

THE GREAT CITY LIGHT HEARINGS

by
The Kerosene Kid

Since our last report on the High Ross issue went to press (April 1970 Wild Cascades), the Seattle City Council conducted a series of nine hearings on the policies of City Light. The evening hearings, particularly, were well attended, and the weight of opposition to High Ross was almost overwhelming. Practically no one spoke in favor of the project except City Light's employees, paid consultants like Drs. Grant Sharpe and Barney Dowdle, and a few flacks like Larry Penberthy.

Our Canadian friends, in especial, put on a tremendous demonstration of solidarity in opposition to City Light's plans to flood the Upper Skagit Valley. Councilman Cooley, chairman of the Council's utility's committee, was presented a petition bearing the signatures of 27,000 British Columbians opposing the flooding by High Ross Dam.

The tone of the Canadian's presentations was generally restrained, expressing regret and sadness that their southern neighbors appeared so determined to devastate one of their irreplaceable national treasures. We doubt that Americans would show similar restraint if a governmental branch of a foreign power were planning to inundate, for example, the Hoh Valley.

The City Council had employed Dr. Douglass C. North, University of Washington economist, to advise them on City Light's policies. In addition to attending all the hearings and frequently questioning the witnesses, Dr. North made a thorough study of several months' duration of City Light's operations. The report of his findings, however, was a bit too critical of City Light to suit the utilities supporters on the Council.

He said the utility had failed to furnish the Council with enough information to permit it to make a rational decision on High Ross Dam. He suggested that City Light experiment with varying price structures to see if peak-load problems can be eased. (This is our suggestion of last year for rate incentives to encourage off-peak use of power to heat domestic water.) Dr. North also charged, as we have done, that City Light's aggressive advertising program has helped to create its peak-load problem.

Finally, Dr. North recommended that the City Council appoint an advisory board to oversee City Light's operations. He commented that the Utility's affairs are so complex that it is impossible for Council members to spend enough time to understand all their aspects. And while Dr. North didn't say it, we would add that Electric John's boys are so adept at concealing and distorting information, that a Councilman would need CIA training to really dig out the necessary data.

Anyway, the North Report appears to have been swept under the rug. George Cooley says he can "live with" a High Ross Dam and will let City Light go to the Federal Power Commission for permission to go ahead with the construction.

It's up to US now to unite all the people who can't live with High Ross into an irresistible force and defeat this monstrosity.

HIGH JINX ON THE SKAGIT OR HIGH ROSS WON'T GO AWAY

by the Kerosene Kid

Did all you cats who spend a pleasant summer hiking, climbing, and camping in the North Cascades think Electric John and his staff had given up on High Ross Dam? Not by a Dam Site! Just because things have been a bit quieter at Your City Light, don't think they haven't been a busy batch of beavers. You see, they had half a million bucks to spend on "Engineering Studies," thanks to the generosity of Seattle's City Council. That's 500 grand, a respectable sum even in today's inflated dollars.

Wave a bait like that below the noses of our City Light bureaucrats, and the drooling would almost equal the flow of the Skagit at spring run-off. You can do so many interesting things with a wad of dough that big, especially when most of the actual design costs have already been met. Our agents were not able to get through Electric John's security screen to obtain an actual breakdown of how these "public" funds are being spent, but in the course of the summer we did learn of some interesting expenditures.

Item: City Light's loggers felled a medium-sized western redcedar (4' 6" diameter) on the banks of Big Beaver Creek 3 miles up-valley from Ross Lake. The purpose of this vandalism in the Ross Lake National Recreation Area was to create a helicopter landing site, so visiting wheels would not have to walk up the trail like the rest of us peons. No permit was obtained from the Park Service for the destruction of this young giant.

Item: City Light's surveyors have laid out grade stakes for a road from the North Cross-State Highway to the top of Ross Dam.

Item: Another survey team has marked the 1725-foot level all the way around Ross Lake. They were several weeks in Big Beaver Valley, camping first at Thirtyninemile Creek and later on the river below the 8-mile marker. They left all their boyscout-type woodcraft (tables, cabinets, john, etc) when they pulled out of this camp. No doubt figured the rising water would clean up the mess.

Item: Part of the 500 G's went toward the hiring of "consultants" and flying them in by helicopter for quickie studies of the effects of the High Ross Dam. See elsewhere in this issue a description by N3C member Joe Miller of his meeting in Big Beaver with such a team of consultants.

Item: City Light's outdoor recreation specialist, Dr. Grant Sharpe, continued his activities at the city trough. Working for him were a couple of fisheries "experts" who were known to have conducted studies in at least Big Beaver and Little Beaver drainages. They were ferried back and forth from Ross Dam in City Light's VIP boat, and when they camped at Tenmile Shelter, they were supplied by City Light's packer (described by Electric John as an engineer in his Civil Engineering Division). The purpose of the studies, of course, was to disprove the contention of the Department of Game that High Ross Dam would be destructive of trout-spawning grounds.

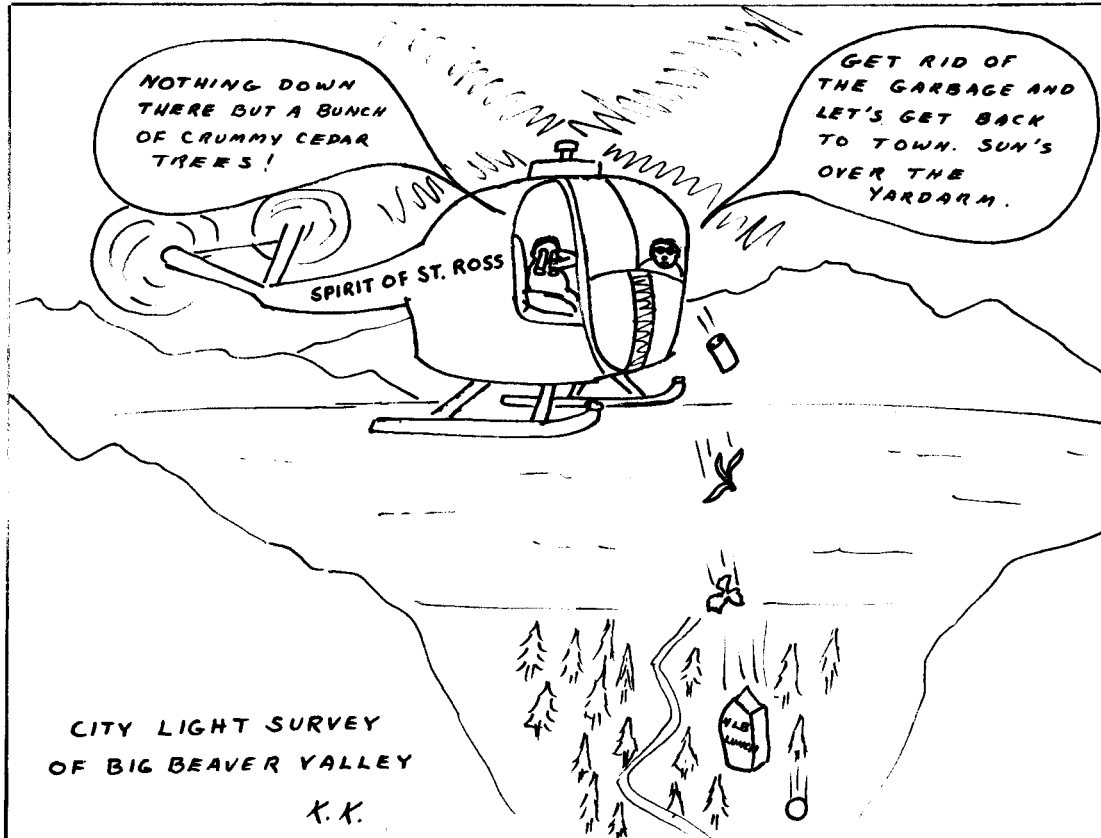
Item: City Light made valiant efforts to hire an ecologist at the University of British Columbia to do some studies for the utility. Why do you suppose they had trouble finding a Canadian scientist willing to accept a juicy share of those half-million American dollars? Well, there's a little string attached to the deal. The studies were to be carried out in such a way as to arrive at a predetermined conclusion. In other words, the ecologist was to "prove" that High Ross Dam would do no harm to the ecosystem in the Upper Skagit Valley. Real scientists do not work under these conditions, and the ecologists approached all turned down Electric John's emissaries. We understand that City Light finally had to settle for a hungry aquatic biologist. His objective report is eagerly awaited by the entire scientific community.

Item: Our City Light blew in a reported 15 of the 500 G's in its slush fund on hiring a firm of Vancouver forestry and recreation specialists -- F. F. Slaney & Co. -- to whip up a pretty brochure that tells how dandy flooding the Upper Skagit is going to be for the British Columbians. Then our busy utility hired a

Vancouver PR firm -- Ray Torresan & Associates -- to publicise the Slaney Report. Electric John denied hiring the PR firm, and since we're reasonably certain they aren't working for him for love, we must assume that he's channeling their share of the loot to them through Slaney & Co. Damn devious, what?'

These are just the goodies we succeeded

in learning about. Penetrating the "Electric curtain" down at 1015-3rd Avenue isn't easy, and doubtless there are other fascinating expenditures we haven't uncovered. Legal costs in Canada, for example, must be substantial. You have to pay pretty high for legal opinions advising you to ignore the laws of the country in which you're premeditating the rape of a virgin valley.



\$\$ NEEDED \$50,000.00 TO FIGHT ROSS DAM (please see page 2) \$\$

NOTE FREUDIAN SLIP (?) at the bottom of page 38, in the 3rd line, 5th paragraph (underline ours) - Ed.