⁴⁰ Journalists described the HEPC’s work camps as modern, clean, and orderly. Historian Megan Stanley argued that BC Hydro designed camps to keep its “mostly male and transient workforce... moderately comfortable and to feed them enough to keep them contented, even if a little bored.”¹⁴¹ The HEPC seems to have shared this design goal. Entertainment facilities at Whitedog Falls included bowling alleys, pool tables, and movies.¹⁴² And yet, Kenora residents anticipated that the HEPC workers would grow bored. Kenora-based businesses prepared for “these men...to come

¹³⁹ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

¹⁴⁰ “310 Men Now Working on Whitedog Project,” 1.

¹⁴¹ Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers*, 216.

¹⁴² Sherrett, “Impression of a Visit to Whitedog,” 1, 10.

out to the larger shopping centre on occasional weekends” for excitement.¹⁴³ Displaced youth like Fontaine were more likely to live in and use these built communities; they were unable to commute home. Anishinabek labourers living on nearby reserves were less likely to use camp recreation facilities. Their presence at the HEPC campsites was temporary and driven by need. At least some Anishinabek families purchased groceries from the HEPC’s camp store.¹⁴⁴

The HEPC also serviced displaced Anishinabek labourers at its food facilities. The Fontaine family would have been provided with access to “the huge cafeteria dining room” while on contract. The HEPC committed to providing its labour force with “substantial meals.”¹⁴⁵ Meals were served cafeteria-style. Given the heavy caloric demand of labour jobs, meals were carbohydrate and protein heavy. A sample meal included soup, a choice of three kinds of meat, vegetables, gravy, raisin pie, and coffee. The bakery alone produced 1,000 loaves of bread daily.¹⁴⁶ There is no indication, however, that general labourers hired from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve were provided with cafeteria access. Given their daily commute to and from the worksite, it seems most likely that local Anishinabek labourers ate meals at home. This may also help to explain the recorded use of grocery stores by Anishinabek families. Indeed, local Anishinabek labourers operated at the periphery of the HEPC’s camp community. Integration and the right to access food and entertainment facilities seem to have depended on whether one had accommodation in the camp.

¹⁴³ “An Economic Necessity,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 20 June 1956, 1.

¹⁴⁴ “13 Year Old Indian Drowned Thursday,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 2 May 1958, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Sherrett, “Impression of a Visit to Whitedog,” 1, 10.

¹⁴⁶ Stuart King, “Kenora Chamber Members See Huge Power Development,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 26 October 1956, 1, 10. See also Sherrett, “Impression of a Visit to Whitedog,” 1, 10.

For men who lived on site, the camp was more likely to be divided by class (i.e. education and perceived skill) than perceived race. J. A. Sherrett, a representative of the Kenora Chamber of Commerce, was “immediately impressed with the quiet efficiency, orderliness, and immensity of this large power development [at Whitedog Falls Generating Station].”¹⁴⁷ The HEPC designated housing according to one’s position with the Commission. The HEPC provided 1,100 square foot houses to the Construction Manager, Construction Superintendent, and Field Engineer(s).¹⁴⁸ Families with three or more children were provided with a 750-square-foot home, whereas families with fewer than three children lived in Commission-owned trailers. The HEPC generally hired displaced Anishinabek labourers for less valued jobs (e.g. felling trees, spotting truck). As a result, no identified status Indians lived in the big houses at Whitedog Falls or Caribou Falls generating stations. Displaced labourers were more likely to be accommodated with other manual workers in tent villages or staff houses. Differences in perceived skill, however, could be exacerbated by perceived race. As Harold Cardinal complained, “[W]e see the white society training its young people for life in the professional and technological world of the space age, we find the government attempting to train our people in skills that have not been required since the industrial revolution.”¹⁴⁹ As a result of education barriers created by the Indian Affairs Branch, few

¹⁴⁷ Sherrett, “Impression of a Visit to Whitedog,” 1, 10.

¹⁴⁸ OPG, “Director of Construction to G. D. Floyd, Assistant General Manager – Engineering, re: Whitedog Falls Power Development: Provision of Staff Housing, 1 December 1955,” Box 91.119, 11-23-471, Folder 010-Whitedog Falls.

¹⁴⁹ Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 13.

Kulchyski, writing on Manitoba Hydro, allocates blame for employment inequity with the company instead of the federal government. He claimed that racial bars are (and long have been) active at the Grand Rapids Generating Station located on the Saskatchewan River. Manitoba Hydro built the Grand Rapids Generating Station between 1960 and 1968. Kulchyski associates “highly paid technical and administrative work” with “non-Native southerners” and “low-paid and menial” labour with Cree bodies. Kulchyski, “Flooded and Forgotten: Hydro development makes a battleground of northern Manitoba.”

Anishinabek labourers received the education needed to compete for managerial positions. Fontaine's uncle managed to become a tradesman. He worked as a pipe fitter and a plumber at Caribou Falls Generating Station's main camp.¹⁵⁰ He was the most skilled Anishinabek labourer identified by interviewees.

Despite the geographic visibility of differences in perceived skill, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission attempted to establish a shared mission among its employees. Democratizing attempts – or efforts to unite employees working across units – can be seen in the establishment of a staff newspaper. The HEPC launched *Whitedog World* to circulate among its 600 employees in 1956. The newspaper helped to strengthen community by reporting on (or alerting employees to) camp events. These events were also democratic in nature. For example, the Whitedog Scouts welcomed boys regardless of their parent's (likely their father's) position at camp. Media reports suggest that Scout Leaders instructed camp boys in fishing, swimming, and hiking. At least seven boys were actively involved with the program. It is unlikely that Anishinabek families benefited from this "open" children's program. For the majority of the year, the Indian Affairs Branch boarded Anishinabek youth at one of three nearby residential schools: Cecilia Jeffrey (Presbyterian), St. Mary's (Catholic), or Mackenzie (Catholic). While Indian Affairs began to integrate Indigenous children across Canada into regular school in 1940, Anishinabek children in the Winnipeg River drainage basin rarely had the benefit of an option; they simply lacked housing in-town and, until the HEPC's arrival, many reserves lacked access roads.¹⁵¹ Residential schools in Kenora remained active long after the

¹⁵⁰ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

¹⁵¹ Legacy of Hope Foundation, "Reclaiming History: The Residential School System in Canada [Timeline]," *Where Are the Children?*, accessed 25 July 2015, <http://wherearethechildren.ca/timeline/research/>.

HEPC's arrival. While Whitedog Scouts was not necessarily designed for a non-Indigenous audience, federal education programs racialized enlistment. The HEPC's attempts to reduce social barriers between employees were made ineffective by schools jointly operated by the Indian Affairs Branch and the Catholic or Presbyterian Church.

The Hydro-Electric Power Commission's attempts to improve community life for Anishinabek peoples *specifically* (general band members rather than the HEPC employees) were also largely ineffective. Anishinabek labourers were disconnected from the Commission's decision-making body. Work for pay thus did little to improve the Commission's understanding of Anishinabek needs. The Indian Affairs Branch represented Anishinabek interests in official attempts to engage band members. Take, for example, the construction of an Anglican church for Whitedog (Islington) Indian Reserve. Whitedog Falls Generating Station is located approximately four kilometres away from Whitedog Indian Reserve. The HEPC wanted to offer a "gift" to band members for sharing their lands. Consultation resulted in a land grant. Eric Law, Indian Agent in Kenora, gave the HEPC reserve land for church construction. With federal encouragement, the HEPC designed a fully operational church, including an office, storage, organ platform, seating area, and chancel.¹⁵² A review of church records, however, makes clear that a new building would do little to enhance community life on reserve. The Anglican Church had struggled to attract Anishinabek congregants since its establishment in 1851. In 1891, fewer than 100 Anishinabek peoples used Anglican facilities at Whitedog (Islington). In 1909, there is no record to quantify church attendance. The historical timeline kept by the Diocese of Keewatin noted only that "few

¹⁵² Diocese of Keewatin, Kenora, ON, R. E. Norris, "Whitedog Falls G. S. Church for Islington Indian Reserve [architectural drawing], 24 January 1958," Folder: Whitedog – St. Mary's Correspondence.

Indians” used Anglican facilities at that time. By 1912, the mission received so little support that it closed. G. Smith, head of the Islington Mission, assumed that “it is impossible to reach them [Indians].”¹⁵³ Bishop Hives found “very little participation in the Services by the People” in 1954, suggesting that there was some attempt to revitalize the mission.¹⁵⁴ And yet, the majority of band members had rejected Christianity and continued to participate in the Midewiwin Society.

Anishinabek use of Anglican facilities appears to have been largely incidental – the Diocese of Keewatin established itself at the junction of the Whitedog and Winnipeg rivers (a high traffic area). Indeed, the mission was built near an “Old Indian Burial Ground,” suggesting long-standing use of the river junction.¹⁵⁵ Band members displayed little interest in Christianity in their day-to-day activities at Whitedog Indian Reserve. In a failed attempt to build community, the HEPC prompted the expropriation of reserve land for an unwanted house of worship. The failure of the HEPC’s gift to serve Whitedog Indian Reserve is evident in its disuse and eventual destruction. In 1971 – just twelve years after its construction – the Diocese of Keewatin requested that Ontario Hydro cut power to the mission house. Three years later, Clarence Stuebe reported that band members had “badly vandalized” Anglican holdings.¹⁵⁶ The HEPC’s gift did not align with the spiritual needs of the community. And thus, the church was not treated as a sacred space. Band members did not treat the “gift” with deference. Instead, the HEPC’s church stood as a symbol of territorial expropriation without active consultation. Eric

¹⁵³ Diocese of Keewatin, “White Dog or Islington [Historical Timeline], undated,” Folder: “Whitedog – St. Mary’s Historical.”

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Diocese of Keewatin, “R. W. Landry, Superintendent of Reserves and Trusts, Kenora District, to The Right Reverend H. J. P. Allan, 25 August 1982,” Folder: Whitedog – St. Mary’s Correspondence.

¹⁵⁶ Diocese of Keewatin, “Clarence Stuebe to the Anglican Church [unspecified recipient], 29 September 1975,” Folder: Whitedog – St. Mary’s Correspondence.

Law had reduced reserve holdings – an action that aligned more strongly with federal goals to assimilate (i.e. Christianize) Indian wards than the HEPC's goals to build community on reserve. By 1982, the Mission House was unoccupied, leaving lands vested in the Synod Diocese of Keewatin unoccupied.

While the Hydro-Electric Power Commission's attempts at community outreach overwhelmingly failed, Anishinabek families developed community goals independent of the Commission. Oral testimony at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve suggests that Anishinabek labourers (like Anamikipinens) envisioned a future in which able-bodied males participated more actively in the wage economy; they hoped for the gift of continual employment. Anamikipinens worked to establish a foothold in the water resource industry that would ensure the socio-economic stability of reserve. Larry Kabestra, born in 1958, proudly remembers his father working for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. He remembers band members hard at work: "They were out. They used to be all standing there. They were really [something] -- some of them used to build those towers and they'd climb them." Kabestra identified Anishinabek labourers as brave and agile. He identified these characteristics as both masculine and desirable and a model to emulate. In her analysis of Algonquin families, historian Kim Anderson noted that "childhood was a time to begin to learn the disciplines of the community in anticipation of becoming a full contributing member."¹⁵⁷ As a child, Kabestra learned that work for pay with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission was valuable. From his father, Kabestra also learned that work for pay helped to maintain reserve boundaries. Able-bodied men

¹⁵⁷ Kim Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 66.

could use their strength and agility to earn wages that would protect ancestral lands.

Anishinabek labourers provided the youth with a new vision of masculine work.

As an adult, Larry Kabestra sought employment with the Department of Lands and Forests. He worked primarily as a firefighter, but also cleaned the screens on Norman Dam. Kabestra saw himself as participating in a family tradition at Norman Dam. He walked a road that his father, Anamikipinens, had blazed. When Kabestra cleaned the screens, he displayed the same bravery as his forefathers: the linemen. Linemen hung from transmission towers. Larry overlooked Winnipeg River with nothing more than a rope to prevent his fall.¹⁵⁸ Larry was not alone in seeking work with the Department of Lands and Forests. He worked alongside his brother, Paul. But, he was also joined by other Anishinabek youth: "[The] Ogemahs.... Leo Ogemah, Charlie Ogemah, Fred Ogemah, Langton Ogemah... and, uh, Andy White... was there with his brothers.... Andersons."¹⁵⁹ Kabestra emphasized that not all Anishinabek labourers worked on Norman Dam. Nevertheless, Kabestra was surrounded by Anishinabek youth who saw screen-cleaning at Norman Dam as valuable, professional work. It was, Kabestra suggested, a good job. It was, Kabestra suggested, a family tradition.

CONCLUSION

During the 1950s, Anishinabek men took up work for pay with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Local labourers sought wages to prevent the occupation of reserve lands by the *waiâbishkiwedig* by ensuring continuous Anishinabek presence. Displaced youth sought wages to finance their return home. In each case, Anishinabek men sought employment to strengthen their home communities, head by head. The long-term

¹⁵⁸ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

effectiveness of Anishinabek labour strategies, however, was compromised when the Hydro-Electric Power Commission evacuated the Winnipeg River drainage basin.

As early as September 1958, the HEPC began to dismantle its labour camps. The *Kenora Miner and News* predicted that bustling hydro communities would become “ghost towns” as the HEPC labourers “moved to other projects.”¹⁶⁰ Site evacuation (and the deconstruction of work camps) was not unique to Ontario. Historian Megan Stanley noted that Mica Camp (a BC Hydro holding) dropped from 1,500 to 150 workers during the final year(s) of construction. Many labourers from Mica Camp simply moved to the next construction site.¹⁶¹ But, this was not a viable option for Anishinabek labourers who took work-for-pay to stay on reserve. Men like Anamikipinens feared relocation and sought local jobs to prevent land grabs by the *waiâbishkiwedig*. The HEPC, however, was determined to provide provincial energy security – it was not directly interested in stimulating local employment. The Commission and its general Anishinabek labourers had developed, in relative isolation, conflicting long-term goals.

Public announcements emphasize the Hydro-Electric Power Commission’s commitment to Ontarians. The HEPC’s slogan, dating back to the 1900s, read “power for the people” – and, the public at large would be served by Whitedog Falls and Caribou Falls generating stations. Commitment to “the people” did not require a commitment to federal wards (Anishinabek general labourers). And so, the HEPC made no attempt to maintain the hiring of Indigenous people over the long-term. Oral testimony suggests that Anishinabek labourers –hired primarily to fell trees and drive trucks – were not trained to operate permanent equipment installed at the generating stations. In the 1960s, John

¹⁶⁰ “Dismantling Operations Almost Compete at Caribou Falls,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 27 September 1958, 1.

¹⁶¹ Stanley, *Voices from Two Rivers*, 224.

Gordon, Acting Director of Indian Affairs, claimed that “Many Indians, particularly older ones, lacked both the training and the inclination which would have enabled them to make the transition [to industrial labour] satisfactorily.”¹⁶² Interviewees suggested that some Anishinabek labourers had “the inclination,” but few of them were given the necessary support to ensure their competitiveness of the job market. The HEPC hired Anishinabek men to perform less valued jobs; the Commission was interested in working their bodies. The HEPC’s failure to invest in skills development required that Whitedog Falls Generating Station became one of the first remotely-controlled stations in Ontario. It was argued that no “satisfactory” work candidates lived in close proximity to the dam. By moving operations to Kenora, the HEPC compromised Anishinabek plans for economic stability on reserve. It is for this reason, in part, that Larry Kabestra defined himself as a potential beneficiary of dam labour but was unable to secure a job with the Commission.

Anishinabek labourers worked to modify the river environment. Socio-economic stability on reserve, so earnestly desired by Anishinabek labourers, was further complicated by environmental changes. It is important to remember that the Hydro-Electric Power Commission did not clearly communicate anticipated changes to band members. It is unlikely that Anishinabek labourers anticipated the extent of flood damages that they facilitated. Whitedog Falls Generating Station permanently raised water levels on the Winnipeg River upstream of Whitedog Falls, collapsing an already fragile subsistence economy at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve.

Whitedog Falls Generating Station further compromised already reduced *manomin* yields between Whitedog Falls and the northern outlet of Lake of the Woods.

¹⁶² John Gordon quoted in Dunstan, “Canadian Indians Today,” 13.

One Man Lake and Whitedog reserves claimed an annual loss of \$10,500.00 in ricing income as early as 1959.¹⁶³ A comparable record of complaint from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve has yet to be found. And yet, oral informants testify that they have been unable to harvest a commercially viable crop from Winnipeg River for generations. Elder Alice Kelly explained that “the water comes both ways,” preventing *manomin* growth.¹⁶⁴ Water is occasionally released from Lake of the Woods into Winnipeg River by the Norman Dam. This leads to flash flooding on the downstream side of Norman Dam (towards Dalles 38C Indian Reserve). Unfortunately, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve is located on the upstream side – or, the reservoir side – of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, which means that water levels have been continuously higher than natural since the mid-1950s. William Cobiness describes the results of high water as follows: “Water was high and it flooded the rice field. When the wind came up, the rice fields would flood and the rice would fall.”¹⁶⁵ *Manomin* along controlled waterways ceased flourishing at the new height.

Pastor Carol Lawson, born to John Kipling Jr. in 1937, describes declining crops through dietary change. In the late 1940s, Lawson lived with her grandmother, Matilda Martin, of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Lawson remembered eating *manomin* on an almost daily basis. Martin’s pantry was stocked full with pounds of *manomin*. As a child, Lawson promised herself that she would *never eat manomin* as an adult. During an interview, Lawson stated, “I could eat my words.”¹⁶⁶ Since large-scale aquaculture

¹⁶³ OPG, “Lorne MacDonald, General Counsel, to C. F. S. Tidy, Special Negotiator, Property Division, Memorandum, re: Caribou Falls Development – Flooding – Islington Indian Reserve No. 29 and One Man Indian Reserve, 6 June 1961,” Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Item 1042, 10-1-228.

¹⁶⁴ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

¹⁶⁵ Elder William Cobiness, interview by Cuyler Cotton, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, 19 October 1992.

¹⁶⁶ Pastor Carol Lawson (née Kipling), interview with author, Kenora, Ontario, July 2012.

collapsed on the Winnipeg River, Lawson no longer has the option of stocking her pantry with pounds of *manomin*. Her consumption of alternative carbohydrates – potatoes, rice, yams – is no longer a matter of choice. In response to flooding, wild rice harvesting has become “more of a reason for a weekend outing” than a reliable source of income (or subsistence).¹⁶⁷

The economic viability of trapping was also compromised by flooding.

Indications of these changes are not found in the corporate records, but maintained by oral testimonies. In Chief Simon Fobister’s own words:

The flooding changed the natural flow, the natural water cycle. For instance, historically, the water levels would go high in the summer and would eventually drop. Then the water would level and the beavers and the muskrats would build their houses at that certain water level. When it became winter the water levels would not go up, they [muskrats and beaver] would be safe, their houses would be above water. Although the river would be frozen, the house would remain on top of the ice. And then when they built these hydro dams, the water cycle was opposite. The water levels would go up in the summer time and they would increasingly rise in level. So, the beavers and muskrats would build their houses at a certain level, but then in the winter time, water levels would be released upriver... and then the water levels would actually be going up again – the beaver houses and the muskrat houses would be totally flooded and the animals would simply drown. That impacted on the income of the trapper, as the beaver population would be destroyed. And the muskrats, there would hardly be any.¹⁶⁸

Federal advisor Anastasia Shkilnyk confirmed Fobister’s report, suggesting that after the 1958 flooding caused by Caribou Falls Generating Station, muskrat catches declined and have fluctuated around a much lower average since.¹⁶⁹ Even though the price of furs increased in the mid-1960s, income potential failed to stimulate increased catches at Grassy Narrows First Nation. As Shkilnyk

¹⁶⁷ Anne McDonald, *From Grassy Narrows* (Tokyo: Shimizukobundo Shobo, 2001), 43.

¹⁶⁸ Chief Simon Fobister, interview by author, Grassy Narrows Indian Reserve, Ontario, 5 August 2008.

¹⁶⁹ Shkilnyk, *A Poison Stronger Than Love*, 137.

concludes, “muskrat catching never again reached the levels of production recorded on the old reserve.”¹⁷⁰

The collapse of *manomin* cropping and muskrat trapping on Winnipeg River confirms historian John Lutz’s hypothesis that “Aboriginal people were drawn into... paid-work relationships [that] made them unwitting participants in the very process that was transforming and displacing their own communities.”¹⁷¹ Anishinabek labourers unknowingly helped to modify the same river that sustained their “unemployed” (or, seasonally employed) relatives and their ancestors. Anishinabek labourers unknowingly helped to modify the same river that they hoped would sustain their descendants. Many Anishinabek labourers had, ironically, adopted work for pay in an attempt to ensure the socio-economic viability of river-based communities. Unfortunately, the stress placed on the subsistence economy by Whitedog Falls Generating Station led to unpredictable – and, notably diminishing – returns. As yields declined, resource competition among band members increased. This competition is evident in at least two competing narratives about Anamikipinens told at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. According to one tale, Anamikipinens succumbed to “the greediness and the selfishness of the white man.”¹⁷² His work-for-pay activities are seen as self- rather than community-motivated. His son, Larry Kabestra, tells an alternate story. He argues that his father was motivated to “keep

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 138.

¹⁷¹ In *Flooding Hope*, a documentary on St. Martin First Nation, Dr. Myrle Ballard et al. reveal corroborating evidence. During his interview, Russel Prince testifies, “I worked in that [Portage] Diversion... back in 1969, but I didn’t know how it would affect me later on in life [wipes tears].” Prince worked on the Portage Diversion near Winnipeg, Manitoba. This structure helped to redirect water away from the city. The Portage Diversion increased lake levels on Lake St. Martin. As water levels rose on the lake so too did poverty rates at Lake St. Martin First Nation. In this way, Prince unwittingly contributed to the economic hardship faced by his own community. *Flooding Hope: The Lake St. Martin First Nation story* YouTube video, accessed 30 July 2015, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQStePF5jeg>. See also Lutz, *Makúk*, 8.

¹⁷² Dovetail Resources, Interview synopses by Cuyler Cotton, 1993, Dalles 38C, Elder Interview Collection.

it [the reserve] alive” by stimulating employment opportunities.¹⁷³ Anamikipinens did not predict the extensive flooding of his homeland. Kabestra is pained by how some band members misinterpreted his father’s intentions: “Each generation is taught to hate, you know. And, why do we do that?”¹⁷⁴ This hatred, Kabestra believes, is fueled by the conflation of outcome (i.e. flooding) with process (i.e. work for pay). Hatred is bred from the misinterpretation of Anamikipinens’ intentions (i.e. socio-economic stability on reserve) and community explanations for endemic on-reserve poverty (i.e. collapse of the subsistence economy as well as commercial ricing, trapping, and fishing).

It is important, however, to separate process from outcome in telling the history of water development in the Lake of the Woods watershed. An examination of process reveals that Anishinabek labourers envisioned an alternative future – a future where paid work facilitated the continuous occupation of reserves. The HEPC’s commitment to Ontario’s energy security, however, limited its desire to build capacity on reserve specifically: continued employment for general labourers – Anishinabek and non-Indigenous alike – required moving to the next development site. Oral testimony collected in 2012 reveals that Anishinabek men remain proud of their history working for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. These men laboured outdoors in 71 centimetres of snow. They worked for long hours overlooking turbulent waters. And, many Anishinabek labourers took these environmentally and physically challenging jobs thinking of home: displaced youth worked with a hope to return their communities. Local labourers worked with the hope of preserving reserve boundaries. For a short time, many

¹⁷³ Elder Kabestra Sr., interview with author, 6 July 2012.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Anishinabek men saw work for pay as the key to socio-economic stability. Their vision of the future, however, has yet to be realized.

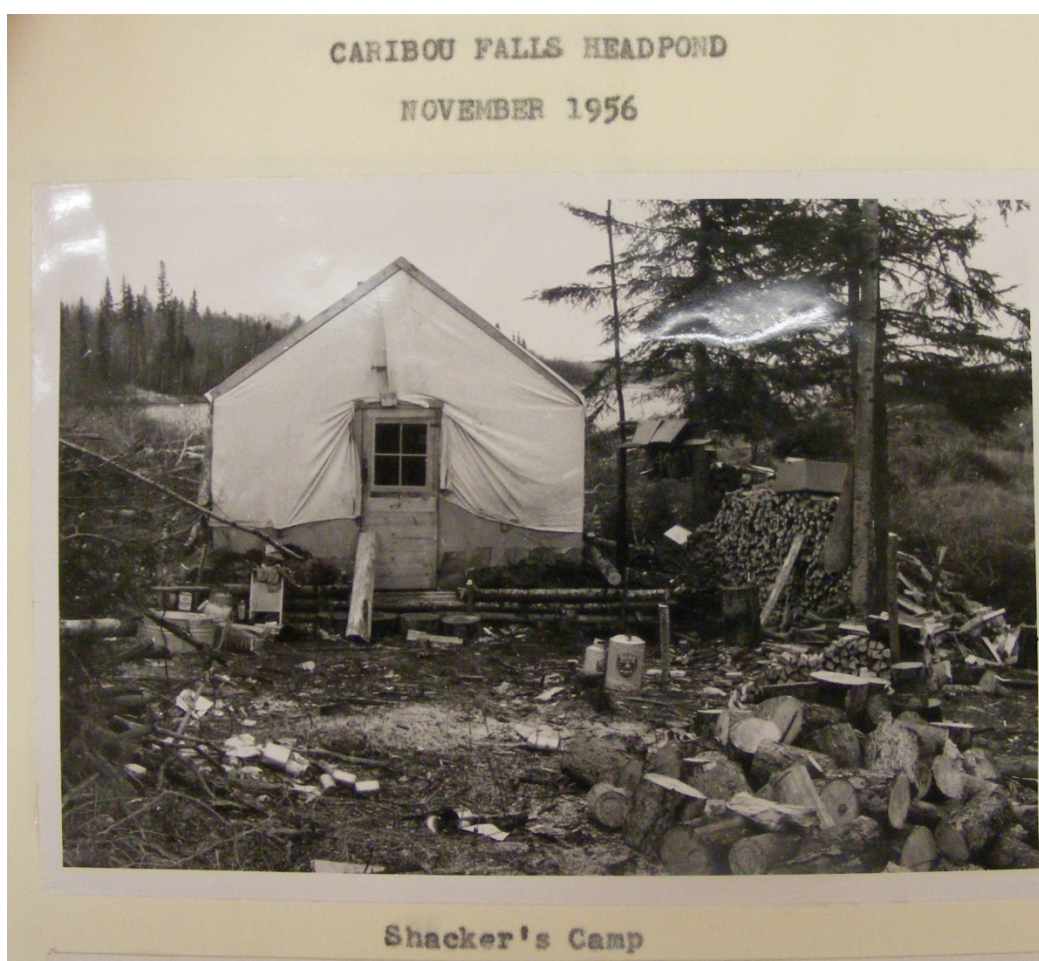


Figure 16: SHACKER'S CAMP (1956)¹⁷⁵

The earliest available labour job with the Hydro-Electric Power Commission was clearing for roadwork. During the early stages of development, the HEPC administrators bemoaned staff conditions, emphasizing a “lack of accommodation and necessary sanitary facilities to house and feed the estimated man power requirements.” This image depicts one such “shacker's tent” from 1956.

¹⁷⁵ OPG, Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, “Caribou Falls Headpond: Shacker's Tent, 1956,” [photograph] Caribou Falls Generating Station, FP4-10101-13, V. 1, Item 178, OHSC-Central Records 8-3-243.



Figure 17: CLEARING (1956)¹⁷⁶

This image depicts clearing work for the Caribou Falls Generating Station in the 1950s. Elder Charlie Fisher of One Man Lake Indian Reserve complained that the Hydro-Electric Power Commission hired Anishinabek men from One Man Lake Indian Reserve exclusively to fell trees, closing off alternative forms of employment. He states, “cutting the trees down.... That’s all we got to do.... Other than that we didn’t get any, any jobs.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ OPG, Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, “Clearing, 1956,” [photograph], Caribou Falls Generating Station, FP4-10101-13, V. 1, Item 178, OHSC-Central Records 8-3-243.

¹⁷⁷ Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.



Figure 18: BLASTED ROCK FROM DAM WORKS (1925)¹⁷⁸

This image depicts blasted rock at the Norman Dam site in 1925. Blasting created a heavy burden of waste for hydroelectric developers in the 1920s and 1950s alike. Oral testimony reveals that Anishinabek men like Bert Fontaine facilitated the disposal of blasted rock at Caribou Falls Generating Station in the 1950s.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ LOWM, Carl G. Linde, "General View after ledge removal above C. P. R. Bridges, 16 July 1925," [photograph].

¹⁷⁹ Elder Fontaine, telephone interview with author, 16 July 2012.

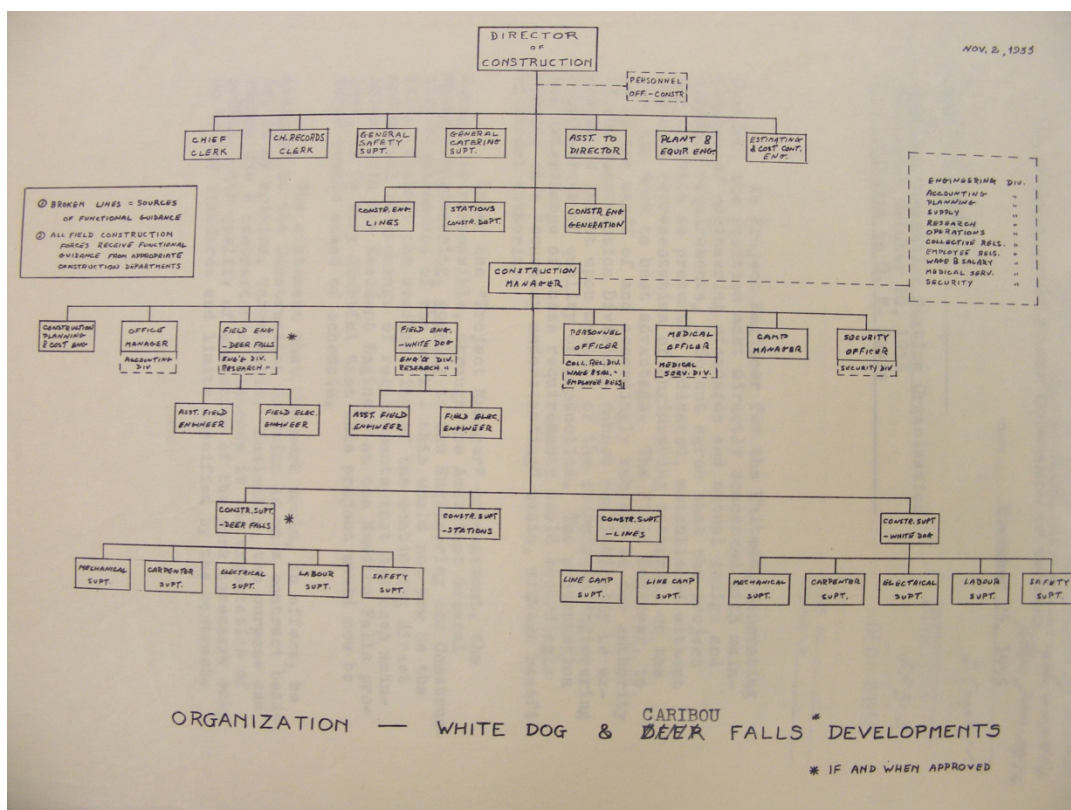


Figure 19: ORGANIZATIONAL FLOW AT WHITEDOG AND CARIBOU FALLS DEVELOPMENTS (1955)¹⁸⁰

This organization diagram represents the flow of power at Whitedog Falls Generating Station from the Director of Construction (top tier) to the Carpenter Superintendent (bottom tier). Oral testimony suggests that Anishinabek men worked primarily below the bottom tier and performed manual labour for the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario.

¹⁸⁰ OPG, "J. E. Stark to G. D. Floyd, Assistant General Manager – Engineering, re: Whitedog Development, 8 November 1955," FP3-C, Item 107, OHSC- Central Records 8-3-242.

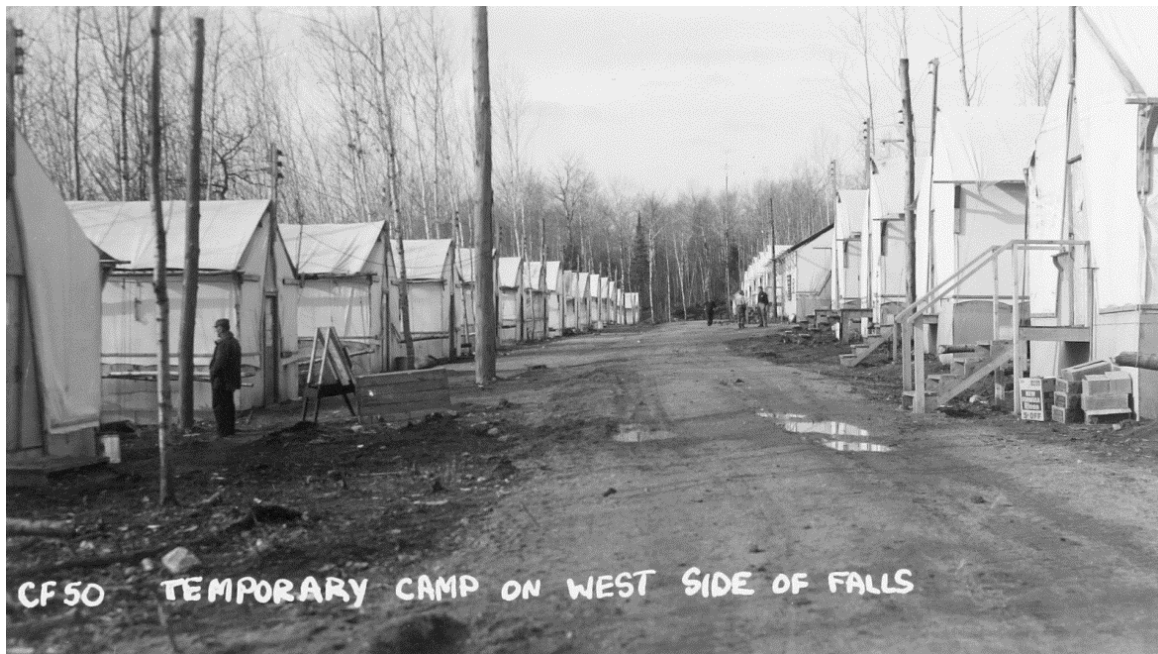


Figure 20: CAMP VILLAGE AT CARIBOU FALLS GENERATING STATION (C. 1956)¹⁸¹

For men who lived permanently on site, the work camp was more likely to be divided by class (i.e. education and perceived skill) than perceived race. Families with three or more children were provided with a 750-square-foot home, whereas families with fewer than three children lived in Commission-owned trailers. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission generally hired displaced Anishinabek labourers for less valued jobs (e.g. felling trees, spotting truck). As a result, no identified status Indians lived in the big houses at the Whitedog or Caribou Falls camps. Displaced Anishinabek labourers were more likely to be accommodated with other manual workers in tent villages like the one featured here.

¹⁸¹ Ontario Power Generation, letter to author, 27 June 2008.

WEST DIRECTION

WHENCE DARKNESS COMES

CHAPTER 5

“TURNING [THE] RIVER SEPTIC”: MUNICIPAL WASTE SYSTEMS, WATER REGULATION, AND WATER QUALITY IN THE WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, 1900-1975¹

Nobody remembered Elder Clarence Henry (1929-1997) working at the Norman Dam.² Nobody remembered Henry working at Whitedog Falls Generating Station either. Henry fished for his living. As a child, Henry likely followed his family onto the river, participating in the sturgeon (*name*) harvest between May and August. A team was required to successfully bring hooked (or netted) sturgeon to shore – it took at least four people and two canoes to move a grandfather fish. Henry recalled the Winnipeg River teeming with fish and a vibrant reservation community. When a large sturgeon was caught, the entire camp divided the meat.³ Henry feasted and danced and eventually grew up beside the Jameson, Savage, and McLeod families. Then, in the 1950s, everything changed. Rapids, once deep and wild, were blasted to widen the Winnipeg River and to relieve flood conditions in Kenora.⁴ By 1955, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario had started to survey lands near Henry’s fishing grounds. The HEPC incorporated Dalles Channel into its reservoir plans for Whitedog Falls Generating Station. This station was to serve the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company – a

¹ Dalles Historical Resources (DHR), “D. J. Collins, Ontario Water Resources Commission, to Stanley Randall, Minister of the Department of Trade and Development, 24 September 1969, re: Memorandum of August 29 Concerning Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Ltd.,” Winnipeg River Watershed – Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Correspondence

² According to the records of Notre Dame Parish in Kenora, Ontario, Clarence Henry was born to Catherine Hunter and Guy Henry on 6 July 1929. Notre Dame Parish, “Bird, Sa Baptiste,” Whitefish Record of Families.

³ Elder Clarence Henry’s childhood experience has been extrapolated using anonymous Elder testimony from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Elder #5, interviewed by Sheldon Ratuski at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, 17 February 2010. Interview referenced in Ratuski, “Gathering Traditional Knowledge”, 5.

⁴ “Escape Channel at Dalles Rapids is Blown Open,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 12 May 1950, 1.

paper mill located approximately thirteen kilometres upstream that was in desperate need of power.⁵ Within twenty years, Henry caught garbage in his nets and found sturgeon belly-up on Winnipeg River. He had never seen anything like it. When Henry looked for possible explanations for the garbage that ruined his nets, his eyes turned southeast to the town of Kenora. He saw new subdivisions that pumped human waste into Lake of the Woods. He knew that Lake of the Woods drained into Winnipeg River. He saw the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, a sulphite-operating paper mill, dump industrial waste into Rideout Bay.⁶ After 1958, human and industrial waste from Kenora settled in the upper reach of the Winnipeg River. This chapter focuses specifically on waste accumulation between Rideout Bay and Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. But, waste disposal alone could not explain declining water quality on reserve; water regulation by the HEPC kept solid waste suspended in the Winnipeg River. Unless the HEPC opened its gates at Whitedog Falls Generating Station, human and industrial waste had nowhere to go.

⁵ The *Kenora Miner and News* noted that “hydro crews [had] been working on surveys of possible developments in the north” in summer 1955. In June, the HEPC had already started to build a camp at Whitedog to house engineers. An unidentified journalist suggested that hydroelectric development at Whitedog Falls – and in northwestern Ontario more generally – was “critical” to avoiding power shortages in Ontario’s “fast-expanding economy.” “Power Line to Feed Kenora Mill Started,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 11 June 1955, 1.

⁶ In 1971, the *Fort Frances Times and Rainy Lake Herald* noted that “the Kenora mill... produced its own chemical pulp by the sulfite process.” *The Mandonian*, a magazine published by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company’s Industrial Relations Department, acknowledged the need to dispose of spent sulphite liquor produced in sulphite digesters as early as 1954. However, the Industrial Relations Department does not specify how sulphite liquor was handled in the 1950s. One exception was noted in International Falls, Minnesota. At this location, the company sprayed spent sulphite liquor on dirt and gravel roads as a binding agent. Oral testimony suggests that the company dumped spent sulphite liquor directly into Rideout Bay in Kenora, Ontario. “O-M Kraft Mill now in production: Why Fort Frances? Much Study Preceded Actual Construction,” *Fort Frances Times*, November 1971, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.fftimes.com/100-years-100-stories/whyFF.html>; “Good Roads From Sulphite Mill Waste Product,” *The Mandonian*, September-October, 1954, 6.; Ray Boivin, Senior Environmental Officer, Kenora Area, Ministry of the Environment, meeting with author, 24 May 2012.

In the mid-1950s, Mayor Peter Ratuski and members of the Kenora town council seemed blissfully unaware of Henry's garbage-laden nets and dead fish on the Winnipeg River. During Ratuski's term, Kenora residents celebrated National Electric Week and arranged a speech competition to address how electricity made "life more interesting, more comfortable and pleasant" – that water regulation would suspend human and industrial waste near someone's home seemed unlikely, if not impossible.⁷ Indeed, letters published by the *Kenora Daily Miner and News* suggested that Lake of the Woods carried waste away from municipal intake sites: waterways operated to benefit Kenora residents.⁸ Scientific publications acknowledged (albeit discouraged) dilution as an effective waste management system for low-density regions like Kenora.⁹ The problem, however, lay in Ratuski's and his constituents' definition of community and how town council designed and approved waste systems to serve community needs. Hydroelectric and waste systems were developed to serve Kenora, Norman, and Keewatin. Community boundaries were determined by colonial settlement and industrial production.¹⁰ Unfortunately, social boundaries conflicted with environmental boundaries: Kenora and Dalles 38C Indian Reserve belonged to the same drainage system. Although the two communities (settler and Indian) were connected by water, they were disconnected in

⁷ National Electric Week (1958) ran from 9-15 February, 1958. *Kenora Daily Miner and News* published National Electric Week advertisements on 10 February 1958 (page 4) and 11 February 1958 (page 5). See also "Festival Public speaking Entrants to Choose Electricity as Topics," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 25 November 1958, 1.

⁸ "E. Hutchinson, Letter to Editor," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 24 November 1955, 15.

⁹ A. E. Berry, "Sewage Disposal Practice in Canada," *Sewage Wastes Journal* 18, no. 1 (1936): 110.

¹⁰ The *Diamond Jubilee Guide* helps to define "community" as perceived by settlers at the north shore of Lake of the Woods. Author Hugh Hughes largely describes Rat Portage (now known as Kenora) by its retailers and service providers; his introduction, however, does not include Anishinabek communities. Hughes, *Souvenir, Diamond Jubilee Guide*, 4-12.

municipal thought and practice: Indian reserves like Dalles 38C fell under federal jurisdiction.

This chapter asks what happens when social boundaries conflict with environmental boundaries. It argues that municipal failure to consider the natural and managed flow of Winnipeg River in the development of waste management systems compromised biological and social health downstream at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. From the two interconnected examples of Kenora's sewage system and Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill's industrial waste system, it becomes evident that seemingly rational decisions to facilitate growth and manage waste in-town relied on an irrational conception of space that simply relocated (rather than processed) pollutants. What follows is a story about power structures – both hydroelectric and governmental – and the unintended consequences of controlling nature for economic profit.

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF NATURAL AND MANAGED FLOWS ON THE WINNIPEG RIVER

The earliest known written descriptions of Dalles Rapids (circa 1823) emphasize the swiftness of an unregulated river. For example, Major Stephen Long's men pulled their canoes up onto "perpendicular precipices of granite" to avoid further thrashing by the Winnipeg River.¹¹ Major Long described his experience at Grandes Dalles as follows:

Our paddles had a comparatively easy task all day except at one place, where they attempted to paddle up the stream.... This place, called the 'Grandes Dalles,' presents the most rapid current against which we have ever seen a canoe paddled. It is a narrow strait, not exceeding forty yards [36.58 metres] in breadth... great exertions are required on the part of the canoe-men in order to ascend this, and one of the canoes, after two

¹¹ Stephen H. Long, *Narrative of an expedition to the source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, &c., &c.*, 105.

unavailing attempts to stem the current with paddles, was towed up with a line.¹²

Explorer David Thompson affirmed Major Long's observations of rapid current (circa 1797). He called Winnipeg River a "bold, deep stream," suggesting that shooting Grandes Dalles necessitated courage and daring.¹³ Thompson's biographer, D'Arcy Jenish, described the Winnipeg River as "short" and "surly." It was characterized by "raging rapids and thunderous waterfalls" in the 1790s.¹⁴ While Anishinabek families living near Dalles Rapids when Long and Thompson journeyed upstream towards Lake of the Woods did not publish their recollections, community practice indicated a need to manage water risk. Anishinabek travellers visited "the sacred rocks where they made offerings for a safe trip" before taking to the waters by boat.¹⁵

In the early 1900s, Dalles Rapids appeared on a chart of "Water Powers in Ontario and Manitoba" as a Dominion property holding. The anonymous surveyor deemed their potential horsepower "unimportant," but provided yet another detail of their shape: Dalles Rapids had a 4.5-metre head (or a 4.5-metre difference in elevation from the peak of the rapids to the base).¹⁶ Considered of little industrial importance, this same 4.5 metres of wild water impressed itself on Ontario Land Surveyor T. D. Green. In the 1910s, Green took extensive note of the land and water near Dalles 38C Indian Reserve

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Canadian artist Don McMaster produced a series of paintings that reflected David Thompson's travels through North America. McMaster conducted "extensive research into Thompson's travels," consulting both Thompson's diaries and the environment to produce his work. Indeed, "McMaster travelled throughout Manitoba, Saskatchewan," and, most importantly for this project, Lake of the Woods. David Thompson quoted in "Running the Dalles," *The Art of Don McMaster*, accessed 15 December 2015, <http://members.shaw.ca/aborsuk9/Thompson/T8.html>. Don McMaster's project is described by Neil Babluk, "Painting David Thompson," *Canada's History*, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.canadashistory.ca/Magazine/Online-Extension/Articles/Painting-David-Thompson>.

¹⁴ D'Arcy Jenish, *Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Opening of the West* (Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2004), 58.

¹⁵ Mike Aiken, "Winnipeg River/Dalles Tour: A Journey Back in Time," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 21 July 2008, unpaginated.

¹⁶ LOWM, "Water Powers in Ontario and Manitoba, c.1930," Folder: Powerhouse and Dams.

to produce a map of the Winnipeg River. Green identified Dalles Rapids as a notable feature of the landscape.¹⁷ Given that Green participated in a European cartographic tradition that made, in the words of Renee Fossett, “representation of terrain... the central element and goal of mapping.”¹⁸ Green’s notes suggest that he felt this stretch of the Winnipeg River, relatively unmarked by the *waiâbishkiwedig*, was hazardous: here was a site worth identifying in provincial map-making programs. Travelogues, ceremonies, charts, and cartographic records memorialize Dalles Rapids as wild water, substantiating Henry’s testimony that “Before this channel was build [sic] the whole area use to be over, over-flooded, over-floating... The water was high and flowed rapidly.”¹⁹

Such descriptions of Dalles Rapids along the thirteen kilometre stretch of the Winnipeg River relevant to this study are essential to understanding scant evidence of complaint about water quality prior to 1950. Up until the mid-twentieth century, the stretch of water near Dalles 38C Indian Reserve was in moderate health: the waterway sustained native vegetation and aquatic species despite the continued dumping of human and sawmill wastes by the triune communities of Kenora, Norman, and Keewatin since at least 1879. How did the Winnipeg River near Dalles 38C help to manage municipal inputs? Aerobic bacteria thrived in the turbulent waters of the Winnipeg River. Naturally occurring rapids helped to aerate the water, providing energy for microbial decomposition. Aerobic bacteria used dissolved oxygen to breakdown organic material that was dumped into Lake of the Woods and Rideout Bay by the *waiâbishkiwedig*.

¹⁷ AO, T. D. Green, “Diary. Of survey of Pistol Lake, Winnipeg River and summer resort locations, November 1911,” microfilm MS 924, reel 28.

¹⁸ Renee Fossett, “Mapping Inuktitut: Inuit Views of the Real World,” *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, edited by Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2003), 113.

¹⁹ Elder Clarence Henry, interview by Cuyler Cotton, 14 June 1993, transcript, Dovetail Resources Ltd., Kenora, ON.

Grandes Dalles, as traversed by Long and Thompson, thus helped to maintain the equilibrium between oxygen content and organic inputs (i.e. excreta and wood cellulose fibre) prior to riverine modifications.

Rapids are caused by varying combinations of gradient, constriction, obstruction, and flow. Records suggest that gradient, flow, and constriction (as described by Major Long) created Dalles Rapids. In 1950, the *Kenora Miner and News* reported that Dalles Rapids would be blasted open to relieve flooding conditions in town. Town planners predicted that a wider channel would allow rising waters on Lake of the Woods to flow downstream more quickly, thus reducing urban property damage. On 12 May 1950, an unnamed journalist reported that the “Escape Channel” had been “Blown Open.” The rock, the constriction causing the rapids, had been excavated through a draw to create the channel. The new channel was described as “150 feet wide, 1600 feet long and 30 to 40 feet deep” – approximately nine metres wider than Major Long reported in 1824.²⁰ Subsequent reports affirm that blasting “dramatically changed the current around the community.”²¹ While blasting increased the surface area of the water (increasing surface air-to-water contact), total aeration likely decreased with the deconstruction of Dalles Rapids: the churning and spraying of waters ceased. Nevertheless, human and industrial wastes continued to flow downstream, preventing an accumulation of excreta and wood cellulose fibre near Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Up until 1955, pollutants flowed into and out of the “Escape Channel.”

When the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario modified flow through the “Escape Channel” in 1955 with work on their “not-too-secret Whitedog Falls

²⁰ “Escape Channel at Dalles Rapids is Blown Open,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 12 May 1950, 1.

²¹ Aiken, “Winnipeg River/Dalles Tour: A Journey Back in Time,” unpaginated.

project,”²² total aeration decreased yet again. Unit 1 of the Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operations in February 1958. Unit 2 entered service about one month later, and Unit 3 followed in June 1958. Prior to construction, Winnipeg River functioned like a drain: water flowed from Lake of the Woods through the Winnipeg River and towards the south arm of Lake Winnipeg. Units 1 to 3 worked to plug the drain 48 kilometres northwest of Kenora.²³ Lake of the Woods, upstream from the dam, functioned as a massive reservoir for Whitedog Falls Generating Station. The HEPC generated power by releasing stored water through the dam machinery before allowing the water to continue its journey towards Lake Winnipeg. Turning Lake of the Woods into a reservoir for hydroelectric power production, however, meant that Whitedog Falls Generating Station also plugged water in the “Escape Channel.” During high organic loading, Chongrak Polprasert explains that “the bacteria [responsible for composting waste] require more oxygen for their oxidation and synthesis, resulting in the depletion of oxygen in a water body which is detrimental to aquatic life.”²⁴ The HEPC reduced the Winnipeg River’s ability to dissolve sufficient amounts of oxygen for aerobic composting near Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Furthermore, damming compromised the seasonal flushing of waste. As Raymond Coppinger and Will Ryan noted in their discussion of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project, “[t]he natural seasonal rhythm without the dams consists of a tremendous discharge in the spring when the ice melts, tapering to a trickle in the fall,

²² “Development Planned: Hydro Starts Road from Minaki to White Dog and Deer Falls,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 16 September 1955, 1.

²³ “Whitedog Falls Generating Station,” *Ontario Power Generation*, 15 December 2015, <http://www.opg.com/generating-power/hydro/northwest-ontario/Pages/whitedog-falls-station.aspx>.

²⁴ Chongrak Polprasert, *Organic Waste Recycling: Technology and Management*, 3rd ed. (London, UK: IWA Publishing, 2007), 57.

followed by freeze-up.”²⁵ Alongside annual spring discharges, the Lake of the Woods was characterized by cyclical flooding prior to both blasting and blocking: “High water levels are usually experienced every eleven years.... In 1916, the water level reached 1064; in 1927 it was 1062.9 at the end of May; in 1938, 1061.55.”²⁶ The normal regulated range of the lake is now 1056-1061.25 feet (321.87-323.47 metres).²⁷ By capturing and storing the spring flow in Dalles Channel, the HEPC prevented the river from flushing the system and diluting (if not redistributing) waste – both raw sewage and industrial pollutants – from reserve lands and waterways.

At the time the HEPC developed Whitedog Falls Generating Station, engineers acknowledged the positive correlation between damming and declining water quality.

Richard D. Hoak, Senior Fellow at the Mellon Institute of Industrial Development Research, was quoted in the trade journal *Industrial and Sewage Wastes* (1954):

[L]ow-flow augmentation is incidental to efficient power stream operation, rather than to stream needs.... Thus, the average flow of a stream below a hydroelectric dam could be relatively consistent while the actual hydrograph would show wide fluctuations. Where such conditions prevailed on a fairly heavily polluted stream [,] the hydro dam might actually be deleterious to stream quality because of diurnal effect.²⁸

Community members also commented on the relationship between damming and declining stream health. Elder Robert Kabestra (Anamikipinens) explained, “Water gets

²⁵ Raymond Copping and Will Ryan, “James Bay: Environmental Considerations for Building Large Hydroelectric Dams and Reservoirs in Quebec,” in *The Social and Environmental Impacts of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project*, edited by James F. Hornig (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 42.

²⁶ “Lake of the Woods Now Approaching 1062 Level,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 16 May 1950, 1.

²⁷ Canada, Parliament, *Convention and Protocol between His Britannic Majesty in the Respect of the Dominion of Canada and the United States for Regulating the Level of the Lake of the Woods*, 1925 (Sessional Papers 1925, No. 98).

²⁸ Richard D. Hoak, Senior Fellow, Mellon Institute of Industrial Development Research quoted in Don E. Bloodgood, “Dilution Factors for Industrial Wastes,” *Sewage and Industrial Wastes* 26, no. 5 (May 1954): 644.

into these bays and doesn't get out – trapped there.”²⁹ What is the connection between damming and decline? In the absence of oxygen, anaerobic bacteria begin the process of anaerobic composting. Anaerobic bacteria produce chemical compounds like hydrogen sulphide – a substance toxic to fish, beneficial bacteria, and insects – into the river when decomposing organic inputs. Further, anaerobic decomposition is less effective, taking longer to breakdown organic inputs like excreta and wood cellulose fibre. Congrak Polprasert explains, “In anaerobic composting, the free energy (heat) produced is much less than that of aerobic composting thus the longer time required for organics to decompose.”³⁰ River modification, both blasting and damming, reduced aeration and, by extension, the rate of waste stabilization. In reducing aeration and preventing the flow of wastes downstream, Whitedog Falls Generating Station worked (unintentionally) to suspend waste along Dalles 38C.

INCREASED MUNICIPAL INPUTS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HYDRO-ELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT, EXCRETA, AND DECLINING WATER QUALITY

Understanding the role of unregulated flow in waste stabilization along Dalles Channel, however, does not adequately explain anaerobic conditions along this stretch of the Winnipeg River. To understand changing oxygen levels (or, perhaps more accurately, declining water quality), one must explore multiple system inputs and the connections among urban development, human excreta, and hydroelectric development. Prior to the economic growth initiated by dam and mill construction, the *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News* published the truism that “economic expansion is reflected usually in general community growth, with increases in population, school enrollment, and all the

²⁹ Elder Robert Kabestra (Anamikipinens), interview by Cuyler Cotton, 29 September 1992, transcript, Dovetail Resources Ltd., Kenora, ON.

³⁰ Polprasert, *Organic Waste Recycling*, 94.

rest.”³¹ Locals had long associated population growth with industrial expansion, predicting that hydroelectric development would “grow” their town.³² News reporting thus encouraged the belief in a causal link between power production and urban development among the readership. By 1955, population increased as men began work on Whitedog Falls Generating Station and families arrived in connection with mill construction.³³ By 1957, local employment seemed guaranteed as headlines declared “New MANDO Machine Adds 150 to Local Payroll – 250 to Timber Department.” Mill-related jobs also cropped up along Kenora’s periphery as additional wood requirements promised “jobs for some 50 men in the company’s logging camps and provide[d] a market for about 200 extra independent operators and tree farmers.”³⁴ Population trends illustrate how urban growth mirrored mill expansion which, in turn, mirrored hydroelectric development. An economic ecosystem had developed in Kenora whereby the growth of one industry (or municipality) depended entirely on the provision of electricity by Hydro-Electric Power Commission.

Population growth that followed the damming of Winnipeg River, however, meant that more people were producing not only more paper, but more waste. Approximately one year after Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company announced its expansion program, “[p]ermits of new dwelling construction for the first seven months of 1956 total

³¹ “What New Industrial Jobs Mean to a Community,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 25 January 1955, 4.

³² “Our Growing Population,” 4.

³³ In March 1955, the *Kenora-Keewatin Miner and News* commented on the installation of a new paper machine by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. Construction was associated with “subsequent addition to staff” at the paper mill (“Industrial Prospects Considered Excellent,” 25 March 1955, 1). In September 1955, the *Kenora Miner and News* noted that “[p]reliminary work on the required access road” to Whitedog Falls Generating Station was underway (“Road to Whitedog Starts,” 30 September 1955, 1). By February 1956, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission had 310 men on payroll for the Whitedog Falls Project (“310 Men now Working on Whitedog Project,” 1).

³⁴ “New MANDO Machine Adds 150 to Local Payroll – 250 to Timber Department,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 February 1957, 1.

61 – a figure equal to the average annual new-house construction of the past several years.”³⁵ By Christmas 1956, three additional new building permits had been issued by the Town of Kenora. At the same time locals celebrated the “Building Boom,” the newspaper reported that “[t]he sewage question has become more acute... by reason of Kenora’s growth.”³⁶ The sewage question centered on processing human waste that had long been privately disposed (e.g. through outside privies).³⁷ The dredging of Laurensen’s Creek illuminates how Kenora residents used Lake of the Woods and outflowing streams for waste disposal. The Kenora Chamber of Commerce complained that people used the creek, particularly “in the vicinity of bridges,” to sink “old tires, bicycles and other objects.” Originally believed to be the result of child’s play, material dragged up by the Department of Public Works revealed that adults also used local waterways for waste disposal: “baby carriages – not doll carriages – tires, mattresses, axles, drill steels, as well as lumber slabs and loose rocks [were] removed.” The normalization of Laurensen’s Creek as a dumping site is highlighted by the accumulation of waste on the creek bed and stopped water traffic; dredging by Public Works allowed for “approximately three feet” of clearance and permitted small boat travel.³⁸ News reporters concluded that many Kenora residents “willful[ly] disregard... ordinary safety

³⁵ “Building Permits total \$747,700: Ahead of 1955 Record Year by \$1/4 Million; 61 Houses Started,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 10 August 1956, 1.

³⁶ “Ratepayers to be Asked to Vote on Sewage Question Again,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 25 October 1955, 1.

³⁷ Lake of the Woods Writers’ Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 129. Direct references to privies and/or private disposal can also be found in “Letter to the Editor,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 8 November 1955, 9; “District Health Good Says December Report,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 12 January 1955, 10.

³⁸ “Creek Clean-Up Permits Use Now by Small Boats,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 July 1958, 1.

and cleanliness rules” when individually responsible for waste disposal.³⁹ No wonder the sewage question also considered how best to centralize multiple outfalls released into Lake of the Woods and how best the municipal government could address above ground lines that posed “grave sanitation problems” west of the urban centre.⁴⁰

By May 1955, Kenora announced a sewer and water project to “solve” some of the waste problems in the Central Park area. Council agreed to lay a sanitary sewer to serve residents living near Central Park and “for residents of Railway Street between 7th and 8th Avenues.” And yet, no system for sewage treatment was announced. Instead, human wastes, were to be “pick[ed] up” and “carr[ied] to the Creek,” which in turn would flow northwest through Kenora Bay, past Tunnel Island, and then through Rideout Bay before becoming trapped in the now-slow moving waters of the Dalles Channel.⁴¹ Within six months, pressure from the Ontario Department of Health prompted town council to hold a vote on a more complex three-stage sewage disposal program.⁴² The proposed treatment solution serviced only Kenora’s higher density centre and retained dumping practices that

³⁹ “Creek Yields Varied Materials to Dragging Crew,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 10 July 1956, 1. The earliest known complaint about private dumping into local waterways was issued in 1893. An anonymous person had “dumped refuse” into Lake of the Woods. Mr. Fletcher, Rat Portage’s health inspector, considered dumping into Lake of the Woods near D. L. Mather’s wharf an act of “gross carelessness” as locals consumed water from that area (“Keewatin,” *Rat Portage Weekly Record*, 21 April 1893, 2). By 1910, Walter Atkinson was hired by the Town of Kenora to work with H. King, sanitary inspector. Town records suggest that locals used Lake of the Woods to dispose of their waste – both human and household – at this time. During summer 1910, Atkinson was paid to remove a “pig from creek,” “a dead dog from lake,” “rotten beef and dead fowls from lake,” “meat and cats from lake shore” and a “box of rubbish from lake shore.” (LOWM, “Town of Kenora Police Department Records of Sanitary Inspector H. King, August 1910,” Folder: Waterworks and Public Utilities.). Local use of Lake of the Woods to dispose of waste, however, did not become an acute problem until the population explosion of the 1950s.

⁴⁰ “Norman Says: Must Have Year-Round Water-Sewer Service,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 28 June 1956, 1.

⁴¹ “Council Gives ‘Go-Ahead’ Signal to Sewer and Water Projects,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 4 May 1955, 1.

⁴² The *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News* suggested that delays resulted in part from “difficulties in providing services in the new housing development.” Indeed, “It is known that sewer and water problems are the main stumbling block to final approval of plans.” “With Time of the Essence Engineer Flies to Housing Conference,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 18 April 1955, 1. The proposed three stage sewage disposal program was detailed in “Ratepayers to be Asked to Vote on Sewage Question Again,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 25 October 1955, 1.

moved waste to Dalles Channel: “Stage 1 involves the connecting up a [sic] sewage outfalls in the Creek and carrying the effluent out into fast-moving water in the vicinity of the hospitals, from where it would be carried down the [Winnipeg] river.”⁴³ Local resistance to the proposed treatment program was voiced in the *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, but complaints did not include concerns about downstream water quality. Instead, E. Hutchinson argued that, “Water runs down to the lake carrying the sewage at present. Would not a sewer line connecting existing outlets to the creek, laid down to the creek and out to deep water function without a pumping station [‘an added cost to no purpose’]?”⁴⁴ Concerns focused on the cost of establishing a pumping station when the creek appeared to manage waste at limited expense. Resistance, however, was rare. Few residents seemed to question Stage 1. Expressions of pride included the publication of statistics such as the fact that 1750 of Kenora’s 2500 households were provided with town-operated water and sewer facilities.⁴⁵ Excreta continued to flow untreated (and in increased quantity) downstream while urban residents lauded “automatic telephones, paved streets, new schools and soon, adequate water and sewer systems” as markers of positive growth.⁴⁶ Local desires to maximize on Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill’s income potential and to quickly provide quality housing to working families thus pushed town council to rely on simple, inexpensive systems of aerobic composting long after the socio-environmental conditions that had assured its efficacy had changed.

⁴³ “Ratepayers to be Asked to Vote on Sewage Question Again,” 1.

⁴⁴ “Letter to Editor,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 24 November 1955, 15.

⁴⁵ “Town’s Brief to Water Resources Commission is Well Received,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 26 September 1956, 1.

⁴⁶ “Our Editorial Viewpoint: Housing Break-Through,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 10 September 1956, 1.

Winnipeg River's inability to handle increased municipal inputs became visible in solid waste accumulation. Between 1955 and 1958, Kenora's population grew from 9,813 to 10,538. The average person releases 132.6 gallons of urine per year and 360.7 pounds of feces. Should all of Kenora's population have been connected to the municipal sewer system, an additional 96,135 gallons of urine and an additional 261,507 pounds of feces would have flowed down Winnipeg River per annum. Elders from Dalles 38C, just thirteen kilometres downstream from town, did not share in Kenora's celebration of progressive waste management, associating the "Building Boom" with suspended solids instead. Henry remembered, "There was so many thing [sic] we found in our nets, toilet paper for example."⁴⁷ Elder Jacob Strong (b. 1930, d. unknown) also recalled "Raw sewage coming down the river – shit, hate to mention the word – as well as 'rubber things' [condoms] snagged in nets." The ubiquity of waste in Dalles Channel led to a series of jokes about urban waste. Strong explained, "When someone caught or snagged 'those things' in the net we used to laugh at them."⁴⁸ Waste suspension was linked, in part, to the slow process of anaerobic composting. While members of Dalles 38C experienced a river unable to process municipal waste, limited communication between town and reserve affirmed urbanites' assumption that dilution worked: waste only became "stuck" once outside municipal boundaries that artificially divided the Winnipeg River drainage basin into settler and Indian lands.

Dilution as a common method of treatment for raw sewage had declined by the 1950s. Chemical precipitation, sewage farming, and experimentation with sand filtration existed as accepted alternatives to dilution for sewage treatment although, according to

⁴⁷ Elder Henry, interview by Cotton, 14 June 1993.

⁴⁸ Elder Strong, interview with Cotton, 2 October 1992.

Dr. A. E. Berry, municipalities “situated on large bodies of water” (e.g. Lake of the Woods) continued to discharge human waste into the adjacent body of water (e.g. the Winnipeg River).⁴⁹ Despite the common practice of lakeside towns identified by Berry, changing industrial standards deemed dilution subpar if outfalls caused a nuisance or endangered health.⁵⁰ The push towards sewage treatment amplified over the years “for the prevention of disease transmission.”⁵¹ By the mid-1950s many Canadian municipalities had adopted “[b]iofiltration and activated sludge type facilities... and some use [had] been made of sewage lagoons.”⁵² And yet, dilution – the least preferable form of sewage treatment – had not been professionally condemned for low-density regions where waste could be “carried away by tide [or wave] action.”⁵³ By defining community by colonial settlement and industry rather than Anishinabek settlement and drainage basin, Kenora’s town council appeared to meet industry standards: the Winnipeg River removed waste from high density regions into Kenora’s nether-regions. Kenora’s treatment strategy can be seen as behind Canadian trends in waste disposal, but not condemnable. At the time Kenora dumped approximately 261,507 pounds of feces into the Winnipeg River, less than half of Ontario residents received partial or full treatment of their sewage.⁵⁴ Here, social boundaries that conflicted with physical geographies allowed town council to serve local citizens to the detriment of its “invisible” neighbours.

⁴⁹ H. W. Clark, “Past and Present Developments in Sewage Disposal and Purification,” *Sewage Works Journal* 24, no. 4 (October 1930): 561; see also A. E. Berry, “Sewage Disposal Practice in Canada,” 110.

⁵⁰ H. W. Clark, “Past and Present Developments in Sewage Disposal and Purification,” 561-71.

⁵¹ E. K. Day, “Sewage and Waste Disposal Problems,” *Public Health Reports* 66, no. 29 (July 1951): 923.

⁵² J. R. Menzies, “Sewage Disposal and Waste Treatment in Canada,” *Sewage and Industrial Wastes* 28, no. 3 (March 1956): 276.

⁵³ Day, “Sewage and Waste Disposal Problems,” 927.

⁵⁴ Menzies, “Sewage Disposal and Waste Treatment in Canada,” 278.

Acceptable by Canadian standards at large, the accumulation of waste in the upper reach of the Winnipeg River becomes problematic when compared to local standards for disposal and national practices (not yet regulations) for drinking water. By 1958, Kenora moved towards the final stage of its sewage program and, as the *Kenora Daily Miner and News* reported, a “Portion of Mill Site [was] Allotted for Sewage Disposal Plant.”⁵⁵ Engineers ratified a plan to establish a treatment plant with 60 percent purification.⁵⁶ Kenora’s Chamber of Commerce voiced dissatisfaction with the announced treatment plan, expressing their concern that “40% [waste] will take place in the bay,” a site that became popular for tourists interested in visiting the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill.⁵⁷ The Chamber pitched relocation, asking the Town of Kenora to move the plant to “Hospital Bridge [where] the 40% remaining will run directly into the river.”⁵⁸ Members of Kenora’s business community demanded a treatment program that removed waste from high traffic areas. Their relocation plans would not prevent waste from settling in the upper reach of the Winnipeg River – it simply allowed waste to follow a northwesterly path that skirted Rideout Bay. The Chamber’s petition sought to maintain the economic vitality of mill tours to produce (and keep) dollars in their community. Council did not demand full treatment of wastes; instead, Council asked that waste remain less visible: pure(r) waters in Rideout Bay were demanded to maintain tourist dollars, not to protect band members. While the municipality forged ahead with the mill

⁵⁵ “Portion of Mill Site Allotted for Sewage Disposal Plant,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 15 July 1958, 1.

⁵⁶ “Chamber of Commerce Seek Alternate Site for Sewage Plant,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 6 November 1958, 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid. For an example of a mill tour advertisement see: “You are Invited to Visit MANDO’s Kenora Mill, June 19-20,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 June 1957, 4.

⁵⁸ “Chamber of Commerce Seek Alternate Site for Sewage Plant,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 6 November 1958, 1.

site, Dalles 38C received waste whose accumulation was now deemed publicly unacceptable in town.

Standards for drinking water during the 1950s were substantively higher than standards for sewage disposal. Writing about the Great Lakes, Joseph W. Ellms noted as early as 1931 that “[t]he water in the Great Lakes is usually of excellent quality for public water supplies when unpolluted by sewage,”⁵⁹ drawing a clear link between sewage and contamination. Even dilution – although an acceptable treatment solution for human waste – was considered unsafe if drinking water was to be drawn from nearby outfall sites: “dilution of sewage and trade waste discharges with the purer water of the lake... tending to diminish the concentration of pollution matter, is an uncertain factor of safety owing to the erratic and irregular diffusion of these discharges.”⁶⁰ Risks associated with pollution (industrial and human) included water-borne disease. In the 1950s, for example, substantive debate continued over the transmission of tuberculosis (TB) through waterways and the relationship between untreated sewage and TB as a water-borne disease. While TB was known to affect Anishinabek children who attended federally-operated residential schools in town, no known attempts to determine associations between municipal dumping and summertime exposure to untreated water were made by health officials.⁶¹ It is worth noting that definitions of quality drinking water in the early-to-mid twentieth century did not include clarity. As Dr. A.E. Berry, active in the Kenora region throughout the 1950s, explained:

⁵⁹ Joseph W. Ellms, “Water Purification and Sewage Disposal on the Great Lakes,” *The Scientific Monthly* 33, no. 5 (November 1931): 424.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 425.

⁶¹ For a summary of works dealing with the possible transmission of tuberculosis through sewage, see: Arnold E. Greenberg and Edward Kupka, “Tuberculosis Transmission by Waste Waters: A Review,” *Sewage and Industrial Wastes* 29, no. 5 (1957): 524-37. For references to tuberculosis at Kenora District Residential Schools, see: LOWM, “*Bakaan nake’ii ngii-izhi-gakinoo’amaagoomin*: We were taught differently,” (Kenora: Lake of the Woods Museum, 2011), 20.

In safe water all bacteria have been killed and do not pose a direct hazard to life. Good quality water contains no sediment and discolouration. When I first started that often could be found in safe water. [Safe water] didn't show anything of a hazardous nature, such as cholera or other organisms.⁶²

As such, the accumulation of sawdust (discussed below) upstream of Dalles 38C would not have made water unfit for consumption on the reserve – although, urban residents did occasionally complain about foreign matter in municipal water supplies.⁶³ But, the accumulation of toilet paper, “shit,” and “rubber things” near the reservation meant that band members were done a great disservice by the municipality, which compromised Anishinabek water quality, and did not acknowledge (or plan for) the accumulation of waste on reserve territories.

Kenora's lack of interest in Dalles 38C does not reflect a lack of awareness of unorganized communities and their water quality issues on the outskirts of town. Residents of Kenora's “North End” from 15th Avenue North to 19th Avenue North were off the town grid as rocky outcroppings made it impossible for the town to hook “North Enders” up to their rudimentary water system. Residents without privately-owned wells were finding it necessary to carry water for more than two blocks while other residents depended on the town to deliver water once a week.⁶⁴ Alderman B. Paterson refused “North Enders” water service, citing the cost of installation “due to the nature of the terrain.”⁶⁵ Inconveniently located – not tainted – water sources, however, entitled “North Enders” to a municipally-organized truck delivery service. Town Council also extended truck delivery service to TransCanada Pipeline employees whose enclosed village was

⁶² Albert E. Berry, interview by Norman Ball and Robert Ferguson, 1983, transcript, Public Works Oral History, Chicago: Public Works Historical Society (1988), 9.

⁶³ “District Health Good Says December Report,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*. 12 January 1955, 10.

⁶⁴ “Residents of N.E. Area Seek Water Service,” *Kenora Daily Miner and New*, c. spring 1957, 1.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

established near Rideout Bay. In October 1968, M. J. W. German of the Ontario Water Resources Commission confirmed that “Unserviced sections of the town receive water by tank truck or from wells.”⁶⁶ Redditt, an unorganized community north of Dalles 38C, was also considered a region of concern by Kenora residents. Much like the North End, the municipality refused Redditt water services as it was too far from town to be connected. Prior to 1950, the Canadian National Railway (CNR) provided water service to citizens of Redditt. When CNR cut service to Redditt in May 1950, the *Kenora Miner and News* suggested that the CNR had committed an injustice as water service was “beyond the means of the community to provide.”⁶⁷ Journalists called for the Department of Health to “find some regulation in the statutes” and to mandate a waiting period during which alternative services could be established before cut-off.⁶⁸ Limited service was also identified as a “real health menace.”⁶⁹ While Dalles 38C fell under federal jurisdiction, Kenora’s concern for provincially-administered communities like Redditt indicates an awareness of water supplies on their periphery. Given jurisdictional boundaries, Kenora cannot be faulted for failing to consider provisional solutions for reserve land. However, continued dumping when compared to active service provision to unorganized settler communities suggests an awareness of compromised water quality in northwestern Ontario: Kenora residents deemed private intake unacceptable and, in Redditt’s case, a health hazard. Town Council then developed – and, occasionally, petitioned for – service solutions on their periphery. Kenora residents advocated for water service north of Dalles

⁶⁶ Sheila McRae, interview by author, Kenora, Ontario, 18 May 2012; DHR, M. J. W. German, “A Study of the Pollution Status of Rat Portage Bay and the Winnipeg River,” Toronto: Ontario Water Resources Commission (October 1968): 2. Winnipeg River Watershed – Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Reports.

⁶⁷ “Redditt’s Water Supply,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 16 May 1950, 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

38C, but demanded no provisional solutions for the reserve, an Indian territory and, by extension, a site of federal concern.

Given records of organized municipal dumping of untreated sewage, perhaps it is unsurprising that band members came to associate their own ailments with polluted water in Dalles Channel. Jacob Strong explained, “Water from the river gave us diarrhea.”⁷⁰ According to oral testimony, Indian Affairs failed to investigate health complaints in the 1960s. While I have been unable to find federal health statistics on waterborne illnesses for Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, reports of diarrhea match scientific studies of the relationship between untreated human feces and infections of the gastrointestinal tract. Donald Wigle of the World Health Organization identified *Giardia intestinalis* (or *G. lamblia*) as a “globally important cause of waterborne diarrheal disease and the most common protozoan infection of the human small intestine” in the developed world, making it a likely explanation for Strong’s health complaints.⁷¹ *G. lamblia* is transmitted through fecal-oral routes, oftentimes through the consumption of fecally-contaminated water and food. Other common causes of diarrhea in developed regions of Canada and the United States include rotavirus and enteric adenovirus; however, rotavirus and enteric adenovirus are primarily responsible for infantile watery diarrhea and were thus unlikely causes of Strong’s gastrointestinal complaint given that his recollections focused on his youth at Dalles 38C.⁷² Such explanations remain speculative and, given Strong’s death, are no longer verifiable. Plausibility lies in commonality: in northern Ontario, studies

⁷⁰ Elder Strong, interview by Cotton, 2 October 1992.

⁷¹ D. T. Wigle, “Water,” in *Child Health and the Environment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 357.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 358.

confirmed *G. lamblia* in nearly ten percent of stool samples in First Nations communities into the 1980s.⁷³

Linda Wasakkejick (b. unknown), an off-reserve member, reports “We weren’t even told the water was contaminated after flooding. We used to wash and bathe in it. My sisters developed disease from this.”⁷⁴ While Wasakkejick was the only interviewee to associate bathing with ill health, scientific studies conclude that a rash can be a possible symptom of infection by an enteric pathogen of fecal-to-oral transmission like the coxsackie virus. The coxsackie virus is reported to display itself through various symptoms, including rash, and is a known cause of disease in Canada and the United States.⁷⁵ Wasakkejick’s complaint makes sense in the context of “infections [of coxsackievirus B5] in epidemic proportions” in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁷⁶ The Virus Laboratory of the Ontario Department of Public Health reported that “one-third of the [enterovirus] isolates were coxsackieviruses” from specimens shipped to Toronto from across Ontario between 1956 and 1965.⁷⁷ Strain B5 predominated in 1958 and again in 1961; strain B3 was most frequently encountered in 1961, whereas strain B1 manifested itself most strongly in 1964 and 1965.⁷⁸ Yet again, a lack of historical testing on the reserve makes it impossible to verify band members’ associations between fecally-contaminated water and ill health. But, the commonality of the above-noted pathogens prohibits us from discrediting band complaints. Whether “dirty water,” the perceived cause of diarrhea and rash, is real, municipal dumping opened Dalles 38C Indian Reserve

⁷³ T. Kue Young, *The Health of Native Americans: Towards a Biocultural Epidemiology* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 92.

⁷⁴ Linda Wasakkejick, telephone interview with author, 7 August 2008.

⁷⁵ Polprasert, *Organic Waste Recycling*, 60.

⁷⁶ A. E. Kelen, N.A. Labzoffsky, “Variations in the prevalence of enterovirus infections in Ontario, 1956-1965,” *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 97, no. 13 (1967): 797.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 801.

up to infection. Town Council's decision to use the Winnipeg River to remove untreated sewage exposed band members to unnecessary risk at least, real infection at worst.

Despite health complaints on the reserve (and, more audibly, concerns for water quality in settler communities), tax resistance posed a series of challenges – financial and political – for the Town of Kenora in the establishment of a waste treatment centre and prolonged dumping into Lake of the Woods. Ratepayers defeated a motion to modernize waste systems in 1954, leading Town Council to request residents to vote on the sewage question again 1955.⁷⁹ Dissent galvanized Kenora's East Enders: "We of the East end of town are taxpayers and are also going to be asked to vote on this project, yet... there is no hope for us."⁸⁰ Geography prevented municipal hook-up. Residents of the East End saw little value in supporting municipal wastewater extensions as tax increases would not provide any immediate benefit to ratepayers. As the phrase "little hope" suggests, "East Enders" feared that wastewater systems would limit their ability to prosper alongside Kenora proper – wastewater systems could drain "East Enders'" pockets. Indeed, working-class home-owners saw no benefit in waste treatment, particularly when Lake of the Woods funneled waste northwest. Questions mailed into the newspaper focused on fears of the rising cost of homeownership: "What will the tax be?" citizens asked in "Letters to the Editor."⁸¹ Mayor J. V. Fregeau published his estimate in the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, but clarified that residents would be called to vote on sewer as a utility *not* "to vote on the capital cost question."⁸² The Town of Kenora tried to shift the debate away from utilities cost to utilities service, but rhetorical wrangling proved ineffective.

⁷⁹ "Ratepayers to be Asked to Vote on Sewage Question Again," 1.

⁸⁰ "Letter to the Editor," *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 8 November 1955, 9.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸² "Answers to Sewage Questions Given," *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 23 November 1955, 1.

By 1956, the sewer question cropped up in Norman. Concerns surrounded cost yet again: “Kenora ratepayers are going to be asked a \$276,000 question on December 10th – should a water and sewer system be installed in Norman?”⁸³ Residents wondered how they were going to balance their personal budgets while financing new utilities, knowing that “for every \$1000 assessment, it would increase taxes by \$1.00.”⁸⁴ More often than not, taxation needed to fund waste treatment systems was perceived as a detriment to the individual. As such, the Town of Kenora did not try to sell waste treatment to residents as a health need. Instead, government employees emphasized neighbourly duty, arguing that Norman “had always supported money by-laws for the town” and that similar support was owed to the suburb.⁸⁵ Such debates illustrate that residents of Kenora valued personal savings over waste treatment.

It is unlikely that many Kenora residents knew of the suspension of solid wastes in Dalles Channel. Municipal concern for Kenora’s economic vitality, a belief in the dilution principle, and a desire to lower taxes worked against the early establishment of a sewage treatment plant. In an attempt to provide cost-effective services to ratepayers and quick housing to a growing population of working families, Town Council centralized dumping into Lake of the Woods. Waste systems, however, did not consider physical geographies. Excreta made its way into the dammed river to save money in the town.

⁸³ “For Norman: To Vote on \$276,000 Sewer-Water Project,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 13 November 1956, 1.

⁸⁴ “Overflow Crowd at Meeting: Water Project Endorsed by Norman – 10 Man Committee Named to Promote Issue before Balloting,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 14 November 1956, 1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

INCREASED INDUSTRIAL INPUTS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HYDRO-ELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT, WOOD CELLULOSE INPUTS AND DECLINING WATER QUALITY

The Town of Kenora, however, was not solely responsible for declining water quality on Winnipeg River. Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company played an important role in anthropomorphic eutrophication (the artificial addition of nutrients to bodies of fresh water as a result of human activity), doubling wood cellulose inputs into Rideout Bay in the mid-1950s – a change made possible by hydroelectric power production at Whitedog Falls Generating Station. The *Kenora Daily Miner and News* sporadically reported on the link between mill operations and power production. Local journalists boosted hydroelectric development, predicting that electrical service would allow communities like Kenora “to grow and develop.”⁸⁶ When MPP White announced the HEPC’s plan to develop Boundary Falls he assured the public that “no Kenora district industry need worry about adequate power supply.” Abitibi Power and Paper Company, Great Lakes Paper Company, and Ontario Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company each filed requests for electrical power with the HEPC between 1956 and 1957. By 1958, the companies demanded increased energy to power industrial expansion. Regional sawmills did, indeed, depend on hydroelectric development.⁸⁷

Within weeks of signing a contract with Hydro-Electric Power Commission, the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company announced a \$17,000,000 enlargement program that included a new barker, eight new grinders, new screening facilities, and a

⁸⁶ Hydro Extensions,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 25 April 1950, 1.

⁸⁷ OPG, “V. W. Dick, minutes, 14 April 1958,” General Correspondence, FP4-A; OPG, “M. Fraresso to Mr. Taylor, 30 August 1957,” Engineering – Head Office, FP4-10907, Item 213.

new steam boiler.⁸⁸ The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company anticipated that the “modernization project,” announced in March 1955, would be completed by 1958.⁸⁹ Projected timelines further illustrate the link between power production and industrial potential: the HEPC began work on Whitedog Falls Generating Station in 1955 and began full operations in 1958 (about one year after Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company installed its new paper machine). A guaranteed supply of power allowed Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company to “more than [double] present newsprint production which is now in the neighborhood of 350 tons a day” to “more than 700 tons.”⁹⁰ Indeed, local news reporters deemed expansion unlikely without hydroelectric development as “[t]he new paper machine requires an additional 17,000 kilowatts of power increasing the present total for the mill, the town and rural areas from 30,000 to 47,000 kilowatts”⁹¹ – a power load that the mill’s privately owned generating station, Norman Dam, could not supply.⁹² While the linkage between power and production may seem intuitive, understanding the interdependent relationship between the HEPC and Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill is essential to recognizing declining water quality as a spin-off effect of hydroelectric power generation. Increased production at Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill was a direct result of power production at Whitedog Falls

⁸⁸ “No. 10 Machine at Work – New Paper Machine in Operation,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 30 January 1957, 1. The article also referenced “expansion of the electric power system,” which implies a connection to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission given the limited electrical capacity of Norman Dam.

⁸⁹ “O & M Production Will Increase,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 March 1955, 7; “Industrial Prospects Considered Excellent,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 25 March 1955, 1.

⁹⁰ “Industrial Prospects Considered Excellent,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 25 March 1955, 1; “Predict Completion of MANDO’s Kenora Mill in Record Time,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 1 October 1955, 1.

⁹¹ “New MANDO Machine Adds 150 to Local Payroll – 250 to Timber Dept.,” 7.

⁹² The Norman Generating Station (10MW) has an installed capacity of 14MW or 14000 kilowatts. As such, it would have been unable to supply the additional 17,000 kilowatts needed to power the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company’s “modernization” project. For further information on Norman Generating Station (operation and capacity), see: “Norman Generating Station (10MW) – Kenora: Winnipeg River,” *Ontario Power Authority*, accessed 20 May 2012, <http://www.powerauthority.on.ca/hydroelectric/norman-generating-station-10-mw-kenora-winnipeg-river>.

Station; increasing pollution – a result of doubled production and unchanged industrial waste systems – was to become the indirect and largely unrecognized result of damming Winnipeg River.

Exact records of effluent released from Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company are not included in corporate records maintained by Archives of Ontario or Lake of the Woods Museum making exact descriptions of waste – both type and quality – difficult to quantify. Records of chemical inputs prior to expansion include “96,000 tons of coal and lignite [and] 3,200 tons of sulphur.”⁹³ An Environmental Site Assessment conducted by Golder Associates Ltd. in 2008 assessed soil and groundwater for traces of metals, petroleum hydrocarbons, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene compounds, volatile organic compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls, and semi-volatile organic compounds.⁹⁴ Testing revealed “elevated concentrations of several metals in the groundwater near Rideout Bay,” including barium (soil-based) and boron, chromium, copper, lead, nickel, vanadium, and zinc (water-based).⁹⁵ This chapter, however, will focus predominately on wood waste dumped from the wooden waste conduit into the river and wood fibre rubbed off of trees during shipment rather than chemical reactions (and outputs) associated with paper processing.

Up until the Ontario Water Resources Commission ordered Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill to reduce riverine outputs in 1970, Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company regularly dumped in excess of 25,000 pounds of waste into Rideout Bay

⁹³ “During 1955... Mandonians,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 22 March 1956, 4.

⁹⁴ Golder Associates Ltd., “Report on Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, Kenora Pulp and Paper Mill,” March 2008, Mississauga, ON, i.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, viii.

daily.⁹⁶ Descriptions of the “modernization” program in the 1950s do not include waste treatment facilities or the relocation of the wooden waste conduit. Indeed, the new facilities were designed so that the new barker drum aligned with Winnipeg River: “The new facilities will be led out along the south side of the present mill incorporating the straight line of production with the wood room located west of the paper machine room on the Winnipeg River... the wood room will be altered to accommodate a new Weldrum barker drum.”⁹⁷ That the mill used the Winnipeg River to funnel its waste was no secret. Dr. Peter Playfair, Medical Officer of Health and Director of the Northwestern Health Unit, reported that “the Ontario Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company dumps its industrial wastes into Rideout Bay [which] flows into the Winnipeg River.”⁹⁸

Dumping, however, was not the only source of pollution associated with mill operations; shipment also produced non-point source pollution. Considerable bark loss occurred through the repeated handling of logs during booming, transport, and storage along Winnipeg River. It is impossible to estimate exactly how much bark rubbed off of trees during shipment as variables including size and species influenced bark loss. We do know, however, that Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company processed between 120,000-162,000 cords of wood during 1955 suggesting that 240,000-324,000 cords of wood passed through the company per annum after 1958 because of increased capacity.⁹⁹ By the 1970s, whether from dumping or transport, wood cellulose fibre “deeper than a

⁹⁶ DHR, “D. S. Calvary, General Manager of Pulp and Paper Mills at Kenora, Fort Frances, and Dryden, memorandum to the Honorable G. A. Kerr, Minister of Department of Energy and Resources Management, 21 May 1970,” Winnipeg River Watershed – Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Correspondence.

⁹⁷ “Predict Completion MANDO’s Kenora Mill in Record Time,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 1 October 1955, 1.

⁹⁸ DHR, “P. F. Playfair, Medical Officer of Health and Director of the Northwestern Health Unit to Sanitary Engineering Division of the Ontario Water Resources Commission, 17 September 1963,” Winnipeg River Watershed – Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Correspondence.

⁹⁹ “During 1955... Mandonians,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 22 March 1956, unpaginated.

standing human” had settled along the bottom of Winnipeg River.¹⁰⁰ Such benthic deposits are rare where river current is strong, but common to industrial dumping areas where water flow is slow.¹⁰¹ Oral testimony allows us to better envision how wood waste piled up between Rideout Bay and the Dalles Channel following industrial expansion. Elder Jacob Strong explained that “Close to Kenora, you could see ‘bubbles’ in the water... a whole chunk of sawdust and all that crap coming up to the surface.”¹⁰² “All that crap” interfered with travel to and from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Anamikipinens remembered that there was “So much muck going downstream, the boat would stall every time you hit a bunch of sawdust or crap. The motor would be so thick of [sic] sawdust.”¹⁰³ Elder Henry complained that his fishing nets collected mill waste in the 1950s:

The stuff off the paper mill would be stuck on our nets... We would pull our nets and clean that stuff out... But the stuff from the mill ruined our nets. It stuck right on to our nets.¹⁰⁴

The above quotation reveals that Henry had not adapted his fishing practices by the mid-1950s, suggesting that he had yet to identify a financial incentive (e.g. the cost of replacing nets) to do so. This, in turn, suggests that nets had not previously acted as a sieve for mill waste: unregulated flow had allowed for waste dispersal, preventing the accumulation of wood debris near the reserve. Henry appears to have maintained fishing practices that he had established prior to Whitedog Falls Generating Station and mill

¹⁰⁰ Jon Thompson, “Dalles team looks at river bed to sustain reintroduction of sturgeon,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 18 October 2011, accessed 20 June 2012, <http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?archive=true&e=3337684>.

¹⁰¹ Bruce Fairbairn, “Sawlog Pollution in the Lower Fraser River” (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1974), 40.

¹⁰² Elder Strong, interview by Cotton, 2 October 1992.

¹⁰³ Elder Kabestra (Anamikipinens), interview by Cuyler Cotton, 29 September 1992, transcript, Dovetail Resources Ltd., Kenora, ON.

¹⁰⁴ Elder Henry, interview by Cuyler Cotton, 14 June 1993.

expansion; it was not until those two industries operated in tandem that Henry needed to change his fishing practices. Henry's personal history shows that environmental modifications caused organic wastes to settle near reserve.

While it is difficult to imagine organic inputs like wood debris as pollution, particularly given the natural presence of wood fibre in healthy river systems through erosion, it can exert a biochemical demand on holding waters and upset oxygen levels. R. A. McKenzie noted the relationship between oxygen levels and mill waste as early as 1930: "It has been found that the coarse material, bark, limbs, and chips settle out in deeper and less rapid part of the stream... As a result of the decomposition of this fine material, the oxygen content of the bottom water appears to become lowered."¹⁰⁵ When oxygen levels change the health of many freshwater fish is affected. Indeed, a prolonged reduction in dissolved oxygen can cause species-based or water-wide mortality. Of the many fish consumed by Anishinabek in the Winnipeg River drainage basin (e.g. whitefish, walleye, and northern pike), sturgeon was least tolerant of hypoxia.¹⁰⁶ As oxygen levels declined in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, so to do the availability of

¹⁰⁵ R. A. McKenzie, "The Reported Decrease in Fish Life and the Pollution of the Winnipeg River, Kenora, Ontario," 320. While the relationship between mill inputs and reduced oxygen levels was noted in Rideout Bay, McKenzie suggested that clean water conditions were re-established further from the bay. Oxygen content was attributed to the "various swift stretches in the river" and the oxygenation of water (315).

¹⁰⁶ Melvin L. Warren and Brooks M. Burr, eds. "Oxygen Requirements," *Freshwater Fishes of North America: Petromyzontidae to Catostomidae I* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 177.

According to V. W. Blevins, low oxygen environments have been shown to "impair... respiratory metabolism, foraging activity, and growth rates" in many sturgeon species ("Water-Quality Requirements, Tolerances, and Preferences of Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) in the Lower Missouri River," U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigation Report 2011-5186 (Reston, Virginia: 2011), 8). Christine Kemker suggests that other fish are more tolerant of low oxygen environments. Walleye, a popular fish for year-round consumption in the upper Winnipeg River drainage basin, "prefer levels over 5mg/L, though they can survive at 2 mg/L DO for a short time" ("Dissolved Oxygen," *Fundamentals of Environmental Measurements*, Fondriest Environmental, Inc., 19 November 2013, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.fondriest.com/environmental-measurements/parameters/water-quality/dissolved-oxygen/#9>). Northern pike, a fish preferred seasonally, can survive "for an infinite amount of time" at 1.5mg/L" (Ibid.).

sturgeon for commercial and household use. According to transcriber Verna Perrault, Elder Janet Green “recalled how plentiful the wildlife used to be and how good the fishing was, but they [band members] gradually lost everything due to the blasting and the dirty water.”¹⁰⁷ Elders emphasized the collapse of the sturgeon population in their accounts of on-reserve life in the 1950s. Sturgeon had formed part of the local diet at Dalles 38C for generations prior to hydroelectric development. Reflecting on his traverse of Dalles Rapids in 1823, Major Stephen Long wrote “While we were resting on one of the islands, an Indian came up in his canoe with his family and supplied us with fresh sturgeon and with dried huckleberries.”¹⁰⁸ Sturgeon was eaten fresh, but also made into a product like bison pemmican “consisting of a special blend of sturgeon oil and dried and pounded sturgeon meat packed into sturgeon skin bags,” making it a valuable food source in all seasons.¹⁰⁹ In October 1992, Jacob Strong informed interviewer Cuyler Cotton that “Fish were affected by pollution... Sturgeon were dying for some reason. Maybe by pollution in the water.”¹¹⁰ Henry affirmed Green’s and Strong’s suspicions, and identified a strong causal link between declining sturgeon populations and mill operations. Henry reported to Cotton that:

The fish feed off the bottom of the river where this stuff from the mill is. The fish are killed off by this stuff they are eating in the bottom... I’ve seen the fish floating around, even fish like suckers (mallets) – they suck the water from the bottom. When I was a young man... there were still sturgeon around, quite a lot of them... The sturgeon, like the suckers, feed off the bottom and ate the stuff which eventually killed them off.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Elder Janet Green, interview synopsis by Cuyler Cotton, 1993, transcript, Dovetail Resources Ltd., Kenora, ON.

¹⁰⁸ Long, *Narrative of an expedition to the source of St. Peter’s River*, 106.

¹⁰⁹ Holzkamm and Waisberg, “Native American Utilization of Sturgeon,” 28.

¹¹⁰ Elder Strong, interview by Cotton, 2 October 1992.

¹¹¹ Elder Henry, interview with Cotton, 14 June 1993.

According to elder testimony, a combination of riverine modifications and urban pollutants compromised band members' access to a prized dietary staple: sturgeon.

Officials from the Ontario Water Resources Commission and the Department of Trade and Development generally acknowledged the deleterious results of paper production in northwestern Ontario as early as 1969. In a memorandum to Stanley Randall, Minister of Trade and Development, D. J. Collins of the Ontario Water Resources Commission considered the cost-benefit of waste treatment in the north. Using the Rainy River example, Collins argued that a three to four million dollar treatment facility was most desirable. Influent released by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company into Rainy River “grossly impaired” alternative water use.¹¹² Collins indicated that mill pollution had been known for “destroying fish life sometimes for up to 30 miles [about 50 kilometres] downstream” across Canada.¹¹³ George Kerr, Minister of Energy and Resources Management, would later weigh in on modernization debates. Kerr noted that modernization, particularly at Fort Frances and Kenora, would cause “improvement in the present unsatisfactory water pollution problems.”¹¹⁴ However, Kerr advised against funding these “slow-growth” areas. Kerr suggested that Randall should refuse Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company’s request for provincial funding “unless this was a last-result solution to enable our resources to be utilized and our existing populations in

¹¹² DHR, “George A. Kerr, memorandum, to Stanley Randall, Minister of the Department of Trade and Development, 16 September 1969, re: Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Limited,” Winnipeg River Watershed – Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Correspondence.

¹¹³ DHR, “D. J. Collins, Ontario Water Resources Commission, to Stanley Randall, Minister of the Department of Trade and Development, 24 September 1969, re: Memorandum of August 29 Concerning Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Ltd.,” Winnipeg River Watershed – Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Correspondence.

¹¹⁴ DHR, “Kerr to Randall Minister of the Department of Trade and Development, re: Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Limited, 16 September 1969,” Winnipeg River Watershed Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Correspondence.

the area to be employed.”¹¹⁵ Collins did not launch an economic argument. As Chairman of the Ontario Water Resources Commission, he was unable to determine “whether or not an industry is in an economic position to put in a proper waste treatment measures.” Evading financial questions, Collins concluded that long-permitted dumping of raw wastes was “turning [the] river septic.”¹¹⁶ Pollution problems, however, were not unique to Ontario. From Collins’ memorandum, particularly his use of the term “septic,” it becomes evident that by 1969 provincial officials acknowledged that mill wastes had created anaerobic environments in otherwise healthy river systems. Provincial policies on waste management had in the past created conditions ripe for species-based (sturgeon) mortality. Yet, Ontario officials like Kerr argued for the continued use of substandard waste treatment systems lest the province “[put] a premium on inefficiency” as the forest industry in Ontario declined.

One could argue that the accumulation of industrial waste at Dalles Channel ought not to be examined in critical detail as Canada’s environmental movement did not gain momentum until the 1970s, making Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company’s waste system “normative” by contemporary standards. And yet, industry standards were changing by the mid-1950s. Professionals published findings that denounced the relative merits of dilution. In 1954, *Sewage and Industrial Wastes* published the transcript of the 26th Annual Meeting of the Federation of Sewages and Wastes Associations. Watson, a panel participant for “Water Dilution Factors and Industrial Wastes,” argued “Where it applies to an individual plant, dilution is probably not an answer to the wastes problem.” He identified an exception whereby clean water used to dilute “must be disposed of

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ DHR, “D. J. Collins to Stanley Randall, 24 September 1969, re: Memorandum of August 29 Concerning Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Ltd.”

anyway.”¹¹⁷ Co-participant Frank W. Jones agreed, suggesting that “Dilution *per se* doesn’t always accomplish what it is intended to.” Yet, Jones too identified an exception: “if there is enough water to take away the visual evidence of sewage and to give the fish enough oxygen to live on without coddling them too much, the benefits of dilution are factual and real.”¹¹⁸ While dilution is here recognized as a viable strategy for waste reduction, Kenora’s mill surpassed Jones’ acceptable limits for waste – the Ontario Water Resources Commission noted that the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company “grossly impaired” northwestern waterways.¹¹⁹ Sanitation engineer Jones explained that “certain things can be tolerated in some streams, but a park stream where children play should be of the best quality.” It became particularly important to monitor discharge for downstream communities as factors beyond corporate control could jeopardize water quality. Jones noted that “If a sudden downpour came... not giving sufficient time for purification and dilution, that festering mass from upstream was carried down into the clear [recreational] section.”¹²⁰ According to Jones, nature could compromise “best practice,” if the pulp mill relied on dilution for waste disposal. Given that Anamikipinens and Henry reported that mill waste interfered with motoring and fishing activities, dilution as practiced by Ontario-Minnesota’s Pulp and Paper Company failed to meet industrial standards as set by industrial professionals at the time of (and, indeed, prior to) expansion.

¹¹⁷ Don E. Bloodgood, “Water Dilution Factors for Industrial Wastes,” *Sewage and Industrial Wastes* 2, no. 5 (May 1954): 645.

¹¹⁸ Frank Jones quoted in *Ibid.*, 646.

¹¹⁹ DHR, “D. J. Collins to Stanley Randall, 24 September 1969, re: Memorandum of August 29 Concerning Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Ltd.”

¹²⁰ Frank Jones quoted in Bloodgood, “Water Dilution Factors for Industrial Wastes,” 646.

Sturgeon collapse in the Winnipeg River drainage basin failed to spark a municipal or provincial reassessment of waste management or water regulation. René Brunelle, Minister of Lands and Forests (1966-1972), estimated that the forest industry accounted for 69 percent of all manufacturing employment in northwestern Ontario in the late 1960s. Given that “pulp and paper [was] responsible directly or indirectly for one dollar out of every eight earned by all Canadians” and that Kenora operations alone “provided employment for over 800 men and women during the year,” high employment rates provided one reason for Kenora’s limited interest in pollution abatement.¹²¹ Demands for waste management plummeted throughout the 1960s as Ontario’s “once favourable competitive position eroded through rising wood costs, increasing power rates, and greater transportation charges.” In 1969, Brunelle advocated for Ontario’s forest industry, suggesting that “it is highly desirable that we create a suitable economic environment to stimulate forest industry growth in these areas.”¹²² While Brunelle made no direct reference to industrial pollution, he desired concessions from the Department of Trade and Development that would reduce operating costs. Band members at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve suffered from unabated industrial waste to keep Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill’s engines running. Costs could (and would) be saved by postponing the modernization of waste disposal systems. Municipal priorities and provincial development goals, which excluded Dalles 38C Indian Reserve (not out of not malicious intent but because of jurisdictional limits), thus ensured the continued flow of waste into

¹²¹ “Biggest Industry: Pulp and Paper,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 2 April 1955, 6; “During 1955... Mandonians,” unpaginated.

¹²² DHR, “Minister René Brunelle, to Stanley Randall, Minister of the Department of Trade and Development, 9 October 1969, RE: Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Co. Ltd.,” *Winnipeg River Watershed – Water Pollution, 1965-1995 – Correspondence*.

Dalles Channel. Mill and hydro planners simply failed to understand how their use of Winnipeg River overlapped.

It was not until the 2000s that biologists confirmed Elders' suspicions and attributed an accumulation of wood fibre on the riverbed to declining sturgeon populations. Reporting on the release of 50,000 freshly-hatched sturgeon fry into the Winnipeg River, journalist Dan Gauthier suggested that "water flow and level fluctuations" negatively impacted the sturgeon population. He cites the opinion of biologist for Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Scott McAughey that Hydro, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Lake of the Woods Control Board ought to agree to reduce fluctuations during the spawning period to help the population recover.¹²³ In contrast, journalist Jon Thompson focused less on water fluctuations and more on the "anoxic mush" at the bottom of the Winnipeg River. He provided a visual description of accumulated waste, suggesting that decomposed bark was at least two metres deep in the 1970s.¹²⁴ The amount of oxygen released from photosynthesis compared to the amount of oxygen removed by animal and microbial respiration determines any waterway's oxygen content. "If," as Scott Brennan and Jay Withgott explain, "nutrients flow into water bodies faster than they flow out or are broken down, the water bodies become increasingly laden with plant material and lower in dissolved oxygen."¹²⁵ As shown earlier, woody material sunk on its way to and from Kenora's mill: inputs exceeded

¹²³ Dan Gauthier, "Restocking program attempts to restore Winnipeg River sturgeon fishery," *Lake of the Woods Enterprise*, 3 June 2005, accessed 20 June 2012, <http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?archive=true&e=1856585>.

¹²⁴ Jon Thompson, "Elders, biologists confer on Winnipeg River sturgeon," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 8 October 2010, accessed 20 June 2012, <http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/2010/10/08/elders-biologists-confer-on-winnipeg-river-sturgeon>.

¹²⁵ Scott Brennan and Jay Withgott, *Essential Environment: The Science Behind the Stories* (San Francisco, CA: Pearson Education Ltd., 2005), 244.

outflow in Dalles Channel, forcing sturgeon to compete with bacterial colonies for oxygen. Disrupted flow between Rideout Bay and Whitedog Falls Generating Station caused by blasting and damming reduced the amount of oxygen that could be dissolved by the river. No wonder the central question Thompson posed was, “Is there enough food and oxygen to support [sturgeon] now?”¹²⁶

Industrial enthusiasm and poor planning ensured the flow of waste into Rideout Bay, but federal inaction affirmed environmental inequalities resulting from careless municipal dumping practices. Federal officials in Ottawa, removed by almost 2,000 kilometres from the contaminated site, had no legal imperative to act on behalf of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve: in the mid-1950s no environmental laws existed to protect water quality in Dalles Channel. The Boundary Water Treaty of 1909 provided limited protection over Canadian waterways and read “the waters herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the [American-Canadian] boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other.”¹²⁷ Anishinabek residents living at Dalles 38C found no protection under the clause as pollutants flowed northwest, towards Lake Winnipeg, and away from the international boundary on Lake of the Woods. Limited protection may also have been provided to band members under the Navigable Waters Protection Act which, as J. R. Menzies noted “place[d] restriction on the discharge of materials of certain kinds into navigable waters or waters flowing into navigable waters.”¹²⁸ But, here again northwesterly flows worked against Anishinabek interest: the steamboat economy flourished upstream of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve on

¹²⁶ Thompson, “Elders, biologists confer on Winnipeg River sturgeon.”

¹²⁷ “Article V,” in *Treaty between the United States and Great Britain Relation to Boundary Waters, and Questions Arising between the United States and Canada* (1910), International Joint Commission, <http://www.ijc.org/rel/agree/water.html#text>.

¹²⁸ Menzies, “Sewage Disposal and Waste Treatment in Canada,” 275.

Lake of the Woods. Further, by the time Anamikipinens' boat stalled, his motor thick with sawdust, federal interest in navigation on Lake of the Woods had declined. Canada had limited economic incentive to carefully monitor Kenora's waterways as early as 1901 when the Canadian National Railway joined "Winnipeg and Port Arthur and [ran] along the south shore of Lake of the Woods through Minnesota and along the north shore of the Rainy River."¹²⁹ By 1911 Canada's interest in navigation on Lake of the Woods became prosaic: buoys were placed on Lake of the Woods to guide boating enthusiasts. As a result of northwesterly flow, members of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve lost whatever limited federal protection they were entitled to under law in the 1950s. Flow patterns decreased Canada's political incentive to monitor local water quality. A failing steamship economy further reduced Canada's economic imperative to keep Winnipeg River free of suspended solids.

CONCLUSION

When looking at municipal dumping of excreta into Lake of the Woods and industrial dumping of wood fibre into Rideout Bay, it becomes evident that an accumulation of waste near Dalles 38C Indian Reserve resulted from the short-sightedness of Town Council and mill operators in designing waste systems. Prior to the blasting of the Dalles Channel, wastes flowed down Winnipeg River, through Dalles Rapids, and aerobic composting ultimately prevented waste suspension near the reserve. By the mid-1950s, however, water flow had been modified by Hydro-Electric Power Commission to encourage industrial growth and to benefit urban residents. Despite sharing the same water, a town boundary that ended near Rideout Bay prevented Kenora's Town Council

¹²⁹ Lake of the Woods Writers' Group and Kenora Centennial Committee, *Through the Kenora Gateway*, 32.

and mill operators from seeing the negative effects of dumping downstream. Federal inaction reinforced environmental inequities that shifted the burden of industrial and human waste from settlers to Indians. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission alone did not jeopardize Anishinabek fisheries. Anishinabek food security declined when three competing water users – the Town of Kenora, the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company, and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario – began to operate in tandem.



Figure 21: “RUNNING THE DALLES”¹³⁰

This image is Don McMaster’s artistic imagining of the Winnipeg River *before* hydroelectric development at the north shore of Lake of the Woods. This image is based on “extensive research into [David] Thompson’s travels” along the Winnipeg River and into Lake of the Woods in the 1790s.

¹³⁰ “Running the Dalles,” *The Art of Don McMaster*, accessed 15 December 2015, <http://members.shaw.ca/aborsuk9/Thompson/T8.html>.

Applied 1930

Water Powers in Ontario and Manitoba.

No.	Where.	ft. Head	Distance from Winnipeg	24 hr. H.P. 75% Efficiency		H.P. Developed	Owner.
				12,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.		
1	Kenora, Ont.	20	128	5,000	10,000	3600	Town of Kenora.
2.	Norman, Ont.	19	126	25,000	40,000	none.	Keewatin Power Co.
3.	Keewatin, Ont.	18'	123	4,000	14,000	4,000	Lake of the Woods Milling Co.
4.	Dalles, Ont.	15'	12 miles N. of Kenora	Unimportant			Dom. Gov.
5.	White Dog Falls, Ont.	45	115	25,000	40,000	none	Prov. Gov.
6.	Pine Falls, Man.	37	64	38,000	63,000	none.	Prov. Gov.
7.	Du. Bonnet, Man.	56	64	57,300	95,000	Constructing	Winnipeg Elect. R. Co.
8	M ^r Arthur, Man.	18	62	18,400	37,000	none.	Dom. Gov.
9	Lower Seven Sisters, Man.	37	52	12,600	37,900	none	Dom. Gov.
10	Upper Seven Sisters Man.	29	55	9,900	29,600	none	Dom. Gov.
11.	Slave Falls Man.	26	74	26,600	44,000	none.	Dom. Gov. On Pinawa Channel
12.	Winnipeg Elect. R. Co. Man.	56	65	90,000	168,000	28,000	Winnipeg Elect. R. Co.
13.	City of Winnipeg	45	77	25,000	77,000	25,000	City of Winnipeg

Figure 22: "WATER POWERS IN ONTARIO AND MANITOBA," (C. 1930)¹

This document reveals that Dalles Rapids had a gradient of 15 feet (or 4.5 metres) prior to environmental modifications by the Town of Kenora and the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario in the 1950s. At present, there is less than 1 metre of head at Dalles Rapids.

¹ LOWM, "Water Powers in Ontario and Manitoba, c. 1930," Folder: Powerhouse and Dams.



Figure 23: “RAPIDS NEAR THE FIRST FALLS” (C. 1893)¹³²

This image depicts one of the many swift stretches on the Winnipeg River that would be dammed between 1893 and 1958. The Kenora Powerhouse is now located at this site. Norman Dam is located approximately two kilometres downstream. Whitedog Falls Generating Station, by contrast, is located approximately 48 kilometres northwest of this site.

¹³² “Rapids near the First Falls,” *Special Supplementary Number of the Colonist*, September 1893, 8.



Figure 24: MUNICIPAL SEWAGE DISPOSAL INTO LAKE OF THE WOODS (C. 1930)¹³³

Residents of the triune communities of Kenora, Keewatin, and Norman relied on Lake of the Woods to dilute human and household wastes. As this image depicts, municipal pipes simply released wastewater into the lake. This practice continued into the 1970s. Proctor & Redfern Limited designed the Kenora Area Water Treatment Plant on contract with the Ontario Ministry of Environment in 1975. Two years later, Matthews Limited of London, Ontario, was hired to construct the facility. The plant began operating in spring 1979.

¹³³ LOWM, Photographer unknown, "Municipal Sewage Disposal into Lake of the Woods, c. 1930," [photograph] Folder: Waterworks and Public Utilities.



Figure 25: “LOG BOOM” (C. 1932) ¹³⁴

This image depicts a bush worker preparing logs for the spring thaw in northwestern Ontario. The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company transported wood along the Winnipeg River and Lake of the Woods to the mill in Kenora. Considerable bark loss occurred through the repeated handling of logs during booming, transport, and storage along Winnipeg River. It is impossible to estimate exactly how much bark rubbed off of trees during shipment as variables including size and species influenced bark loss. However, by the 1970s, decomposed bark at least two metres deep had settled at the bottom of the Winnipeg River. ¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Thunder Bay Public Library, “Log Boom, c. 1932,” [photograph] accessed 1 March 2016, <http://images.ourontario.ca/gateway/56380/data?n=9>.

¹³⁵ Thompson, “Elders, biologists confer on Winnipeg River sturgeon.”

CHAPTER 6

“ALL SHE USE IS WHITEFISH SOUP TO HAVE MILK ON HER BREAST”: ANISHINABEK MOTHERS’ RESPONSES TO HYDROELECTRIC FLOODING IN THE WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, 1900-1975¹

The women of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve experienced Whitedog Falls Generating Station differently than their male counterparts (fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons). Reflecting on her years growing up on Dalles 38C Indian Reserve between 1885 and 1908 Anishinabek Elder Matilda Martin remembered working alongside her grandmother, Jane Lindsay, to maintain their family home.² During the fall, Martin helped to prepare a winter supply of whitefish under Lindsay’s supervision. As they worked side-by-side gutting the fish from caudal fin to gill, Lindsay passed down women’s knowledge of family care. Martin may have learned that expectant mothers who consumed whitefish produced breast milk of the highest quality – a lesson she passed down to her granddaughter, Carol Kipling, years later.³ Lindsay likely taught Martin to recognize whitefish soup as alternative to breast milk that could be bottle-fed to infants – an observation then shared with a journalist at the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*. As a mother in the early 1900s, Martin would catch, prepare and consume whitefish in an attempt to ensure her children’s health. While her husband’s paid labour promised the family economic stability, Martin’s unpaid mother-work ensured the physical well-being of household members. Martin’s experience as a key contributor to household welfare was not unique to Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Anishinabek women throughout

¹ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

² Martin-McKeever, *The Chief’s Granddaughter*, 9-11.

³ Pastor Carol (Kipling) Lawson, interview with author, 12 July 2012.

northwestern Ontario in the early twentieth century worked in partnership with men to raise healthy families.

In the 1950s, however, hydroelectric development along the Winnipeg River jeopardized Anishinabek women's access to the local resources that were essential for mother-work. Whitedog Generating Station disrupted the flow of the Winnipeg River past Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, and thus facilitated an accumulation of sewage and pulp waste in nearby fishing waters. High levels of organic loading by the Town of Kenora and the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company raised the biochemical oxygen demand and exacerbated hypoxia. As oxygen levels in the upper Winnipeg River drainage basin declined so too did sturgeon populations. While other fish populations (e.g. walleye, whitefish, and northern pike) survived, they became highly toxic to humans. As microorganisms digested pulp waste in-and-around Dalles Channel, naturally occurring methyl mercury was released into the Winnipeg River and accumulated up the food chain. Martin's great-grandchildren risked poisoning their infants with methyl mercury if they relied on country foods (i.e. whitefish) while pregnant or breastfeeding. This chapter explores the shift in Anishinabek women's abilities to feed their children since the development of Whitedog Generating Station on the Winnipeg River. I argue that hydroelectric power generation on the Winnipeg River disrupted the environment's ability to provide resources necessary to maintain women's reproductive health (especially breast milk). Indeed, food shortages caused by hydroelectric development since the 1950s have continually compromised Anishinabek women's ability to maintain the household economy and to raise families in accordance with cultural expectations. The history of methyl mercury contamination at Dalles 38C is a useful case study which,

when considered along with more egregious examples such as Grassy Narrows and Whitedog First Nations, illustrates some of the ways in which colonization and land alteration affected the lives and health of Indigenous communities in Canada in the twentieth century.⁴

According to Dan Pine, an Anishinabek Elder from Garden River First Nation, women were traditionally responsible for household maintenance. He explains that, “*Kina gewii kinoomaajgaazo wa shkniigkwe nikeyaa ezhi-nokiimgag kina ge-goo ezhi-bmingaademgag maa biindig*” – “a young woman is taught everything, how everything works inside, how everything is managed.”⁵ Inside tasks included child-rearing. During the first few years of a child’s life, Anishinabek women were primarily responsible for food provision, which was dominated by breast milk. To produce the best quality breast milk, Anishinabek girls and women avoided objects they believed may have harmed or impeded their breasts, such as bows and constricting bras, to ensure their breasts could continue to feed their children.⁶ Pregnant and lactating women followed strict dietary regimes to ensure that high quality food – believed to have medicinal qualities – would

⁴ As summarized by Robert M. Bone, “Between 1962 and 1975 Dryden Chemicals Ltd, a subsidiary of Reid Paper Ltd., produced chlorine and other chemicals used as bleach in the pulp and paper mill of Reid Paper at Dryden, Ontario. The mill flushed its waste products into the Wabigoon River. The mill effluent contained a relatively high level of mercury, which worked its way into the aquatic food chain of the river system. In 1970, the Ontario government discovered that the level of mercury found in fish in a 500-km stretch downstream from the pulp and paper mill was dangerous to health, and advised the Ojibway communities at Grassy Narrows and Whitedog reserves not to eat fish from these rivers.” Unfortunately, large numbers of band members, many of whom relied heavily upon country foods, already displayed symptoms of Minamata disease. Robert M. Bone, *The Geography of the Canadian North: Issues and Challenges*, 3rd edition (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2009), 199. See also Lee Manko, “The Grassy Narrows and Islington Band Mercury Disability Board: A Historical Report, 1986-2001,” *Grassy Narrows and Islington Bands Mercury Disability Board*, September 2006, accessed 1 July 2014, <http://www.mercurydisabilityboard.com/booklet.pdf>.

⁵ Dan Pine, “*Anishinaabe Miikan/The Anishinaabe Road*,” in *Gechi-Piitziig Dbaajmowag/The Stories of Our Elders*, edited by Alan Corbiere (West Bay, Ontario, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, 2011), 14-5. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, commenting on Anishinabek household relations near Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, almost a century earlier similarly noted that “[t]he lodge itself, with all its arrangements, is the precinct of the rule and government of the wife.” Schoolcraft is quoted in Priscilla Buffalohead, “Farmers, Warriors, Traders: A Fresh Look at Ojibway Women,” *Minnesota History* 48, no. 6 (Summer 1983): 241.

⁶ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

be provided to their nursing infant(s).⁷ If women could not nurse, they used local resources, like *manomin* (wild rice) and whitefish, to feed their child. Substitutions for breast milk will be discussed further in this chapter.

Anishinabek girls like Martin learned how to perform “womanly duties” from their mothers and grandmothers. Writing in the early 1900s, American ethnographer Frances Densmore found that “a Chippewa girl... learned many household tasks by watching and helping her mother.”⁸ Gendered teachings continued to shape Anishinabek women’s expectations and activities well into the 1940s and 1950s in Anishinabek territories along the Winnipeg River. For example, an unidentified “Older Woman” from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve remembered being sent to her grandmother to learn about family provision:

Your grandmother would teach you, your great-grandmother. But mostly your mother turn[ed] you over to your grandmother. Because, you know, your mother, you wouldn’t listen to her... but you respected your grandmother [– you] listen to an Elder tell stories.⁹

School attendance, particularly at day school, did not interfere with lessons on appropriate women’s work. Elder Alice Kelly, born at Dalles 38C in 1946, credits her mother for teaching her how to maintain a happy home-life. As a school girl, Kelly would “come home,” “do homework,” and then “do chores inside or whatever.” By the time she married (circa 1962-1965) Kelly “knew everything” about providing for her family. In her words, “It was good.”¹⁰

⁷ Ibid. See also: Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women*, 44.

⁸ Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 6.

⁹ “An Older Woman” quoted in Jennifer Leyson, “Looking Forward, Looking Back: Chronic Disaster, Collective Trauma, and Community Restoration in the Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining First Nation [Dalles 38C Indian Reserve],” (M.A. thesis, George Mason University, 2002), 117.

¹⁰ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

MILK-MEDICINE: ANISHINABEK MOTHER'S ROLE IN INFANT CARE

The bodies of Anishinabek women were (and, indeed, still are) imbued with medicinal power by their communities. Like the Earth, pregnant women displayed the ability to (re)generate life. These conceptual linkages between pregnancy and medicinal power were made manifest in Anishinabek healing places, particularly the sweat lodge. Cree knowledge keepers Eric Robison and Henry Bird Quinney suggest that sweat lodges were initially designed to mimic “the belly of a pregnant woman” and explained that Indigenous men “use[d] the Sweat Lodge to go through the womb of a mother to try to understand the Creation process of Women and Mother Earth.”¹¹ By passing through the symbolic womb, Indigenous men sought to renew their bodies – the sweat bath was used as both a general curative and relief for stressed muscles. Indigenous women, by contrast, did not enter sweat lodges as often, as female bodies cleansed themselves monthly and had the inherent ability to create.¹² Given the long history of political alliance and intermarriage between Anishinabek and Cree families in the Treaty #3 District, Robison and Quinney’s testimony is particularly relevant.¹³ Their testimony reveals that female bodies were medicine bodies in many Anishinabek and Cree territories.¹⁴

¹¹ Eric Robinson and Henry Bird Quinney, *The Infested Blanket* (Winnipeg: Queenston House, 1985), 11-2.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Peter Bakker, author of *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Metis* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1997), identified a number of historical sources which demonstrated land-sharing between Anishinabek and Cree communities around Lake of the Woods (now part of the Treaty #3 District) in the eighteenth century (256). As early as 1790, for example, Edward Umfreville observed that “These two nations have always been in strict alliance with each other, and many of the Ochipawas [Anishinabek] live in a promiscuous manner among the Ne-heth-aw-as [Crees]” (266).

¹⁴ The seclusion of Anishinabek women during their menses further speaks to the perceived medicinal power of female bodies. However, a full description of menstrual seclusion is outside the scope of this article. Mary Inez Hilger, *Chippewa Child Life and Its Cultural Background*, (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1951), 50-5.

Given Anishinabek women's perceived medicine power, it is perhaps not surprising that breast milk was believed to be both "a gift [from the Creator] and a medicine a mother gives her child."¹⁵ Recognized as a healing liquid, breast milk was the most highly valued food for infants;¹⁶ Anishinabek women recommended breast milk to lactating mothers over known alternatives like whitefish and/or *manomin* soup. Breasts were seen as medicinal tools that both strengthened infants and maintained overall family health by limiting family size. Along the Winnipeg River, Elder Matilda Martin strongly associated pregnancy with the weaning of previous children, suggesting that breastfeeding may have been considered a form of contraception.¹⁷ Today, breastfeeding, when used as a form of contraception, is known as the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM). LAM depends upon hormonal changes experienced by lactating mothers, particularly the reduced production of hormones associated with ovulation. It is most effective within six months of giving birth.¹⁸ LAM also works best if the mother "feeds her baby at least every four hours during the day and every six hours at night."¹⁹ Given its

¹⁵ Unidentified Traditional Educator quoted in Joan Dodgson and Roxanne Struthers, "Traditional Breastfeeding Practices of the Ojibwe of Northern Minnesota," *Health Care for Women International* 24, no. 1 (2003): 57.

¹⁶ Written records of breast milk's socio-cultural significance to Anishinabek families date back to 1826. *Totoashaúbo*, translated "milk" or "breast liquor," featured in Thomas McKenney's "Vocabulary of the Algonquian, or Chippeway Language," copies of which the Department of War gave to American missionaries. McKenney deemed *totoashaúbo* as important to learn as *waydokaugadgig* (allies), *puckway'zhegun* (bread), *shominau'bo* (wine) and *mey'im* (victuals). Thomas L. McKenney, "Vocabulary of the Algonquian, or Chippeway Language," in *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes, of the character and customs of the Chippeway Indians, and of incidents connected with the Treaty of Fond du Lac* (Barre, MA: Imprint Society, 1972), 407-13.

¹⁷ Elder Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 27 July 1972. Kim Anderson, who researches Algonquian peoples in northwestern Ontario, focuses on the use of herbal mixtures to limit family size, citing no examples of breastfeeding to consciously space pregnancies. Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women*, 40-1. Oral informants from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve made no reference to herbal mixtures as a form of birth control. However, Mary Inez Hilger found that Anishinabek woman used tea decoctions to induce abortion in the Boundary Waters District (Hilger, *Chippewa Child Life*, 28).

¹⁸ M. Vekemans, "Postpartum Contraception: The Lactational Amenorrhea Method," *European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health* 2, no. 2 (June 1997): 105-11.

¹⁹ "Breastfeeding as Birth Control," *Planned Parenthood Federation of America*, accessed 1 March 2016, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control/breastfeeding>.

conditional effectiveness, Anishinabek mothers realized that suckling was not always a successful method of birth control. At Lac Courte Oreille, Minnesota, an informant told anthropologist Mary Inez Hilger that toddlers and their infant siblings sometimes nursed together.²⁰ Women observed that breastfeeding did not necessarily prevent multiple births. If breastfeeding was a reliable contraceptive, siblings at different life stages would not have shared the breast.

Anishinabek girls born on Dalles 38C Indian Reserve prior to the development of Whitedog Falls Generating Station were raised under the assumption that they too would breastfeed. Oral testimony reveals that girls born in the 1940s were educated in breast care by their mothers. Rules existed discouraging the use of hunting tools and constrictive bras to facilitate the future flow of milk-medicine. Elder Alice Kelly explained:

[M]y Mom used to say, ‘Don’t ever touch’ – I don’t know what they call those, slingshots and, I don’t know, a bow and arrow – ‘don’t touch those.’
 ‘Why?’ [I’d ask.]
 ‘Your breasts. They gonna drag your breasts.’²¹

Kelly explained that girls were not allowed to touch “the boys’ stuff” to protect their breasts. Toying with predominately male tools – like the bow or the slingshot – was believed to “drag” the breast. Kelly mapped the drag on her body, gesturing from her collarbone to her lower ribs. Whether Anishinabek mothers feared that their daughters would develop a boy-like chest, harm their breasts, or prematurely age their breasts (and hence be unable to lactate) by using “boys’ stuff” is unclear. What is clear, however, is that Anishinabek mothers believed that “dragging” the breast could produce a body incapable of lactation. It is important to note that although post-menopausal women were

²⁰ Hilger, *Chippewa Child Life*, 28.

²¹ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

no longer able to produce milk-medicine, they did not lose their medicine powers at-large. Female Elders harvested herbal medicines and produced herbal decoctions and poultices.²² In later life, botanical knowledge supplemented reproductive power amongst some post-menopausal women.

When Kelly became pregnant in the early 1960s, her mother provided further advice to encourage the flow of milk-medicine and warned Kelly against using “White women’s stuff.” The *waiâbishkiwedig* had long displayed breasts differently than Anishinabek women. Throughout the nineteenth century, middle- and upper-class women used corsets to bind their torsos. This constraining undergarment “impressed apparently natural virtues upon the shape of a woman’s body” by shaping an hourglass figure.²³ A bound waist accentuated the bust. By making the torso appear narrow and slender, the breasts appeared larger by contrast. American historian Elizabeth Matelski has suggested that the straight front corset made “the monobosom” fashionable until World War I.²⁴ Indeed, many non-Indigenous North Americans associated the monobosom with feminine beauty. Non-Indigenous women not only manipulated their flesh to enhance their physical appearance, but to represent feminine virtue. Wendy Dasler Johnson has noted that North Americans associated the torso with morality and “the chest as the seat of emotions.”²⁵ She argued that “in a nineteenth-century corset, a woman’s moral zone

²² Martin-McKeever, *The Chief’s Granddaughter*, 18; Hilger, *Chippewa Child Life*, 11.

²³ Wendy Dasler Johnson, “Cultural Rhetorics of Women’s Corsets,” *Rhetoric Review*, 20: 3-4 (2001): 204.

²⁴ Elizabeth Matelski, *The Color(s) of Perfection: The Feminine Body, Beauty Ideals, and Identity in Postwar America, 1945-1970* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Loyola University Chicago, 2011), 51.

Writing on the Canadian context specifically, Cynthia R. Comacchio (“War and Reconstruction: ‘Normalcy’ and Its Discontents,” *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) confirms that “the large-breasted, wide-hipped, maternal feminine ideal” remained desirable until after World War I when “a slender boyish frame” became more popular (73).

²⁵ Johnson, “Cultural Rhetorics of Women’s Corsets,” 211.

[was] ‘thrown into prominence’ while her appetites [associated with the abdomen] would be kept well under control.”²⁶ Binding thus helped non-Indigenous women to control their waistlines and to display virtue for non-Indigenous men.

Anishinabek women did not traditionally bind the waist to accentuate the bust. As ethnologist Basil Johnston suggests, an Anishinabek “woman’s worth was not measured by a lithe body [or] full breasts.”²⁷ An Anishinabek woman was valued for her industry and her skill (e.g. cooking and sewing).²⁸ Traditional teachings warned Anishinabek youth against choosing a partner for his/her appearance. For example, one Anishinabek man rejected suitable brides within his own village. He travelled until “he found a yellow-haired woman of great beauty.” Her beauty, however, did little to ensure his well-being – this woman did not cook or sew. Overtime, her beauty faded and she became a burden. In this story, good looks are no virtue. The young man had married Dandelion.²⁹ Given that breasts had limited sex appeal, Anishinabek women had little pressure (or, indeed, incentive) to showcase their bust with restrictive clothing. Before transatlantic trade, Anishinabek women wore loose-fitting deerskin skirts and dresses.³⁰ Frances Densmore noted that “[i]n early times the clothing of a woman consisted of a single garment made of two deerskins, one forming the front and the other the back of the garment, the two parts being fastened together at the shoulders and held in place with a

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1982), 79.

²⁸ Ibid., 79, 84.

²⁹ Ibid., 84.

³⁰ In *History of the Ojibway People*, William Warren noted that “their shirts and leggins [sic] were made of finely dressed deer and elk skins sewn together with the sinews of these animals” (98). Warren associates this style of dress with the early eighteenth century. In *Chippewa Child Life*, Mary Inez Hilger suggests that “[i]n the early days adults wore clothing made of finely tanned hides of deer, moose, bear, and elk; and of dressed skins of rabbit, beaver, and other small fur-bearing animals” (129). Hilger’s temporal framework is unclear.

belt.”³¹ The belt is described as a functional, rather than fashionable, item. To demonstrate their worth, Anishinabek women adorned their clothing with beads made out of animal bone, stone, and shell. Overtime Anishinabek women replaced handcrafted beads with glass, ceramic, and metal beads acquired through trade with the *waiâbishkiwedig*.³²

Anishinabek women also fashioned trade blankets into clothing. The adoption of European cloth did not precipitate the suppression of Anishinabek chests or torsos. Densmore explained that “The blanket was wrapped around the limbs like a tight skirt and fastened with a belt; the upper part of the blanket was then thrown loosely around the arms and shoulders.” This style of dress eased mother-work: “A woman could put her baby in the blanket [or] drop the upper part of the blanket entirely, drawing it around the waist.”³³ Blanket skirts did not showcase the bust; instead, skirt styles made it easier for Anishinabek women to free the breast to nurse. Clothing designed specifically for the chest was also functional. Densmore indicated that “[a] muskrat skin, tanned with the hair on it, was worn [seasonally] as a ‘chest protector.’”³⁴ The “chest protector” was worn by both genders, but more commonly by men on hunting expeditions.³⁵ It was placed inside blanket coats, perhaps to cut wind. Unisex clothing like the “chest protector” reinforces that the bust was not eroticized in Anishinabek communities – undergarments were not designed to enhance the chest, but to protect it from the elements.

³¹ Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 31.

³² Katherine Krohn, *Calico Dresses and Buffalo Robes: American West Fashions from the 1840s to the 1890s* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2012), 11.

³³ Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 33.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

As trade increased, Anishinabek women replaced loose-fitting deerskin dresses and skirts with ready-made fabric. In the 1860s and before, the *waiâbishkiwedig* exchanged broadcloth with the Anishinabek for furs. Much like deerskin dresses, broadcloth dresses were “held in place by strips over the shoulders and confined at the waist by a belt or a sash.” While Anishinabek women adopted new material, they rejected Western pressure to bind the torso. Intercultural exchange did influence how women showcased (and, perhaps, envisioned) their assets in the 1860s. Anishinabek women added “front pieces” to their dresses around this time. The “front piece” extended across the chest and “was the first part of a woman’s dress to be decorated in color [sic].”³⁶ Worsted braids sewn onto the front piece, instead of constricting undergarments, drew attention to the chest. In the early 1900s, Anishinabek women used pointed waistlines to create an hourglass figure. Women also adopted some European-influenced undergarments. Elder Matilda Martin made bloomers from flannelette and used cotton to make slips.³⁷ Cost and the day-to-day reality of Anishinabek women’s lives, however, made corseting impractical. Martin relied on creative stitching (i.e. the pointed waistline) to enhance her physical appearance as a bride. Martin married in a European-influenced duveteen jacket and skirt.³⁸ Shortly after her church wedding, however, Martin was required to paddle home.³⁹ A restrictive corset would have prevented such physical exertion. At the turn of the century, beading and stitching offered practical alternatives to

³⁶ Ibid., 32.

³⁷ Elder Matilda Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 July 1972.

³⁸ “Mrs. Martin’s Wedding Dress,” *Kenora Miner and News*, undated, unpaginated. This undated document can also be found in an unpublished memoir at the Lake of the Woods District Museum. See LOWM, Lucille Burton, “Memoirs of Matilda Josephine Lavergne Kipling Martin,” 1987.

³⁹ Elder Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, summer 1972.

Anishinabek women who wanted to accentuate their curves without limiting their ability to work.

While Anishinabek women refused the corset, they were familiar with body binding. Infants were bound to encourage healthy development. The *tikinagun*, or cradleboard, is perhaps the most famous example. In the Winnipeg River drainage basin, cradleboards were commonly “2½ feet long, fitted with a U-shaped shelf to contain the baby, and over which a drawstring-fitted cloth covering is placed.”⁴⁰ This “drawstring-fitted cloth” is known as a *dikineyaab*. It was used by Anishinabek mothers to keep infants securely attached to the cradleboard.⁴¹ Indian enthusiast Frank Belmore claimed that infants “[appear] so tightly packed in that [they] can scarcely move.”⁴² The head and arms, however, remained free. Children were protected from falls by “a stiff circle of wood” that was attached at “a convenient distance above the head.”⁴³ Anishinabek mothers bound children to protect them from harm. Belmore explained that “it prevents [children] from getting burned at the fire, cutting [themselves] on the sharp skinning knife.”⁴⁴ He determined that the *tikinagun* was an Anishinabek tool that “defied improvement.” Binding also allowed Anishinabek women to “[carry] small children on dog-team and canoe trips.”⁴⁵ Elder Matilda Martin suggested that the *tikinagun* enabled women to work by freeing their arms. The *tikinagun* allowed Martin to paddle and to pick berries. By constricting their children, Anishinabek women freed themselves to labour.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ LOWM, Frank Belmore, “The Tikinagun,” undated, Folder: Anishinaabe – Essays and Papers.

⁴¹ Bruce White, *We Are at Home: Pictures of the Ojibwe People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2007), 21.

⁴² LOWM, Belmore, “The Tikinagun.”

⁴³ “Uncivilized Man,” *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art*, 51 (1861): 471.

⁴⁴ Belmore, “The Tikinagun.”

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Elder Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 11 July 1972.

Parents also used the *tikinagun* to direct growth. For example, Anishinabek parents sometimes attached miniature moccasins to the “stiff circle of wood” in hopes of raising a good runner. Miniature bows and arrows, by contrast, were used to encourage the development of a good hunter.⁴⁷ Bonnets were also used to direct growth. Elder Jane Lindsay, whose birthdate is unknown, instructed Martin to “put the bonnet on after the baby is born because their heads are not a very good shape.” Lindsay had been born two generations before Martin and believed that a “tight bonnet” would encourage healthy bone development. Martin observed that other Anishinabek families, not just her own, used restrictive garments to shape the head in the early 1900s.⁴⁸

American and Canadian styles of breast management changed significantly after World War I, although women continued to manipulate their chest for fashion. By the 1920s, the brassiere had replaced the corset. Early bras offered little support – their sole purpose was to restrict movement. Some women opted to bind their breasts by repurposing old sheets to achieve “the look” without the cost.⁴⁹ Ideas of feminine beauty had changed: the hourglass figure was replaced by a tubular silhouette. Non-Indigenous North Americans now preferred a bound chest over a protruding monobosom. This form of binding was short-lived. Uplift became fashionable in the 1930s. But, it was not until 1947 that the first padded bra became wildly popular amongst Canadian and American

⁴⁷ “Uncivilized Man,” *The Eclectic Magazine*, 471.

⁴⁸ Elder Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, summer 1972.

⁴⁹ Kathleen Morgan Drowne and Patrick Huber, *American Popular Culture through History: The 1920s*, edited by Ray B. Browne (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), note that “during the 1920s women’s underwear... became lighter and less constricting” than the corset (105). Older women, however, continued to purchase corsets despite the rising popularity of the brassiere. Drowne and Huber explain that most undergarments “manufactured during the 1920s were intended to flatten rather than accentuate women’s breasts” (106). See also: Carol Wood, “Bust Support Comes of Age: The Bra in the 1920s and 1930s,” *The Virtual Costumer* 8:3 (2010): 19.

women. Manufacturers used foam rubber or felt to help women augment their chest.⁵⁰ In 1948, breasts throughout North America “got a lift” with the first mass-produced push-up bra, “The Rising Star.”⁵¹ Matelski argues that many non-Indigenous North Americans associated an ample bust with attractiveness, particularly to the opposite sex. Young women expressed “anxiety about breast size, more than any other body part.”⁵² Industry responded. In addition to padding and underwire, American and Canadian women purchased vitamins, bust creams, and hydro massage to increase their breast size.⁵³ Anishinabek women were taught to ignore the trend for high, formed breasts. Kelly’s mother warned: “‘Don’t put your tits like this [lifts them as if in an underwire bra]. Let them be down.’” Anishinabek women, unlike the *waiâbishkiwedig*, did not believe that men desired an ample bust.⁵⁴ *Anishinaabemowin*, the Anishinaabe language, suggested that men wanted companions. The word for relationship, *weedjeewaugun*, roughly translates “he who goes with” or “she who walks with.”⁵⁵ Ritual wedding words encouraged husband and wife to “be kind to one another” and to “be kind to [their] children.”⁵⁶ Oral stories emphasized that good parents nourished their children.⁵⁷ Clothing that improved breast function was thus more valuable than clothing that increased breast size. Women do not hold their children upright to feed. A lower, more accessible breast would have allowed Kelly to nurse her infant at a more comfortable

⁵⁰ Maysa Rawi, “The first ever push-up bra: So, bust-boosting dates back to the 1800s,” *Daily Mail*, 23 April 2010, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1268276/The-push-bra-Bust-booster-dates-1800s.html#ixzz2omt0AAR9>; Jane Farrell-Beck and Colleen Gau, *Uplift: The Bra in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 121.

⁵¹ Rawi, “The first ever push-up bra,” 23 April 2010.

⁵² Matelski, *The Color(s) of Perfection*, 99, 62.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 65-9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁵⁵ Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies*, 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 91-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

angle – on a practical level, push-up bras may have complicated mother-work. Kelly believed that her mother’s advice worked, conceptually linking her milk supply to intergenerational guidance: “When I was carrying my kids, I could feel the milk already... [It was] dripping when my baby was just about to come out.” Kelly associated her maternal success with unrestrictive clothing. Kelly then reiterated her mothers’ advice, reassuring me, an interviewer of childbearing age, that “milk will start coming [a]ll the time” if one’s breasts are not artificially pushed up.⁵⁸

Best practice for lactating mothers extended from dress into pre-and-postnatal diet. Diets recommended to lactating mothers at Dalles 38C reinforced the value of “wild foods,” or food found naturally in the local environment. Many Anishinabek women believed that wild foods were essential to increasing milk supply without draining the mother of essential nutrients. Kim Anderson found that northern Algonquian peoples designed prenatal diets under the assumption that “whatever the pregnant woman took in would be ingested by the baby.”⁵⁹ Kelly suggests a similar *modus operandi* shaped postnatal diets in northwestern Ontario: “My Mom eat the wild food and whatever she eat we suck her [laughter]. Breastfeeding.”⁶⁰ Given that infant health depended heavily upon quality breast milk, it was important that the mother ate select, nutrient-rich crops, fish, and game. In Minnesota, Joan E. Dodgson and Roxanne Struthers found that *manomin* (wild rice) was highly recommended by contemporary Anishinabek knowledge keepers.⁶¹ Working throughout the 1930s among “the Chippewa” in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, Hilger found that lactating mothers were also encouraged to eat wild foods

⁵⁸ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

⁵⁹ Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women*, 44.

⁶⁰ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

⁶¹ Dodgson and Struthers, “Traditional Breastfeeding Practices of the Ojibwe of Northern Minnesota,” 58.

such as “venison, wild rice, lake trout and whitefish.”⁶² In the Treaty #3 District, Elder testimony reveals that whitefish soup was similarly identified as a key component of postnatal diets. Kelly explained, “My Mom breastfeed us, all of us. All she use is whitefish soup to have milk on her breast.”⁶³ The use of beaver soup to encourage lactation, however, appears to be unique to Anishinabek living in the Treaty #3 District – similar findings have yet to be identified by other researchers.⁶⁴

Anishinabek women carefully monitored and regulated their diets to encourage the production of milk-medicine. The possibility of jeopardizing milk-medicine through improper diet is made evident by Anishinabek dietary restrictions for potential mothers. Kelly suggests that turtle soup was believed capable of compromising one’s reproductive health:

- Kelly: But, we weren’t allowed to eat it [turtle soup]. Just the old people. We used to peek and watch them, me and my friends, my relatives. They looked but don’t eat it... ‘You’ll kill your virgin [reproductive health],’ that’s what my Mom told me. Whatever we have in our – I don’t know, you ruin where the baby is.
- Luby: Alice, was there anything else you weren’t supposed to eat to stay healthy?
- Alice: That’s the only thing they never let us eat. The turtle soup.

Kelly did not provide the rationale behind this dietary restriction. Hilger suggests that turtle, a recognized emissary of the spirit world, was banned during pregnancy – for Anishinabek mothers and fathers – in Mille Lacs, Minnesota. Eating turtle was believed to cause the baby to “stretch all the time.”⁶⁵ If we extrapolate from Cree testimonies, it

⁶² Hilger quoted in Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women*, 44. Hilger also found that many Anishinabek women believed that porridge boiled in fish broth could increase milk secretion. See Hilger, *Chippewa Child Life*, 29.

⁶³ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Hilger, *Chippewa Child Life*, 6-7.

seems likely that taboos around turtle involve “taking the baby back”⁶⁶ or stretching the child between worlds. Anderson found that it was considered “particularly dangerous to take the newborn into environments where he or she might come into contact with negative energy, or where there may be spirits waiting to take the baby back.”⁶⁷ Capable of living both on land and in water, of living between worlds, Turtle may have tempted the child’s spirit to follow Him through the physical world. Cree knowledge keepers Robinson and Quinney suggest that infants, being “closest to the Creator’s Creation and Spirit World having come more recently from the Womb,” face greater temptation to leave the physical plane.⁶⁸ Anderson suggests that many northern Algonquian people believe this openness to the spirit world comes from the fontanelle or “soft spot” in the baby’s head.⁶⁹

While Anishinabek restrictions on material culture and diet were designed to ensure the production of milk-medicine, labour demands and/or bodily stress sometimes prevented mothers from breastfeeding their children. Oral testimonies demonstrate how Anishinabek mothers in the Treaty #3 District were encouraged to utilize alternatives like whitefish, sturgeon, and *manomin* (wild rice) soup. For example, Kelly testified that when her mother left to harvest, a bottle of whitefish soup was left with her caregiver. Kelly’s mother explained, ““whitefish soup, that’s what I feed you [when] I couldn’t do it because I had to go look for food for you.”” Bottles were made from recycled goods to

⁶⁶ Basil Johnston identifies the turtle as a symbol of “communication, emissary” in Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*, 53.

⁶⁷ Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women*, 57.

⁶⁸ Robinson and Quinney, *The Infested Blanket*, 9.

⁶⁹ Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women*, 57. While Anderson suggested that the fontanelle was associated with an openness to the spirit world, Hilger found that Anishinabek women attached no meaning to the fontanelle (circa 1930). According to Hilger’s observations, the fontanelle was only recognized as a sensitive area. She found that the fear of injury encouraged many Anishinabek peoples to refrain from washing the top of an infant’s head. See Hilger, *Chippewa Child Life*, 18.

feed infants while the mother was at work. Kelly described homemade bottles: “they have these kind of old, old fashioned nipples. I used to laugh at my Mom. They used to have these old pop bottles... and they used to put the nipples like this [motions putting nipple over bottleneck].” Sometimes, particularly while mothers were at work, “the milk was fish soup.”⁷⁰

Supporting evidence for fish-based alternatives to breast milk discussed by Kelly date back to the mid-1890s. Former Dalles 38C resident, Matilda Martin, recalled how Anishinabek mothers made bottles of rabbit bone and fish gut:

I heard one time a woman have no milk and, mind you, [s]he make that baby drink that, small baby you know. [S]he made something to suck it, to suck it out of, jackfish guts, you know, out of jackfish guts. I think [s]he cooked the jackfish guts and [s]he made a hole in here and then [s]he put a rabbit bone there... that’s the way that baby suck that fish bouilla [sic].⁷¹

This quotation makes evident that fish soup (or bouillon) was a longstanding remedy for women unable to lactate.

Anishinabek mothers valued wild food alternatives to manufactured baby foods. Commercial infant formulas were introduced to the market in 1867 with the development of Justus von Liebig’s appropriately named Liebig’s Soluble Food for Babies. By the turn of the twentieth century, Nestle’s Milk, Mellin’s Infant Food, and Ridge’s Food functioned as formula alternatives to Liebig’s.⁷² However, there is no evidence to suggest that formula was readily available to mothers in Rat Portage. Much like their Anishinabek neighbours, Anglo-Canadian mothers were encouraged to fortify their blood for nursing. In the 1910s, the *Kenora Miner and News* carried regular advertisements for

⁷⁰ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

⁷¹ Elder Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 27 July 1972.

⁷² Harvey Levenstein, “‘Best for Babies’ or ‘Preventable Infanticide’? The Controversy over Artificial Feeding of Infants in America, 1880-1920,” *Journal of American History* 70, no. 1 (1983): 75-95. See also S. Radbill, “Infant Feeding through the Ages,” *Clinical Pediatrics* 20, no. 10 (1981): 613-21.

Maltum Stout, a caramelized malt powder for nursing mothers. Mothers could order this “wholesome, positively non-intoxicating” powder from Winnipeg suppliers through their local grocer.⁷³ It appears that commercial infant formula first became available in Kenora around 1923. Klim Powdered Whole Milk, “pure, fresh liquid milk... with only the water removed,” could be ordered from Canadian Milk Products Ltd. in Winnipeg.

Advertisements urged Anglo-Canadian mothers to order Klim, calling it “safe milk.”

Considerable social pressure existed to replace breastfeeding with formula feeding as Canadian doctors argued that formula – like Klim – was “best for babies.”⁷⁴ And yet, oral testimony suggests that Anishinabek mothers along the Winnipeg River did not actively seek scientifically approved formulas.

Long before Klim entered the northwestern market, Anishinabek mothers resisted cash incentives to bottle-feed. Town Councillor E. W. Chadwick promoted the benefits he perceived of goat’s milk for nursing infants as early as 1905.⁷⁵ For example, Chadwick entered five goats into the livestock show at the Kenora Agricultural Fair. Chadwick displayed his animals “in the grounds to the rear of the Hudson’s Bay stores,”⁷⁶ a known Anishinabek gathering site. Indeed, Matilda remembered routinely boiling a pot of tea behind the Hudson’s Bay Store.⁷⁷ Here Chadwick may have vocalized his published

⁷³ E. L. Drewry, Ltd., located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, supplied Maltum Stout to businesses in the Kenora District. E. L. Drewry, Ltd. regularly advertised Maltum Stout in the *Kenora Miner and News* during the fall of 1918. For example: “Maltum Stout [advertisement],” *Kenora Miner and News*, 7 September 1918, 3.

⁷⁴ Levenstein, ““Best for Babies,”” 83. See also: “Klim Powdered Whole Milk [advertisement],” *Kenora Miner and News*, 15 September 1923, 3; “Klim Powdered Whole Milk [advertisement],” *Kenora Miner and News*, 1 December 1923, 3; “Klim Powdered Whole Milk [advertisement],” *Kenora Miner and News*, 2 February 1924, 4.

⁷⁵ C. W. Chadwick quoted in “Have Goats a Place in Ontario,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 4 November 1916, 2.

⁷⁶ “The Fair Decided Success,” *Kenora Miner and News*, 28 August 1915, 1.

⁷⁷ “Old Time Resident Fondly Recalls Walk from Dalles,” *Kenora Miner and News*, undated, unpaginated. This undated document can also be found in an unpublished memoir at the Lake of the Woods

opinion that goat's milk reduced indigestion in children: "the butter globules [in goat's milk] are so fine that curdling on a child's stomach is most improbable." In an attempt to improve the physical health of northern Ontarians, Chadwick offered cash incentives and money-back guarantees to families willing to incorporate goat products into their diets.⁷⁸ Chadwick's efforts anticipated federal attempts to introduce goat's milk into Indigenous diets. In 1919, new "Indian" hospitals in Ontario began to replace cow's milk with goat's milk in-house.⁷⁹ Oral testimony, however, suggests that Anishinabek mothers along the Winnipeg River rejected municipal and federal pressure to bottle-feed. Martin did not recall any livestock rearing at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve.⁸⁰ Elder Charlie Fisher of One Man Lake, a neighbouring community (now flooded), similarly claimed Anishinabek families displayed a limited interest in livestock rearing. Fisher explained that families "couldn't really look after cattle at the same time [they went trapping]."⁸¹ As a result of their mobility requirements, Anishinabek families may have rejected cash incentives to bottle-feed. Anishinabek mothers maintained that breast was best. Whitefish soup trailed close behind and was served in handcrafted bottles.

Given the perceived importance of whitefish soup to promoting milk supply and acting as a healthful alternative to milk-medicine, it is unsurprising that Matilda put extraordinary emphasis on teaching her granddaughter, Carol Kipling, how to make fish bouillon. Kipling remembers bringing Martin home to eat with her four boys:

There [were] some things that [were] her specialities – like she loved her whitefish bouillon. And, uh, even in her later years, when she was in

District Museum. See LOWM, Lucille Burton, "Memoirs of Matilda Josephine Laverne Kipling Martin," 1987.

⁷⁸ "He Kept the Goat," *Kenora Miner and News*, 27 October 1915, 3.

⁷⁹ "Goats for Hospital," *Kenora Miner and News*, 20 August 1919, 3.

⁸⁰ Elder Martin, interview with the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 27 July 1972.

⁸¹ Elder Fisher, interview with Chapeskie, 22 March 1995.

Pinecrest [Nursing Home] – in the fall, I would always go to the fish market and buy a big whitefish and go pick her up and bring her home.⁸²

While Martin may have acted as “head chef,” Kipling was not allowed to be a passive observer in the kitchen. Kipling remembers how she was carefully taught (and retaught) how to prepare whitefish bouillon for her family:

[S]he would always have to clean it right from the beginning to the end... And, every year it was like she'd never done it in front of me before or [like] I didn't know anything about making fish bouillon. She would have to show me step by step how to scale the fish, how you cut off the head. Now you do this. Now you do that. And so she would make this fish bouillon as if it was the very first time.⁸³

Martin's dedication in teaching Kipling how to prepare whitefish bouillon reflects the importance both she and her community attached to it. Although Kipling “married out” and raised her children off-reserve, Martin provided her with the key to preserving infant health. Martin ensured that her granddaughter could prepare the best known alternative to breast milk, a weaning staple, although the river they had long fished on was beginning to change.

DAMMED RIVER: ANISHINABEK MOTHERS RESPOND TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS IN COUNTRY FOODS

The construction (1955 to 1958) and operation (1958 to present) of Whitedog Generating Station curtailed Anishinabek women's ability to provide milk-medicine to their children at Dalles 38C. Increased levels of methyl mercury in predatory fish (like whitefish) were identified and made public by the Ministry of the Environment after the Hydro-Electric Power Commission entered the region. Whitedog Generating Station has limited subsequent generations – like my own – from raising children according to local,

⁸² Pastor Lawson, interview with author, 12 July 2012.

⁸³ Ibid.

cultural standards. But, in addition to mercury contamination the question still remains: how did Whitedog Generating Station initiate this decline? Band members of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve link fish toxicity to effluent and wood cellulose fibre released into Rideout Bay by the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company. While the triune communities of Rat Portage (Kenora), Keewatin, and Norman had dumped mill wastes into Winnipeg River since 1879, food crises did not emerge until almost a century later. Why? Imagine the thirteen-kilometre stretch of the Winnipeg River between Kenora and Dalles 38C Indian Reserve acting like a giant aerobic composter. Aerobic microbes – the organisms responsible for decomposing organic inputs – need sufficient oxygen to break down wastes like wood cellulose fibre. Land-based compost piles are commonly aerated by the turning of piles or dropping floors. The rapids on Winnipeg River between Kenora and Dalles 38C helped to aerate decomposing wood fibre. “Wild” waters, such as rapids and falls, dissolved oxygen by churning the water and pulling air back into its fold. Indeed, R. A. McKenzie, a fisheries employee, associated healthy fish populations downstream from Rideout Bay to “the various swift stretches in the river” and subsequent oxygenation of the water, despite dumping by the paper mill.⁸⁴ Using available oxygen, aerobic microbes were able to transform Kenora’s waste to carbon dioxide (CO₂), ammonia (NH₃), energy (heat), and other end products that could be managed by the river. Aerobic composting, however, is a two-part process: bacterial reactions produce energy for cell synthesis. The production of new oxygen-dependent bacterial cells is a natural phenomenon. At low levels of organic loading, decomposition and synthesis

⁸⁴ McKenzie, “The Reported Decrease in Fish Life and the Pollution of the Winnipeg River, Kenora, Ontario,” 315.

occur in a state of dynamic equilibrium.⁸⁵ R. A. McKenzie critiqued the poorly-understood dumping of wastes into Winnipeg River by the Kenora mill in 1930.⁸⁶ After a series of oxygen tests, McKenzie concluded that healthy fish populations along the Winnipeg River depended on nature rather than effective waste management by mill employees:

In all cases oxygen content of the water is well above the 2.5 c.c. per litre, which is supposed to be about the minimum for fish life... This high oxygen content is no doubt due largely to the falls [,] the various swift stretches in the river and the thorough mixing of the water during the fall turn-over of the water.⁸⁷

‘Wild’ water thus helped to maintain the equilibrium between oxygen content and organic inputs (such as wood cellulose fibre) prior to the construction of Whitedog Generating Station.

When the Hydro-Electric Power Commission modified flow through Dalles Channel between 1955 and 1958,⁸⁸ the total amount of oxygen dissolved by water declined. The aeration of water occurs most quickly “by wind (creating waves), rapids, waterfalls, ground water discharge or other forms of running water.”⁸⁹ Whitedog Falls Generating Station prevented water from running downstream. As a result, less “natural mixing” of the elements occurred after 1958. The higher the amount of organic material present in a body of water, the more oxygen is required for the microbial decomposition of waste. Increased energy demands by aerobic bacteria responsible for composting waste can lead to oxygen depletion. Once oxygen levels are upset, sulphate-reducing bacteria

⁸⁵ Polprasert, *Organic Waste Recycling*, 56.

⁸⁶ McKenzie, “The Reported Decrease in Fish Life and the Pollution of the Winnipeg River, Kenora, Ontario,” 316.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁸⁸ “Development Planned: Hydro Starts Road from Minaki to White Dog and Deer Falls,” *Kenora-Keewatin Daily Miner and News*, 16 September 1955, 1.

⁸⁹ Kemker, “Dissolved Oxygen,” 19 November 2013.

can release naturally-occurring mercury from the sediment as an accidental process of microbial activity (e.g. anaerobic composting). Sulphate-reducing bacteria require two inputs to survive: sulphate and organic matter. In short, they need energy (provided by sulphate) and food (provided by organic matter like wood debris). Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill was a sulfite-operating mill. As in the Rainy River case, dissolved sulfide was a toxic compound present in pulp-and-paper mill effluents.⁹⁰ By dumping its waste directly into Rideout Bay, Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Mill provided one of two necessary inputs needed to prompt microbial methylation. Transport, storage, and wet-barking, by contrast, increased the presence of organic matter in the river, providing sulphate-reducing bacteria with food. Methylmercury released during the process of decomposition accumulates up the food chain. As oxygen levels in the river decreased, fish habitat changed. As fish habitat changed, mercury levels in predatory fish increased.

While whitefish continued to thrive in Dalles' fishing territories, band members believed that mill operations negatively affected fish quality in terms of taste (not toxicity) in the 1950s. Indeed, whitefish remained a dietary staple. Nevertheless, band members closely associated mill production with fish health and taught their children to monitor industrial dumping. Children were taught that pulp waste directly influenced food quality. Kipling describes a family fish fry during her youth:

Kipling: They always poured the sewer from the mill – that would
 be like the baths from the wood and the sludge that came
 from the mill – and the sewer would go right into the river.
 And, they said the fish was never the same. They never
 tasted the same. They always had a tainted taste. I
 remember them saying that...

⁹⁰ Peter J. Colby & Lloyd L. Smith Jr, "Survival of Walleye Eggs and Fry on Paper Fiber Sludge Deposits in Rainy River, Minnesota," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 96, no. 3 (1967): 285.

- Luby: So, while you were sitting down having [fish] would your dad or somebody say, ‘Oh, that doesn’t taste the same as when I was young.’ Was it sort of like that?
- Kipling: No. No. He would just – they would just make a comment that it’s not as good. You know how when you sit down everyone just seems to pig out when you have a family fish fry? ‘Oh so good’ [I would say]. ‘Oh, you don’t have any idea how good it used to taste before the mill came.’ They’d say things like that...they would mention that [mill].⁹¹

As adults, these same children noted an accumulation of mill wastes near the Dalles Channel, now a reservoir of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Robert Kabestra echoed Kipling family sentiments regarding pollution and flavour. Kabestra claimed that “meat doesn’t taste the same” in the 1990s.⁹² This change in flavour altered Anishinabek perceptions of locally-harvested foodstuffs and resulted in many families questioning their ability to feed their children from the river.

Many Elders believed that pollution from the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company changed not only the taste but the healthfulness of country foods. Clarence Henry observed that “[f]ish got sick from the worms” near the mill.⁹³ Similarly, Kabestra testified that disease in fish and game manifested physically. He said, “[b]listers, spots [appear] on the liver, lungs, kidneys [of game animals]... it was the organs that were full of blisters.”⁹⁴ Band members feared that human ingestion of “sick” fish and game might cause illness. Henry suggested that “a human would get sick if they got worms in their body.”⁹⁵ Oral testimony indicates that Anishinabek families discarded “sick” animals to prevent the transfer of disease between species. Kabestra remembered, “Joe [Wagamese]

⁹¹ Pastor Lawson, interview with author, 12 July 2012.

⁹² Elder Kabestra (Anamikipinens), interview with Cuyler Cotton, 29 September 1992.

⁹³ Elder Henry, interview with Cuyler Cotton, 14 June 1993.

⁹⁴ Elder Kabestra (Anamikipinens), interview with Cotton, 29 September 1992.

⁹⁵ Elder Henry, interview with Cuyler Cotton, 14 June 1993.

mentioned cutting a duck's chest and discovering white veins in the chest. He threw it away."⁹⁶ Anishinabek families clearly monitored consumption to maintain good health. The Ministry of the Environment confirmed Anishinabek fears that country food could cause disease in the 1970s. Federal officials did not comment on worms, blisters, or spots. Instead, the Ministry of the Environment reported an invisible problem: mercury levels in excess of 0.5 ppm in northern pike, smallmouth bass, sucker (redhorse and white), and walleye. This finding meant that large fish populations near Dalles 38C were deemed unfit for human consumption.⁹⁷

Federal recognition of fish toxicity in the Winnipeg River drainage basin raised Anishinabek fears about mercury poisoning at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Regular interaction with Grassy Narrows – a neighbouring community that intermarried and shared harvesting grounds with Dalles 38C – alerted families to the risk of Minamata disease. Members of Dalles 38C were attuned to multiple symptoms being displayed at Grassy Narrows, including, but not limited to: “numbness of the mouth, lips, tongue, hands, and feet; tunnel vision [;] impairment of hearing; speech disorders; difficulty in swallowing; loss of balance [;] disturbances in coordination [;] extreme fatigue [and] mental depression.”⁹⁸ By 1973, Anishinabek in-and-around Kenora feared that mercury caused death as indicated by the inquest into Thomas Strong's death. H. B. Cotnam, supervising coroner for the Province of Ontario, argued against the popular Anishinabek belief that Strong died of mercury poisoning. Cotnam confirmed that Strong died of “an

⁹⁶ Elder Kabestra (Anamikipinens), interview with Cuyler Cotton, 29 September 1992.

⁹⁷ Paula Spencer, Ministry of the Environment, e-mail to author, 14 November 2011.

⁹⁸ Shkilnyk, *A Poison Stronger than Love*, 185.

acute coronary thrombosis” rather than “high levels of mercury.”⁹⁹ His test provided limited reassurance to Anishinabek families, however, as “expert evidence during the inquest revealed recent mercury analysis of blood and hair from Indians in the area were higher than normal, and some were in the known dangerous range.” Strong’s inquest led the Ministry of Health to establish preventative health measures for band members of Grassy Narrows, including a twice annual “mercury analysis of blood and hair samples” by Dr. J. Stopps of the Environmental Health Services Branch.¹⁰⁰ Stopps did not offer comparable testing at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Family networks made Dalles’ band members aware of the hazards of consuming fish from nearby waters, but provided them with none of the benefits of federal monitoring. Band members came to live in a constant state of apprehension, wondering if ‘dirty water’ was poisoning their families.¹⁰¹

Historians have long discussed mercury methylation and its effect on fish populations. And yet, researchers to date have discussed this link almost exclusively in relation to rising male unemployment and welfare rates in Indigenous communities as Indigenous men are unable to guide or to fish commercially. Little attention has been paid to how declining catches by male family members – husbands, brothers, fathers, uncles –

⁹⁹ H. B. Cotnam, Supervising Coroner, to T. M. Eberlee, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, 6 February 1973, “Re: Inquest into the Death of Thomas Strong deceased – 16 August 1972,” Indian Community Branch General 1973, RG 47-138, b212821, AO.

¹⁰⁰ Ross C. Bennett, Deputy Chief Coroner, letter to T. M. Eberlee, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, 8 March 1973, “Re: Inquest into the Death of Thomas Strong,” Indian Community Branch General 1973, RG 47-138, b212821, AO.

¹⁰¹ These fears remain active today. During a recent community meeting (2008), band members expressed a desire to “to take hair samples, that be our next sort of idea” to determine whether perceived health risks are scientifically verifiable. Stress caused by living with a potential illness is amplified by Health Canada’s historic lack of interest in monitoring water quality at Dalles 38C. As Cuyler Cotton explained, “right now, there’s not data on the extent of mercury levels, historic or otherwise, in this community.” Unfortunately, the cost of knowing whether the water was poison – if the fish are poison – is beyond the means of Dalles 38C. And so, questions about whether to eat country foods remain unanswered. Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining Ojibway Nation Band Meeting, meeting with author, 19 November 2011, Ochiichagwe’Babigo’Ining Ojibway Nation, Ontario.

have influenced Anishinabek women's ability to care for their children.¹⁰² Indeed, such changes are difficult to identify as childcare practices like breastfeeding cannot be tracked in the same way as fishing licenses available in the archives. Within Anishinabek communities, however, such changes are writ large. For example, many women who were raised to care for their breasts in hopes of providing milk-medicine were unable to follow Anishinabek dietary recommendations for lactating mothers, which emphasized the importance of whitefish in breast milk production. One Elder from Dalles 38C remembers an unidentified medical official visiting her community around 1970. This moment was the first time she was told "not to eat any more fish, not even muskrat, or beaver." She describes the visit as follows:

I remember a nurse came with a doctor. They told us not to eat game, fish, not to eat any of those things anymore that we got from the river, that... they were polluted with mercury and waste from that paper mill... It was terrible.¹⁰³

In April 1973, Anishinabek women at Grassy Narrows organized the "Women's Mini-Conference" and invited women from other reserves in the Treaty #3 District to exchange knowledge and voice women's concerns. Women feared that federally appointed field nurses working on-reserve downplayed their concerns about reproductive health to obscure the mercury problem (and thus maintain the milling economy).¹⁰⁴ Lacking reliable federal support, Grand Council Treaty #3 sought alternative medical advice. Throughout 1973, *Council Fire* published Dr. A. Burnstein's warnings to Treaty #3

¹⁰² In the Winnipeg River drainage basin, this trend is demonstrated by Shkilnyk, *A Poison Stronger than Love*, 200-06, 217-19.

¹⁰³ Unidentified Elder quoted in Leyson, "Looking Forward, Looking Back," 96.

¹⁰⁴ Grand Council Treaty #3, "Women's Mini Conference, Grassy Narrows," *Treaty #3 Council Fire* 2, no. 5 (1973): 1. Anishinabek women's fears about obscured evidence may have been tied to parliamentary debates about the existence of methyl mercury in the Treaty #3 District. For further information, see Lee Manko, "Mercury Disability Board: A Historical Report, 1986-2001," funded by Grassy Narrows First Nation and Wabseemong Independent Nation Mercury Disability Board, September 2006.

subscribers: “If a pregnant mother has mercury, then the mercury will concentrate on the unborn baby. The mercury will cause improper growth to the child.”¹⁰⁵ Burnstein implored pregnant Anishinabek women in the Treaty #3 District to visit Winnipeg General Hospital and be tested for mercury intoxication, indicating an awareness of the challenges that Anishinabek women faced finding acceptable protein substitutes in isolated communities. For example, the federal government shipped canned salmon to Grassy Narrows First Nation, but it was left untouched in the local dump because it did not yet have a recognized place in the local diet.¹⁰⁶ As a result, Anishinabek women were faced with the choice to either eat whitefish *or* breastfeed without the sense of breast milk as milk-medicine.

In response to Elder fears, Anishinabek women organized events like the Women’s Mini-Conference to increase awareness about the risk of consuming wild foods while pregnant and/or breastfeeding. On-reserve schools also launched programs like “Cleaning up Grassy” to teach children that mercury pollution was bad for community health; for the first time, children were being taught at home that Anishinabek waters and foodstuffs could be poison. Figure 26, a story by Tony Ashopenase, reveals that children understood that the dangers of mercury were often invisible. Ashopenase could clean his backyard. Ashopenase could pick up pop cans, papers, bags, boxes, and bottles. But, “theres [sic] still mercury pollution” and Ashopenase could not clean it up – even in his childhood fantasy of being a well-paid employee of Treaty #3 Council.¹⁰⁷ Much like Anishinabek mothers who could not see the damage their diet inflicted upon the fetus,

¹⁰⁵ Burnstein quoted in “Women’s Mini Conference, Grassy Narrows,” *Treaty #3 Council Fire* 2, no. 5 (1973), 3.

¹⁰⁶ “Grassy Narrows: ‘Fishing for fun and death,’” *Take 30*, CBC Television, 23 March 1976, <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1747666465>.

¹⁰⁷ Tony Ashopenase, “Cleaning Up Grassy,” *Treaty #3 Council Fire* 2, no. 5 (1973): 5.

children were taught that they could not see the dangers in their river. They were, however, taught that this invisible danger was as real as a pop can. Figure 27, an unsigned image, depicts a tap filling a household tea cup. This tea cup is marked with a skull and crossbones, the standard symbol for poison. The image reveals that band members had come to recognize daily fare – like a cup of tea – as potentially toxic.¹⁰⁸

Unlike their mothers, children growing up in the late 1960s and early 1970s were taught to avoid foods harvested from the river. Unlike their mothers, these children were not taught that whitefish had medicinal qualities – rather, they learned that whitefish could harm them. Further, as Anishinabek women worked to eliminate breastfeeding within their communities, the strict rules for breast care – from regulations around push-up bras to slingshots – declined.

CONCLUSION

Children growing up on Dalles 38C Indian Reserve after the construction of the Whitedog Generating Station do not share in the memories of their older siblings, cousins, and neighbours. For many, life at Dalles 38C throughout the 1950s and early 1960s is remembered as a hungry time. Elder Roberta Jameson recalls her baby brother screaming out in hunger. Her father's nets had been ripped from the shore by dead heads – trees uprooted by flooding, but not removed from the water by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission. Debris from the dam prevented her father from bringing home fish even before her mother learned that they had been poisoned. Jameson's mother was unable, or refused, to breastfeed. On the shelf sat one box of Pablum baby cereal.

¹⁰⁸ Unidentified Artist, "Gov't stops mercury pollution?!!!," *Treaty #3 Council Fire* 2, no. 5 (1973): 3.

Jameson's mother fed the screaming infant one spoonful at a time. She and her older siblings watched, their tummies grumbling, unable to take from the baby.

According to Jameson, she was shipped to residential school shortly after her parents stopped being able to provide for her family. Jameson boarded the train in Minaki, Ontario, and attended Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School where her parents believed that the Presbyterian Church would feed her.¹⁰⁹ Elder Alice Kelly also remembers being registered for residential school in the mid-1950s. Her mother enrolled Kelly at St. Mary's Residential School when she started "having a tough time to support us." Prior to the construction of Whitedog Generating Station, Kelly remembered "We were eating fish and potatoes. Bannock, that's how I was grown up." But, as she entered her pre-teen years, that was "not the way they were feeding their kids." For Kelly, residential school started when fish and potatoes stopped.¹¹⁰ At Dalles 38C Indian Reserve today, Elders like Roberta Jameson and Alice Kelly clearly associate food insecurity with institutionalization.

Some Anishinabek parents relied on federal institutions – like residential schools – to feed their children because of the food shortage caused by hydroelectric development. The solution was temporary – parents voluntarily split up their families in hopes of keeping their children well-fed. At Dalles 38C Indian Reserve, chubby was desirable – parents believed that the healthiest children had meat on their bones. Pastor Carol Kipling explained that:

[Grandma] wanted me to be fat. And, when I would bring friends home, girls who were on the chubby side, she'd say 'Oh, they so good lookin!' She'd say, 'Why don't you put on some weight?' She wanted me to be fat too -- that was a

¹⁰⁹ Elder Jameson, interview with author, 27 August 2012.

¹¹⁰ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012.

big thing with her. If you were fat, you were healthy and that was good.¹¹¹

In his research on Pikogan, Quebec, Roger Spielmann similarly found that additional weight was a desirable physical attribute, explaining that “someone who has plenty of meat on their bones is considered healthy and strong.” Spielmann suggests that “[p]art of the reason for this goes back to when people were living in the bush... It was always important to have plenty of flesh on your bones to tide you through the time when game was scarce.”¹¹² But, parents in the Winnipeg River drainage basin could not raise “healthy” children on rationed teaspoons of Pablum.

The Children’s Aid Service (CAS) took notice of parents’ failure to feed their families. Throughout the 1960s, CAS scooped children up from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Provincial intervention into Indigenous family life was not unique to northwestern Ontario. In 1966, H. I. Hawthorne published a report recommending the extension of provincial welfare services to reserves across Canada to close the gap between Indians and others. According to Nancy and Judy MacDonald, Indigenous children “quickly became over-represented” and made up to “40-50% of the total number of children in care” for many years after Hawthorne’s Report.¹¹³ Patrick Johnston coined the phrase “Sixties Scoop” in *Native Children and the Welfare System* to describe the mass removal of Indigenous children from their natal homes into foster or adoptive care with, primarily, non-Indigenous families.¹¹⁴ Many social workers believed that foster or adoptive care would save Indigenous youth from poverty, substandard housing, poor

¹¹¹ Pastor Lawson, interview with author, 12 July 2012.

¹¹² Roger Spielmann, *‘You’re so Fat!’ Exploring Ojibwe Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 30.

¹¹³ Nancy MacDonald and Judy MacDonald, “Reflections of a Mi’kmaq social worker on a quarter of a century work in First Nations child welfare,” *First Peoples & Family Review* 3, no. 1 (2007): 38.

¹¹⁴ Patrick Johnston, *Native Children and the Welfare System* (Toronto: James Lorimer Ltd., 1983).

sanitation, and malnutrition on reserve.¹¹⁵ Unlike other victims of the Sixties Scoop, some children from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve may have been placed with other Status Indian families. If these speculations are accurate, CAS did not relocate these children to assimilate them. An unidentified Elder told sociologist Jennifer Leyson:

[T]hese kids and everything got taken away by CAS, the Children's Aid. And there are some sad stories there... I'll give you an example of my brother there. He was taken away and sent up north... They put them in a plane, told them they were gonna go for a plane ride and they would be... going home later on.

But what actually happened was... those kids got... got flown up and they landed somewhere in [another] community.¹¹⁶

In such cases where Anishinabek mothers lost control – not only of their ability to feed children, but their ability to place children – families broke up permanently. The Department of Indian Affairs assigned children adopted by Indigenous families with new band numbers, creating significant challenges for birth parents trying to track their children through federal registries.¹¹⁷

And yet, Anishinabek mothers developed adaptive strategies to manage environmental change within their families. For example, many Anishinabek mothers adopted canned, condensed, and sweetened Carnation Milk as a substitute for breast milk. Canned milk could be picked-up at the Kenora Friendship Centre and some have even suggested in interviews that Indian Affairs distributed Carnation Milk to Anishinabek families as a form of in-kind welfare.¹¹⁸ While many Anishinabek mothers can no longer

¹¹⁵ Macdonald and MacDonald, “Reflections of a Mi’kmaq social worker,” 39.

¹¹⁶ Unidentified Elder quoted in Leyson, “Looking Forward, Looking Back,” 88.

¹¹⁷ Families at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve are, as of January 2016, still actively trying to locate victims of the “Sixties Scoop” who are believed to have been placed with other Status Indians. To learn more about the challenges faced by birth families, contact the band office at Ochiichagwe’ Babigo’ Ining Ojibway Nation. Administration can be reached at 807.548.5876.

¹¹⁸ I have yet to find documents corroborating these stories of in-kind carnation milk rations and, to a certain extent, the suggestion of in-kind welfare runs counter to trending bureaucratic practices in the

provide milk-medicine (fortified by whitefish consumption) to nursing infants, they have fashioned Carnation cans – which have become symbols of welfare dependence – into healing regalia. In the Kenora District, Carnation cans are widely agreed to make the best jingle cones for jingle dresses.¹¹⁹ Today, female jingle dancers are provided with tobacco by community members seeking healing prayers for themselves or their loved ones.

Holistic medicinal practices (like jingle-dancing) have come to reinforce and reinvigorate women's work. By saving the tops of Carnation cans, by washing them and rolling them to fashion jingles, Anishinabek mothers help their daughters to develop new forms of medicine power.¹²⁰

Whether enrolling their children in residential school, applying for food stamps, or (re)fashioning healing regalia, Anishinabek mothers developed creative strategies to preserve their families after 1955. They had to. The spin-off effects of hydroelectric

Kenora District in the 1960s. For instance, Paul Driben and Robert Sanderson Trudeau noted that cash began to replace government benefits “in the form of goods and services” by 1965 at Fort Hope Indian Reserve (approximately 800 kilometres east of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve). For further information, see Paul Driben and Robert Sanderson Trudeau, *When Freedom is Lost: The Dark Side of the Relationship between Government and the Fort Hope Band* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 29. However, given historian Ian Mosby's recent exposé of collusion between Indian Affairs (e.g. Dr. Percy Moore, Indian Affairs Branch Superintendent of Medical Services) and the Canadian food industry (e.g. Dr. Frederick Tisdall, co-inventor of the infant food Pablum) in the post-war era, it is too early to dismiss whispers of product distribution. See, for instance, Ian Mosby, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952,” *Histoire sociale - Social History* 46, no. 91 (2013): 145-72.

¹¹⁹ According to research compiled by the Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators, tin cones are frequently made with the lids of chewing tobacco cans. “Student/Teacher Resource: ATC 30 – Jingle Dress Dance,” *Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators*, accessed 15 December 2015, <http://code.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/resources/282-aboriginal-dance/documents/atc30-aboriginaldance-blmljingleddressdance.pdf>.

¹²⁰ While not all jingle dances serve a medicinal purpose, the jingle dress originated from a medicine dream (circa 1900). In the Treaty #3 District, it is believed that a *Midewinini* from Whitefish Bay First Nation introduced the healing dress and dance. According to local history, the *Midewinini* had a granddaughter who lay gravely ill. He was gifted with a vision of a spirit in a jingle dress. The spirit informed the *Midewinini* that he could heal his granddaughter by recreating the dress and putting it on her. The *Midewinini* accepted the spirit's advice. He recreated his vision dress, put it upon his granddaughter, and carried her to the dance circle. His granddaughter then took three turns in the pow-wow circle. She was carried by the *Midewinini* for the first turn; she walked with the support of the womenfolk for the second turn; she walked alone, healed, for the third turn. Convinced of its medicinal power, Anishinabek women adapted the jingle dress as a healing dress thereafter. For further information see Ibid.

development along the Winnipeg River complicated mother-work. Rising levels of methyl mercury (caused by a change in microbial ecology) tainted foodstuffs recommended to Anishinabek mothers for increasing breast milk production. While protein substitutes like salmon are now available for purchase in Kenora's grocery stores, there is no simple substitution for the culturally specific diets of breastfeeding mothers. And so, the stories Anishinabek women tell about how they fed (or did not feed) their families, about how children ate (or did not eat), reveal that Whitedog Generating Station forever changed mother-work along the Winnipeg River.



Figure 26: CHADWICK FAMILY GOAT FARM (C. 1920)¹²¹

At the north shore of Lake of the Woods, municipal official E. W. Chadwick promoted the benefits he perceived of goat's milk for nursing infants as early as 1905.¹²² Chadwick argued that "the butter globules [in goat's milk] are so fine that curdling on a child's stomach is most improbable."¹²³ He advocated for young families to feed their children with goat's milk to prevent infant indigestion or tummy trouble.

¹²¹ LOWM, "Chadwick Family Goat Farm, c.1920," [photograph].

¹²² C. W. Chadwick quoted in "Have Goats a Place in Ontario," *Kenora Miner and News*, 4 November 1916, 2.

¹²³ "He Kept the Goat," 3.



Figure 27: MATILDA MARTIN WITH GRANDCHILDREN CAROL AND RAY KIPLING (C. 1945)¹²⁴

This image depicts interviewee Carol Kipling with Matilda Martin, her grandmother. Martin made certain that Kipling could prepare whitefish bouillon. Kipling remembers how she was carefully taught (and retaught) how to prepare whitefish bouillon for her family: “[E]very year it was like she’d never done it in front of me before or [like] I didn’t know anything about making fish bouillon. She would have to show me step by step how to scale the fish, how you cut off the head.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Image provided by Pastor Lawson during interview on 12 July 2012.

¹²⁵ Pastor Lawson, interview with author, 12 July 2012.

Cleaning up Grassy
 Once there was a boy named
 Tony Ashopenase who always
 cleaned his back ground. finally
 One day He got a job. He works
 for the Treaty tree council
 He was to clean All around
 the whole Reserve. He went
 around every house and
 around back Grounds,
 Every day, He got Twenty five
 dollars a day. Ever where he
 goes He sees garbage, Pop cans
 Papers, bag boxes and bottles, Everything.
 Then soon Grassy narrows ont
 looked better. But theres still
 mercury Pollution

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Figure 28: ANISHINABEK CHILDREN DISCUSS MEHG POLLUTION ON THE WABIGOON RIVER (C. 1973)¹²⁶

Treaty #3 Council Fire, a newsletter published by Grand Council Treaty #3, circulated community thoughts and concerns. Grade 6 children from Grassy Narrows submitted a series of letters themed “Cleaning up Grassy,” many of which displayed an awareness of mercury pollution – a health hazard that the federal government would not take seriously until 1978 with the establishment of the Royal Commission of Northern Environment.

¹²⁶ Tony Ashopenase, “Cleaning Up Grassy,” *Treaty #3 Council Fire* 2, no. 5 (1973): 5.

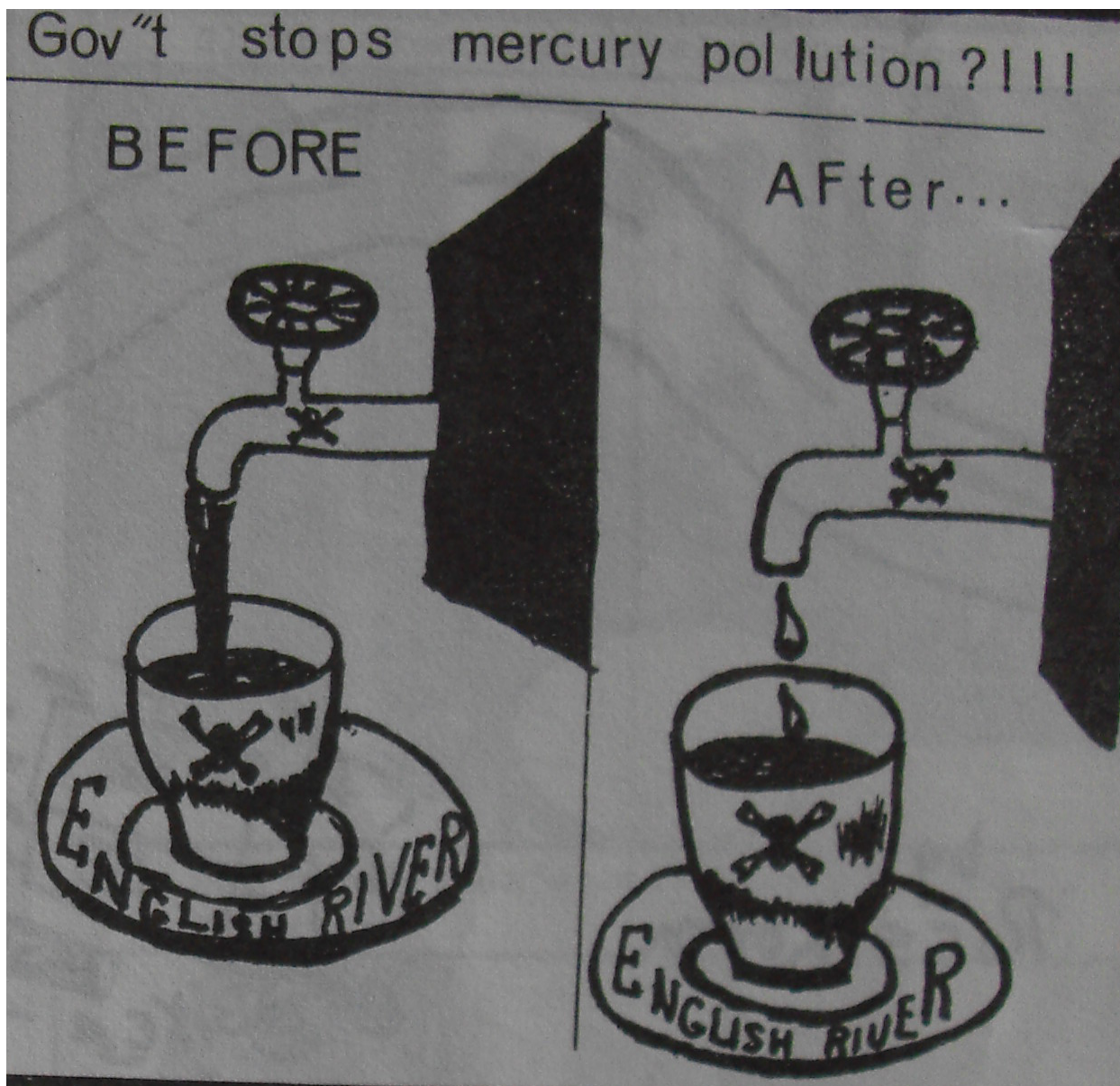


Figure 29: ANISHINABEK REPRESENTATIONS OF WATER QUALITY (C. 1973)¹²⁷

This cartoon by an unknown artist was published in the same newsletter as the “Cleaning up Grassy” series. “Cleaning up Grassy” was a school unit undertaken by Grade 6 students at Grassy Narrows School. Although it is unsigned like the school submissions by Gloria Keewatin and Ross Loon, it meets the same educational goals as other unit pieces.

¹²⁷ Unidentified Artist, “Gov’t stops mercury pollution?!!!,” *Treaty #3 Council Fire* 2, no. 5 (1973): 3.

NORTH DIRECTION

A PLACE OF REFLECTION

CONCLUSION

“SO THAT OUR NEXT GENERATION WOULD KNOW”: A REFLECTION ON WATER RESEARCH AND ANISHINABEK RESPONSES TO WATER DEVELOPMENT IN THE WINNIPEG RIVER DRAINAGE BASIN, 1873 – PRESENT¹

When I was younger, I asked my father – as most children are wont to do – *why*? In 1987, as Mom carried the weight of my brother Michael inside her, I wanted to know “Why is Mommy’s tummy so big?” In 1990, shortly after my sister Ashley was born, I wanted to know “Why do babies cry?” By the time I reached adolescence, I wanted to know why our family was displaced from Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Why were Michael, Ashley, and I raised in town? How had we come to be “third generation born and raised off the land”? What made my great-grandfather, John Kipling Jr., leave the place of his birth? As a toddler, John would pull his *tikinagan* (cradleboard) towards Ogimaamaashiik, my paternal great-great-grandmother, hoping to be carried through our ancestral territories. From his *tikinagan*, John watched Ogimaamaashiik paddle towards the *manomin* fields. He saw Ogimaamaashiik and her peers pick blueberries for home use and for sale. As a child, he had loved Dalles 38C Indian Reserve and off-reserve harvesting grounds, yet John left. Why?

To answer my questions, Dad drove me to Norman Dam at the western outlet of Lake of the Woods. He parked the truck and asked me to walk alongside him. Norman Dam, Dad explained, changed how water flowed through the Winnipeg River drainage basin. I learned that my heart is composed of water (an estimated 73 percent). I learned that my blood is composed of

¹ This title is inspired by Anishinabek activist Leanne Simpson’s claim that resistance stories empower. Like Simpson, I have devoted my research to finding stories of resistance. This dissertation uncovers three types of resistance – adaptation, cooperation, and passive resistance – that predate 1969. I do not intend to downplay the very real legal and material disadvantages my ancestors faced. Instead, I seek out instances of *survivance*, a term defined by Gerald Vizenor as “an active sense of presence.” *Manifest Matters: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), vii. This form of resistance is about endurance, about surviving as a people.

water. Just like a clogged artery had caused my grandfather's heart to stop, Norman Dam and the Whitedog Falls Generating Station further upstream had stopped the natural flow of water from Lake of the Woods towards Hudson Bay. Water regulation had killed members of the Kelly family – *Nokomis* drowned on a walk to town when the ice road collapsed. Water regulation killed the four-leggeds and the swimmers too. Muskrat drowned as backed-up waters inundated their dens. Sturgeon suffocated as wood waste accumulated in the upper reach of the Winnipeg River. Anishinabek mothers stopped producing best-quality breast milk as mercury levels increased in predatory fish. John Kipling Jr. wanted to give us, his descendants, a full life. We moved to escape, to avoid hunger, and to work for pay as the subsistence economy on reserve flat-lined.

Other Anishinabek families living along the Winnipeg River chose to relocate. Dalles 38C Indian Reserve was nearly abandoned after the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario incorporated the stretch of river between Norman Dam and Whitedog Falls Generating Station into their reservoir system. Journalist Lloyd Mack reports that “[b]etween 1956 and 1970, the population declined steadily until there was nobody left.” Concerns over the water and its effects on local wildlife spurred massive outmigration.² Testimony left by Elder Clarence Henry aligns with Mack's observation. Henry testified, “Everything was dying away, just like that. Eventually there were hardly any people left. People my age spread out.”³ Henry named specific families who migrated, including Paddy Strong's family, Old Jamieson's family, Pete Savage's family, and the McLeod family.⁴ Elder Alice Kelly testified that her mother, Catherine Hunter, relocated her children to Whitefish Lake Indian Reserve near Sioux Narrows, Ontario, in

² Lloyd Mack, “Utility chairman apologizes to Dalles members,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 4 July 2008, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/2008/07/04/utility-chairman-apologizes-to-dalles-members>.

³ Elder Henry, interview with Cotton, 14 June 1993.

⁴ Ibid.

response to food insecurity.⁵ Historian Bryan Palmer has suggested that Indigenous peoples across Canada – not just members Dalles 38C Indian Reserve – hoped to escape poverty through out-migration. According to Palmer, the percentage of status Indians in Canada who lived in urban centres rose approximately ten percent between 1959 and 1972. The population on reserve decreased accordingly.⁶

In 1974, the Ministry of Transportation and Communication showed (albeit unintentionally) the abandonment of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve on a map. The Project Planning Branch produced a feasibility study in response to a request from the Indian Affairs Branch for a transportation service from Kenora to nearby reserves. Dalles 38C Indian Reserve is strikingly absent from the map included in the feasibility study. By 1974, there was no resident population to consider. One Man Lake Indian Reserve is also missing. The Indian Affairs Branch had merged its band members with Whitedog Indian Reserve in response to rising water levels. Between 1950, when Dalles Channel was blasted open, and the 1970s, when the Ministry of the Environment identified methyl mercury in the Winnipeg River, the human geography of Anishinabek territories had changed. While a paucity of historic data makes it difficult to quantify the effects of hydroelectric development on Anishinabek bodies, provincial maps allow us to see its effect on physical communities: band members left Dalles 38C Indian Reserve in hopes of raising healthy families elsewhere. In 1984, I was born in the Lake of the Woods District Hospital. Living off-reserve was my best chance at achieving physical and economic

⁵ Elder Kelly, interview with author, 30 July 2012. Journalist Mike Aiken has similarly reported that Dalles 38C Indian Reserve was “eventually deserted, as inhabitants could no longer live their traditional lifestyle.” Aiken attributes socio-economic challenges to environmental modifications, particularly the damming of the Winnipeg River by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. Aiken notes that Dalles 38C Indian Reserve was only recently repopulated (circa 1980). Please see “Flood Memorial at Dalles,” *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 19 October 2010, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.kenoradailyminerandnews.com/2010/10/19/flood-memorial-at-dalles>.

⁶ Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 386.

well-being. Leaving Dalles 38C was an unfortunate ‘gift’ from my great-grandfather, John Kipling Jr., who never returned home after residential school.

What has been presented here is a history of hydroelectric development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin that blends Anishinabek and settler-colonial sources to reconstruct a plausible, mutually comprehensible narrative of environmental and social change in Northwestern Ontario. My personal narrative is essential to a culturally relevant and culturally appropriate telling of water development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Anishinabek researcher and activist Leanne Simpson calls for intellectuals “who exist in the world as an embodiment of contemporary expressions of our ancient stories and traditions.”⁷ Linda T. Smith has similarly called on Indigenous scholars to use research to demonstrate and to validate Indigenous methodologies. Scholars are encouraged to immerse themselves in community, to honour Indigenous voices in their research, and, by so doing, to build resistance to dominant discourses.⁸ If we, as scholars, honour Anishinabek voices, we learn that knowledge is tied to experience. While many formally trained academics seek objectivity in their work, I adhere to a worldview (a tradition) that makes “objectivity” implausible. Anishinabek historian Basil Johnston explains that “to know” is a rough translation of the Anishinaabemowin word *w’kikaendaun*, but this is inaccurate; “to know” suggests that it is possible to have a clear and complete idea of something. Where I come from it is understood that, in the words of Basil Johnston, “knowledge may not be exact.” Instead, a person who claims to “know” something “is saying that the notion, image, idea, act that that person has in mind corresponds to and is similar

⁷ Simpson, *Dancing On Our Turtle’s Back*, 31

⁸ Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London, UK: Zed Books Ltd. and Dunedin, NZ: University of Otago, 1999), 15-16, 166, 199.

to what he or she has already seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelled.”⁹ The research findings presented here – what I “know” about water development – is based on my growing-up experience in Kenora and my interactions with Elders at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve.

I also adhere to an Anishinabek understanding of *w'daeb-awae*. Johnston explains that *w'daeb-awae*, an approximate translation of “truth,” means that “a speaker casts his words and his voice as far as his perception and his vocabulary will enable him or her.”¹⁰ And so, in response to Simpson and Smith, I offer a dialectic narrative of environmental change in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. In this dissertation, I have presented “crossing points” instead of “truths.” Our stories – my personal narrative, my family history, and Elder testimonies – have been corroborated with archival sources from the Lake of the Woods Museum, the Kenora Public Library (particularly their holdings of the *Kenora Miner and News*), the Fort Frances Museum and Cultural Centre, the Archives of Ontario, the Ontario Power Generation Archives, and Library and Archives Canada. This corroboration allows us to see that economic stability on reserves in the Winnipeg River drainage basin collapsed after World War II. In particular, the HEPC’s program of development jeopardized Anishinabek opportunities to benefit from state-sponsored growth. Despite federal and provincial mismanagement of Anishinabek resources, Anishinabek living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin found diverse ways to manage change. Below is a detailed summary of the “truths” that I believe to be worthy of discussion.

⁹ Basil Johnston quoted in Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark, eds. *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World through Stories* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State Press and Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2013), 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

RECONSTRUCTING NATIONAL NARRATIVES: DIALECTICS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN INDIAN COUNTRY, 1945 – PRESENT

After World War II, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario launched an expansionist program that required increased access to water resources in northwestern Ontario. Industrial and consumer demand had skyrocketed since the HEPC's inception in 1906. Canadians demanded 389 times as much power in the 1940s as they did in 1910.¹¹ The HEPC required new hydroelectric generating stations to meet this ever-growing demand. Without new facilities, the HEPC feared that industry and consumers alike would suffer from power shortages that could thwart production or dim household lights. In response to predicted energy demands, the HEPC started building five hydroelectric generating stations to the west of Marathon, Ontario in the early 1950s.¹² This dissertation focuses on the development of Whitedog Rapids to serve (primarily, but not exclusively) the town of Kenora and the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company located at the north shore of Lake of the Woods. Kenora was one of the largest urban centres west of Marathon, only significantly outnumbered by Port Arthur and Fort William (the twin cities now known as Thunder Bay). The Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company was one of the largest employers in this area with additional plants located in Fort Frances and International Falls. Whitedog Falls Generating Station was to serve this locus of demand.

Major development was not unique to Northwestern Ontario or the energy industry. World War II is generally believed to have ushered in a period of "unparalleled economic growth" across Canada.¹³ Historians J. M. Bumsted and Douglas Owram have linked an increase

¹¹ Consumption increased from 4,000kW to 1,558,500kW between 1910 and 1939 alone. The increase from 4,000 to 1,558,500 is 38,863 percent. Exact figures for the period from 1914 to 1939 are not readily accessible. Ontario Hydro, *Ontario Hydro a Proud Tradition*, 26.

¹² As noted by staff at the *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, "Whitedog Falls G.S. will be the Commission's fifth new power source to be undertaken in Northwestern Ontario since 1945." See: "Road to Whitedog Starts, Power Development slated Early 1956," *Kenora Daily Miner and News*, 30 September 1955, 1.

¹³ Bumsted, *A History of the Canadian Peoples*, 358.

in per capita income with improved standards of living nationwide.¹⁴ My research demonstrates that Anishinabek families living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin did not prosper with Canadians at large. Instead, Anishinabek families living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin experienced a precipitous decline in living standards on reserve. While the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company used hydroelectricity to expand newsprint production, Anishinabek unemployment increased as the Hydro-Electric Power Commission disassembled work camps once Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operations. Prior to the establishment of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Anishinabek labourers supported their families by combining wage work with seasonal harvesting. As suburbanites used new electric appliances to lessen the burden of domestic labour in Kenora, Anishinabek mothers downstream struggled to feed their infants with best quality breastmilk. Prior to the establishment of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Anishinabek women resisted federal and municipal pressures to bottle-feed. Indeed, hydroelectric development after World War II exacerbated the socio-economic divide between settler-colonists and Anishinabek families.

Histories of post-war Canada have often missed the widening economic gap between Canadians and First Nations after 1945 due to two popular misconceptions, widely thought to be ‘historical facts.’¹⁵ Firstly, it has been assumed that 1951 amendments to the Indian Act, which increased Indian control over First Nations’ affairs, also improved the economic standing of

¹⁴ Ibid. and Owrap, *Born at the Right Time*, preface.

¹⁵ It is difficult to identify the origins of these misconceptions. They have become accepted “historical facts” and circulate in general texts (e.g. Canadian textbooks, encyclopedia entries, and teacher resources). In her textbook, Dickason claims that the revised Act of 1951 “heralded in the dawn of a new era,” but tempers this statement, adding that the revised Act “can hardly be called revolutionary” (248). The sense that Canada “removed some of the most egregious political, cultural and religious restrictions” with the 1951 amendment is also identified by Zach Parrott, “Indian Act,” *Canadian Encyclopedia*, 02/07/06, accessed 1 March 2016, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act/#h3_jump_2. It is echoed in teacher resources like Erin Hanson, “The Indian Act,” *Indigenous Foundations*, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html#amendments>.

Indians on reserve.¹⁶ However, few historical narratives compare this increased political control with the effects of concurrent federal programming (e.g. industrial expansion and full employment) on reserve lands and labour practices. Canada gave Indians increased control over First Nations' affairs at exactly the same time that industry jeopardized the economic functioning of reserves; Indians gained very limited control over a decreasing land base and declining resource base. While federal programs were designed "to help" status Indians build sustainable communities in the postwar era, the shift of responsibility in 1951 has obscured the role of industrial development in economic collapse.

Secondly, explanations for endemic poverty on reserve have been tied to the allocation of reserve lands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The existing historical literature has emphasized poor soils that prevented Indigenous peoples from growing crops for home use or for sale. For instance, Mary-Ellen Kelm has noted that reserve life in British Columbia fostered malnutrition as reduced access to traditional harvesting areas stymied Indigenous food production.¹⁷ Poverty has also been associated with the isolation of reserves themselves: Indians were separated from markets. However, sustainable reserves have garnered limited attention, making economic erosion in the 1950s harder to identify. Economic disempowerment that was rooted not in nineteenth-century legislation, but in twentieth-century economic development, has

¹⁶ Other historians have emphasized the extent to which the 1951 amendments were failed remedial legislation. In her discussion of failure, Dickason mentions that Canada prevented status Indians from establishing their own forms of government (*A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 248). Bands lacked complete control over their funds until 1958 (249). Parrott centres his argument about failed remedial legislation around gender, concluding that "additional restrictions on the transfer of status did harm to First Nations women and children" ("Indian Act"). Lynn Gehl, an Anishinaabe advocate, makes similar claims in her public education video "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act," accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.lynngehl.com/video-publications.html>. Hanson does not explicitly state the limits of the 1951 amendments, but references the Royal Commission of Aboriginal People to claim that amendments were "ultimately unsuccessful." None of these authors refer to concurrent federal programming that limited Indigenous opportunities to benefit from the 1951 amendments to the Indian Act.

¹⁷ For sustained analysis of the impact of colonization on Indigenous diet and nutrition, see Mary-Ellen Kelm, "'My Young Men Are Angry': The Impact of Colonization on Aboriginal Diet and Nutrition," *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 19-37.

led to a number of erroneous conclusions about the nature of First Nations poverty. For example, assumptions about isolation and economic failure have led political scientist Tom Flanagan to advocate for the dissolution of reserve lands as a solution to welfare dependency. Flanagan assumes that Indigenous peoples have refused “to move to where jobs and investment opportunities exist.”¹⁸ He does not address how job opportunities on reserve only recently declined in regions like the Winnipeg River drainage basin. This dissertation has demonstrated that Anishinabek reserves were economically sustainable until the 1950s. The Winnipeg River example shows that endemic poverty was not the necessary result of poor soil, geographic isolation, or a refusal to participate in the free market economy. By shifting attention away from seemingly progressive legislative amendments to material realities on reserve, from the distant past to the recent past, this dissertation has exposed the negative cumulative impacts of federal policy on Anishinabek economies after 1945. Endemic poverty on reserve resulted from federal and provincial policies that emerged from Canada’s peacetime program.

Historians who identified socio-environmental inequity after 1945 have explained how the “common good” narrative justified development on Indigenous lands, suggesting that comparatively few Indians suffered to provide lighting and power for settler-colonists who resided in urban centres.¹⁹ While historians have challenged the “common good” argument, few have challenged Hydro’s representation of space. Historians, like Canadian hydro companies, have maintained that development served the “centre.”²⁰ Post-war development is said to have

¹⁸ Tom Flanagan, *First Nations, Second Thoughts* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 7.

¹⁹ Waldram, *As Long as the Rivers Run*, xv, xvi, 4, 6, 123, 172-173, 179-180.

²⁰ Notable exceptions include Richard White’s *The Organic Machine* and *The River Returns: An Environmental History of the Bow* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009) by Christopher Armstrong, Matthew Evenden, and H. V. Nelles. In his analysis of the Columbia River, White found that “[Euro-Americans] regarded the space at the Cascades and the Dalles as open, as culturally empty. Indians regarded it as full” (15). Armstrong, Evenden, and Nelles similarly found that “the Bow River was at once a homeland and a margin [before Euro-Canadian settlement]. As a homeland, it lay at the centre of an indigenous world.... As a

occurred in “peripheral” spaces, or spaces without social and economic systems valued by the *waiâbishkiwedig*. This definition of space has assumed a shared citizenship across these two zones (“centre” and “periphery”), normalizing European conceptualizations of space that overwrote Indigenous homelands. It also overlooks that Indigenous peoples live at the “centre” of their own communities. I have made Anishinabek territories “central” to draw attention to lived space. Anishinabek men and women in the Winnipeg River drainage basin did not see themselves as “peripheral.” They lived under separate jurisdiction. When we acknowledge jurisdictional divides, we do not find a “common good.” Instead, we find the unequal distribution of damages between residents of Ontario and treaty partners. These two groups had little in common under the law. This dissertation reminds us that Anishinabek living on federally designated lands saw few benefits from post-war expansion. Canadian citizens, by contrast, saw little of the suffering just outside of the town line.

When Indigenous communities are made central it gives nuance to histories of environmental change. My work reveals that there was no single “Indian” experience of flooding in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Hydroelectric development fractured Anishinabek communities. Individuals had to make difficult choices about how to respond to the HEPC and their options were shaped by labour and by gender. Elder Robert Kabestra (Anamikipinens), a general labourer, planned to use his wages to sustain Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. Elder Clarence

margin, the Bow existed at the ragged southwestern edge of a continental fur trade” (24). In this story, the Bow River becomes central to Euro-Canadians as they settle the region in the 1880s. While both the *Organic Machine* and *The River Returns* acknowledge Indigenous centres, Indigenous peoples themselves operate in the background. Neither White, nor Armstrong, Evenden, and Nelles sustain an “Indigenous centre,” shifting readers’ attention instead to Euro-American and Euro-Canadian activities on the Columbia and the Bow.

A subtle nod to an Indigenous homeland is also made by Christopher Armstrong and H. V. Nelles in *Wilderness and Waterpower: How Banff National Park Became a Hydroelectric Storage Reservoir* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2013). Armstrong and Nelles note that “Native peoples” and their antecedents formed the “first human habitation[s]” on the upper reaches of the Bow (10). Armstrong and Nelles, however, do not make these habitations central. *Wilderness and Waterpower* more accurately begins in 1883 with the identification of the Bow, particularly the hot springs near present-day Banff, Alberta, as a site of potential development by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Henry, by contrast, continued to fish along Winnipeg River. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario informed neither Kabestra nor Henry of the anticipated impacts of Whitedog Falls Generating Station on the Winnipeg River. When the HEPC abandoned the worksite, both Kabestra and Henry would find themselves struggling to find steady employment. Hostilities against wage-earning families like the Kabestras, however, increased significantly. Kabestra's attempt to sustain the reserve through cooperation with the HEPC was misinterpreted as collaboration with the *waiâbishkiwedig*. Flora McLeod, Kabestra's wife, did not work for the HEPC like her husband. She was busy maintaining the family home. Mothers like McLeod experienced Whitedog Dam differently than their husbands and, indeed, post-menopausal women. After Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operations, increased methyl mercury levels on the Winnipeg river were made public by the Ministry of the Environment. Anishinabek women had to change their breastfeeding practices to maintain child health, a challenge that burdened Anishinabek mothers specifically.

Previous works on hydroelectric development have tended to simplify Indigenous experiences of hydroelectric development. For example, in 1974, journalist Boyce Richardson followed three Cree families – Blacksmith, Jolly, and Voyageur – to their winter hunting grounds. In the closing minute of the film, Richardson articulated Cree fears that “the project will destroy their way of life.”²¹ Viewers are provided with little sense of what makes Blacksmith, Jolly and Voyageur representative of the Cree and their way of life. And yet, reviewers Thomas Waugh, Ezra Winton and Michael Baker recently celebrated the film as “unequivocal in its presentation of a Cree perspective on a proposed Hydro-Quebec project in the

²¹ *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*, 1974.

James Bay Region.”²² But, what is “a Cree perspective”? What, if anything, distinguishes Cree labourers from Cree hunters? What, if anything, differentiates Cree women from Cree men? Canadian filmmakers (and historians) have written extensively on “Indian” responses to water regulation, using male hunters’ and trappers’ bodies to illuminate socio-economic crisis. My research demonstrates a plurality of Indigenous experiences of environmental change.

The history of hydroelectric development in the Winnipeg River drainage basin, however, allows us to do more than challenge simplified representations of dynamic communities. The HEPC is my vehicle to challenge narratives about Indigenous activism after World War II. Long before 1969, Indigenous communities responded to settler-colonial activity by adapting to, cooperating with, or passively resisting the *waiâbishkiwedig*. Prior to the construction of the Whitedog Falls station, older generating stations had prompted important questions about Anishinabek treaty lands in the area. The Norman Dam, constructed by the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company, had jeopardized Anishinabek mobility along the Winnipeg River since the 1890s. Water fluctuations reduced the structural integrity of ice roads, which, in turn, reduced safe access to trap lines between Kenora and Dalles 38C, One Man Lake, and Whitedog Indian Reserve. Ice instability also increased the risk of travelling to town for provisions or Western medical aid. By the 1900s, Anishinabek families living in the Winnipeg River drainage basin knew that water regulation affected their ability to live from the river. They responded creatively to environmental change and adjusted labour and saving practices to maximize available resources to meet new circumstances. Anishinabek families continued to sell blueberries to generate income during the summer months, but now occasionally banked “blueberry monies” in Kenora. Capital could be drawn during the winter months should the trap

²² Boyce Richardson’s documentary film was selected by Thomas Waugh, Ezra Winton, and Michael Baker (editors) as part of their complementary playlist for *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010).

line fail. Writing on blueberry sales in the United States, historian Brenda Child has identified “participat[ion] in the broader cash economy as an antidote to poverty.”²³ Like Child, I argue that adaptation ought to be identified as a form of resistance to the expropriation of natural resources by settler-colonists. Adaptation allowed Anishinabek communities to endure despite increased incentives to abandon the reserve and to assimilate into the body politic. Adaptation allowed Anishinabek families to retain their special homeland.

By the 1950s, when the HEPC began work on Whitedog Falls Generating Station, Anishinabek families had every reason to assume that water regulation would change how they occupied their lands once again. They required a new strategy to ensure the continuous occupation of reserves like Dalles 38C along the Winnipeg River. Some able-bodied Anishinabek men chose to cooperate with the HEPC and worked for the Commission. My discussion of cooperation with the HEPC breaks new ground. Historians to date have focused on the economic losses of fishers, hunters, and trappers – not the economic gains of general labourers.

Historians like Caroline Desbiens, for example, have associated Indigenous labour with cultural disruption. Desbiens suggests that Indigenous, particularly Cree, workers struggled to identify with celebratory symbols of industrial labour produced by Hydro-Québec. She roots the supposed struggle of Cree workers to associate with Canadian symbols to “a different cultural experience of James Bay.” She assumes that Cree labourers generally changed their way of being in the world (presumably, as hunters and fishers).²⁴ Using Whitedog Falls Generating Station as

²³ Brenda Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community* (New York: Penguin Group, 2012), 85.

²⁴ While Desbiens expands on her claim, suggesting that, “Cree and Inuit people fared worse... in the... workforce,” she provides little evidence to substantiate this claim (*Power from the North*, 171). Desbiens also applies her argument about cultural disruption to women: “Women could not easily... partake into [sic] ‘the grand spectacle’ of hydroelectric development. For Aboriginal women, the likelihood of identifying with these figures, was of course, even more reduced” (159). Her citation for this statement does not substantiate her claim. In footnote

a case study, I argue instead for cultural continuity. While Anishinabek labourers may have been anomalous in their communities, they created social and cultural space for Indigenous labourers at the dam site and in the wage economy more generally. Anishinabek men earned wages clearing brush, driving trucks, and erecting transmission lines. This work allowed them to use locally earned dollars to support their family on reserve. Unfortunately, this strategy – which temporarily allowed Anishinabek families to resist assimilation pressures – failed over the long run. Oral testimony suggests that the HEPC did not employ Anishinabek men in the Winnipeg River drainage basin after 1958. Yet, Anishinabek cooperation with the HEPC emerges as a new resistance strategy designed to protect reserve boundaries by finding ways to survive using resources and employment opportunities available off reserve. Anishinabek labourers thus emerge as both uncommon (in that Anishinabek participation in power generation was a new practice) and representative (in that creative responses to settler encroachment were much older practices). By uncovering the logic behind cooperation, my research creates space for anomalies and demonstrates that Indigenous general labourers worked to sustain treaty lands.

At the same time as Anishinabek attempts to sustain reserves through employment with the HEPC failed, men and women upheld a vision of a special homeland that conflicted with provincial redefinitions of treaty rights, reserve lands, and water use. Anishinabek families passively resisted the flooding of their lands by the HEPC (and, indeed, by earlier water developers like the Keewatin Lumber and Power Company). Members of Whitedog Indian Reserve turned to settler advocates like the local MP Benedickson to demand that the HEPC

40, page 249, Desbiens refers to Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*. This text focuses primarily on Britain (as centre) and South Africa (as colony). How, if at all, the experiences of the indigenous peoples of South Africa apply to the Cree of James Bay is not clear. Desbiens provides no Cree, nor even Canadian, source to prove that Indigenous women struggled to "partake into [sic] 'the grand spectacle' of hydroelectric development" (159).

consider Anishinabek complaints about the loss of their trapping income. Letter writing indicates a nonviolent response to environmental change. It is important to remember that Whitedog Falls Generating Station was remotely controlled from Kenora, with no resident attendants.²⁵

Vandalism and property destruction were viable options for resistance. Indeed, band members at Whitedog Indian Reserve expressed frustration over territorial expropriation by damaging an Anglican Church.²⁶ The decision to write to the HEPC and earlier attempts to build relationships with the HEPC (i.e. through waged labour) suggest that Anishinabek families did not necessarily oppose hydroelectric development. Resistance strategies identified by my research – adaptation, cooperation, and passive resistance – suggest that, given the new reality of hydro development on their ancestral lands, some band members desired a relationship with the HEPC that allowed them to help determine how water regulation affected reserve lands and harvesting grounds. My research thus expands our knowledge of Indigenous responses to Canadian expansion by highlighting moderate responses to water development.

To date, Canadian historians have largely ignored moderate responses to settler-colonialism. Moderate actors worked for change outside of the Canadian legal system. They worked within their own communities or within their families to manage environmental change. A refusal to operate within the Canadian state may be an Anishinabek expression of sovereignty: moderate actors sought change from within their ancestral territories. Yet the year 1969, when Indigenous peoples united to oppose the Canadian government's proposal to dismantle the Indian Act (White Paper), has been upheld as a watershed moment in which Indigenous peoples from British Columbia to Nova Scotia united to defend their treaty rights and to assert their special

²⁵ OPG, Memorandum, "Whitedog Falls Generating Station: General Description and Design Requirements, 13 September 1955."

²⁶ Diocese of Keewatin, "Clarence Stuebe to the Anglican Church [unspecified recipient], 29 September 1975," Folder: Whitedog – St. Mary's Correspondence.

relationship with the Crown.²⁷ Historian Bryan Palmer has argued that Indigenous peoples entered a “period of self-discovery” in the 1960s. Palmer attributes this socio-political awakening to “national and international currents of dissent” from Québécois nationalists’ cries for sovereignty to African-American demands for equality under the law.²⁸ Indigenous peoples, he suggests, were inspired (if not radicalized) by external forces. Palmer describes a decidedly pan-Indian Red Power movement. This political ideology acknowledged the shared struggles of colonized peoples (e.g. Nehiyaw, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinabek) and demanded change *en masse* (i.e. as “Indians” under the Indian Act). A “failure” to unite before 1969, however, need not be equated with defeat. My dissertation challenges readers to rethink 1969 as a “period of self-discovery.” While moderate action was largely ineffective at achieving legislative change in Canada, it operated within and thus reinforced pre-colonial boundaries (an Anishinabek homeland). Ironically, unified resistance in the 1960s required a suspension of unique interests – Anishinabek activists demanded better treatment as “Indians” under the Indian Act, not as a treaty nation.

By studying moderate action, it becomes evident that the year 1969 did not mark a revival of treaty demands; rather it marked a change in strategy that acknowledged federal legislation. Localized, moderate responses to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario provide an alternative definition of Indigenous resistance. I argue that resistance requires (1) a strong sense of one’s treaty rights, (2) a powerful, anti-colonial sense of one’s territorial limits, and (3) an unwavering desire to maintain a special homeland by living in it. These tenants allow

²⁷ Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, 90; Naithan Lagace and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, “The White Paper, 1969,” *Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-white-paper-1969/>; Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 335; “The White Paper 1969,” *Indigenous Foundations*, accessed 1 March 2016, <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-white-paper-1969.html>.

²⁸ Palmer, *Canada’s 1960*, 378.

us to better envision Indigenous resistance on a continuum. My research provides an alternative to “before 1969” and “after 1969” depictions of anti-colonialism in Canada. By so doing, it allows readers to imagine how the average person endured settler-colonialism.

TOOLS FOR HEALING: THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS HISTORY TO TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY ENERGY USERS

Research into the day-to-day experiences of and reactions to hydroelectric development by Anishinabek peoples helps us to identify flaws in Ontario’s remedial process. Apologies issued by Ontario Power Generation (OPG, formerly known as the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario) have not explicitly presented reserves as economically unsustainable. However, in 2008, the OPG presented Anishinabek labour in the Winnipeg River drainage basin as anti-modern (“traditional”) in a public statement about flooding at Dalles 38C Indian Reserve. The apology begins “[l]ong before Ontario Hydro... came to build hydro-electric facilities on the Winnipeg River... the people of [Dalles 38C Indian Reserve] were a self-sufficient people.”²⁹ Readers are transported to a time before living memory. Self-sufficiency is located in the distant past – a time when Anishinabek families “share[d] and care[d] for all of creation... the waters, water and fish life, plants, medicines, trees, animals, birds.”³⁰ Economic decline is associated (implicitly) with settler arrival in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. OPG does not accept responsibility for crashing the mixed economy (i.e. the loss of guiding jobs), for laying off Anishinabek labourers, or for jeopardizing women’s reproductive labour in the 1950s. Instead, OPG presents hydroelectric flooding as a threat to “hunting, trapping, fishing and harvesting in

²⁹ OPG, Ontario Power Generation Apology to Ochiichagwe’ Babigo’ Ining Ojibway Nation [Dalles 38C Indian Reserve], 3 July 2008. Bill McKinlay, Senior Communications Advisor, Ontario Power Generation, email to author, 9 July 2008, author’s collection.

³⁰ Ibid.

balance and harmony with the land.”³¹ Canadian historians have suggested that these economic activities had already been compromised by settler encroachment and federal surveys. The apology suggests that OPG contributed to, but did not cause, endemic poverty on reserve. The OPG claims to have “further impacted the resources and way of life of the people” of Dalles 38C Indian Reserve.³² OPG thus participated in a metanarrative of endemic poverty on reserve that locates blame with our colonial predecessors (such as traders, missionaries, federal surveyors, and settlers).

Having located self-sufficiency in the distant past (pre-contact), OPG minimized its blame for recent environmental damages (post-World War II). Ontario Power Generating apologized for “not resolving these past grievances [i.e. disruption of ‘traditional ways’] sooner.”³³ While a cash settlement was successfully negotiated between Dalles 38C Indian Reserve and OPG in 2008, damages are recurring and ongoing. As recently as October 2015, band members asked Ontario and Canada to provide compensation for the swampification of reserve lands. Property value is declining in the present as a result of water fluctuations caused by Whitedog Falls Generating Station. Unless we think critically about how continued energy use floods reserve lands, we risk thinking that the apology is a cure. Anishinabek activist Leanne Simpson has noted that “the perception of most Canadians is that post-reconciliation, Indigenous Peoples no longer have a legitimate source of contention.”³⁴ As energy users, we need to understand how human (Anishinabek and settler-colonial) and natural systems (Winnipeg River drainage basin) interact. My dissertation reveals the interplay between these distinct systems. I uncover the relationships between industrial development, settlers, governments, the Winnipeg

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 22

River, and Anishinabek peoples. Cash settlement did not (and does not) change how these systems interact. Current historical literature on post-war affluence does not teach the average citizen to read for system overlaps. It is my hope that this dissertation provides a counter to public apologies that shift the burden of responsibility from current energy users to past federal and provincial administrators.

Indeed, this dissertation illuminates how the benefits of development have been inequitably distributed in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. My research makes clear how Canadian political, cultural, and economic systems have functioned and interacted to the detriment of Anishinabek families. My research enables the average Canadian to recognize the far-reaching implications of their day-to-day decisions about energy use. I take seriously historian Paige Raibmon's argument that Canadians need to take responsibility for privilege rather than seeking to blame Indian policy (or ancestral land grabs) for the socio-economic disadvantages of First Nations. Raibmon argues that it is not all nameless, faceless bureaucrats who dispossessed and disinherited Indigenous peoples. Canadian citizens continue to benefit from earlier dispossessions.³⁵ Every time I turn on a light in Kenora, I place demand on an electrical grid that causes the periodic flooding of my ancestral home. It is my hope that my readers ask, "Where is electricity being generated?" It is my hope that my readers ask, "Whose lands are inundated for my convenience?"

This dissertation reveals how Canadian energy demands after 1945 stimulated hydroelectric development in northwestern Ontario.³⁶ It also illuminates how Canadian energy

³⁵ Raibmon, "Unmaking Native Space: A Genealogy of Indian Policy, Settler Practice, and the Microtechniques of Dispossession," in *The Power of Promises: Rethinking Indian Treaties in the Pacific Northwest*, edited by Alexandra Harmon (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 78.

³⁶ In 2015, Matthew Evenden published *Allied Power: Mobilizing Hydro-electricity during Canada's Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press). This dissertation functions as a necessary complement: Evenden spends little space talking about projects in northwestern Ontario. *Allied Power* focuses primarily on the Hydro-Electric Power Commission's activities in central Ontario. Further, Evenden's emphasis on national policy

demands negatively affected Anishinabek labour – trappers, fishing guides, nursing mothers, and general contractors alike all struggled to provide for their families once Whitedog Falls Generating Station began operations. Endemic poverty on reserve is not and should not be associated with “past actions” or “historical grievances.”³⁷ On-reserve poverty has been aggravated by the unconscious decisions of thousands of Canadians in the Winnipeg River drainage basin since 1958. I do not ask our treaty partners to turn off their lights, to unplug their phone chargers, or to shut down their laptops. Instead, I ask our treaty partners – all residents on Canadian soil – to become conscious energy consumers. As in 1958, water flows northwest from Kenora to Hudson Bay. Whitedog Falls Generating Station continues to impound water southeast of Whitedog Falls Generating Station, raising water levels on Anishinabek reserves and in Anishinabek harvesting areas. First Nations – like band members of Dalles 38C, One Man Lake, and Whitedog Indian Reserves – still carry the burden of hydroelectric power generation in Ontario. Despite environmental challenges, Anishinabek families never relinquished their vision of a special homeland on reserve. If you listen carefully, you can still hear the water drum sound in the Winnipeg River drainage basin. Anishinabek families continue to resist the erosion of their homelands. Drum songs remind us that reserve lands are not inherently unsustainable. We continue to make them so.

during World War II does not allow for sustained discussion of First Nations. My dissertation provides a necessary follow-up and reveals how wartime decisions affected First Nations after 1945.

³⁷ OPG, Ontario Power Generation Apology, 2008.

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- Norman Dam Photograph Collection

Lake of the Woods Museum (LOWM)

- Anishinabe - Artifacts
- Anishinabe - Culture
- Anishinabe - Essays and Papers
- Anishinabe - Food
- Anishinabe - Lake of the Woods
- Anishinabe - Minamata
- Anishinabe - Photograph Collection
- Frederick Canniff
- Lake of the Woods - Hunting and Fishing
- Lake of the Woods - Lumber, Paper, Sawmills
- Lake of the Woods - Pictographs
- Lake of the Woods - Poetry
- Lake of the Woods - Powerhouse and Dams
- Lake of the Woods - Waterworks and Public Utilities
- Lake of the Woods - Steamboats
- Matilda Martin
- Town of Kenora, Minutes and Planning Reports
- Schools - Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School

Schools - St. Mary's Residential School

Notre Dame Parish

- Families, Dalles
- Families, Various Locations
- Families, Wabigoon
- Families, Whitefish Bay
- McIntosh [Indian Residential School] Marriage Register, 1925-59
- St. Mary's [Indian Residential School] Death Register, 1898-1975
- St. Mary's [Indian Residential School] Marriage Register, 1898-1978

Treaty #3 Archives and Rights Research (TARR)

- Briefing of the Treaty #3 Chiefs-in-Assembly on the Headlands Issue
- Shoal Lake #39 First Nation
- Shoal Lake #40 First Nation
- Trapping Harmonization Agreement
- Trapping Harmonization Agreement - A One Man Lake First Nation Perspective

Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining Ojibway Nation, ON

Dalles Historical Resources (DHR)

- Winnipeg River Watershed - Water Pollution, 1965-1995 - Correspondence
- Winnipeg River Watershed - Water Pollution, 1965-1995 - Reports

Ottawa, ON

Library Archives Canada (LAC)

- RG10, Indian Affairs

Toronto, ON

Archives of Ontario (AO)

- RG 5, Ontario Department of Travel and Publicity
- RG 7, Ministry of Labour
- RG 10, Ontario Public Health Administration Division
- RG 65, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
- RG 74, Ontario Indian Community Development Services
- RG 84, Ontario Water Resources Commission

Ontario Power Generation Archives (OPG)

- Caribou Falls Generating Station
- Whitedog Falls Generating Station

Royal Ontario Museum, Department of New World Archaeology (NWA)

- Dewdney Rock Art Research Material, Series 3: Site Files
- Dewdney Rock Art Research Material, Series 4: Slides

Dewdney Rock Art Research Material, Series 5: Files
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