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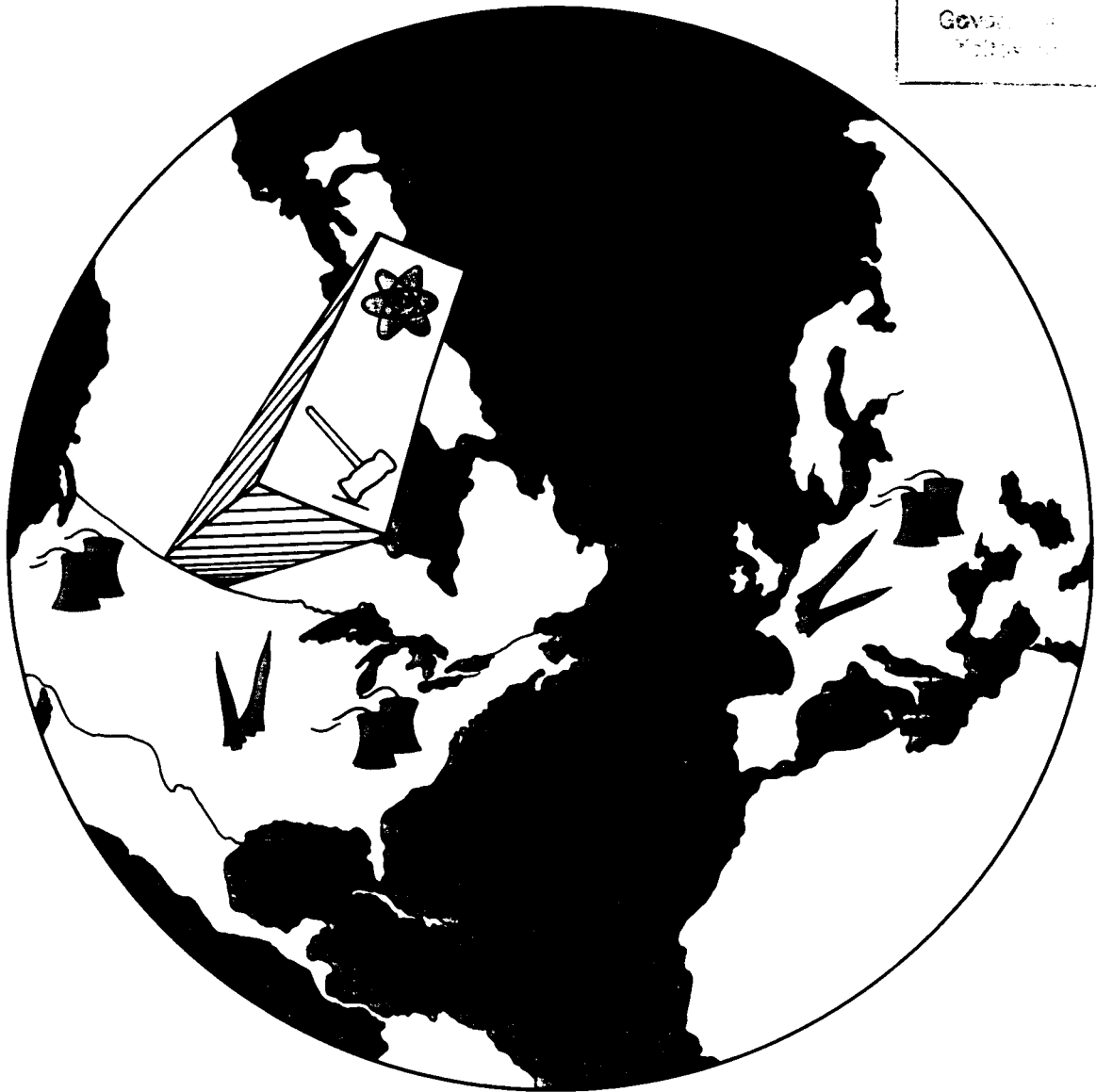
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Aboriginal Rights and Government Wrongs:

*Uranium Mining and Neocolonialism
in Northern Saskatchewan*

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1. SASKATCHEWAN AT THE PLANETARY CROSSROADS

The expansion of the uranium industry in Saskatchewan gives policy research and direct action on uranium mining not only a regional but a global **significance**.¹ Northern Saskatchewan is now the major front-end location of the nuclear system. With our sister province of Manitoba being considered as a nuclear reactor spent fuel storage site, continued cruise testing on the Alberta border and the arming of cruise missiles in North Dakota, the Canadian prairies is quickly becoming industrialized and militarized with nuclear technology.

Market, profit and political considerations have all contributed to this situation. The only other non-communist country with large uranium deposits is Australia. Although the estimated volume in the Australian deposits is very large, the grade at the Saskatchewan sites is much higher. The 2% uranium oxide (**U308**) at the Key Lake mine in northern Saskatchewan is 10 times higher than the grade at Australia's Ranger site. It is 6 times the grade expected at the **Jabiluka** site. Due to the lower grades of ore and the national ban on new uranium mines in Australia in the 1970s, Saskatchewan deposits became much more attractive to the energy multinationals. An unnamed president of a uranium mining company operating in Saskatchewan is reported as saying, "I'd rather face the technical problems of mining Cigar Lake (Saskatchewan) than the political hassle of developing a uranium mine in Australia."² An added advantage is uranium from Saskatchewan can be processed and transported more easily to the four big users of nuclear generated electricity - France, Japan, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Most of the major nuclear powers (United States, France, West Germany, Japan) and several countries involved in nuclear power and/or interested in

obtaining nuclear weapons are now involved with uranium mining in Saskatchewan.³ With the amalgamation of the provincial and federal crown corporations, the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation (SMDC) and Eldorado Nuclear, into a single company **CAMECO** - which is to be privatized - one company now has control of the world's largest source of uranium reserves and one of the largest uranium refining systems.

The reserves of uranium deposits in northern Saskatchewan total nearly 700 million pounds, ranging from 1/4% to 11 1/2% uranium oxide.⁴ Saskatchewan's uranium reserves are over 90% of those found in western Canada, and Northwest Territories. This makes up the largest amount of Canada's uranium production, which is now over 30% of the world market.

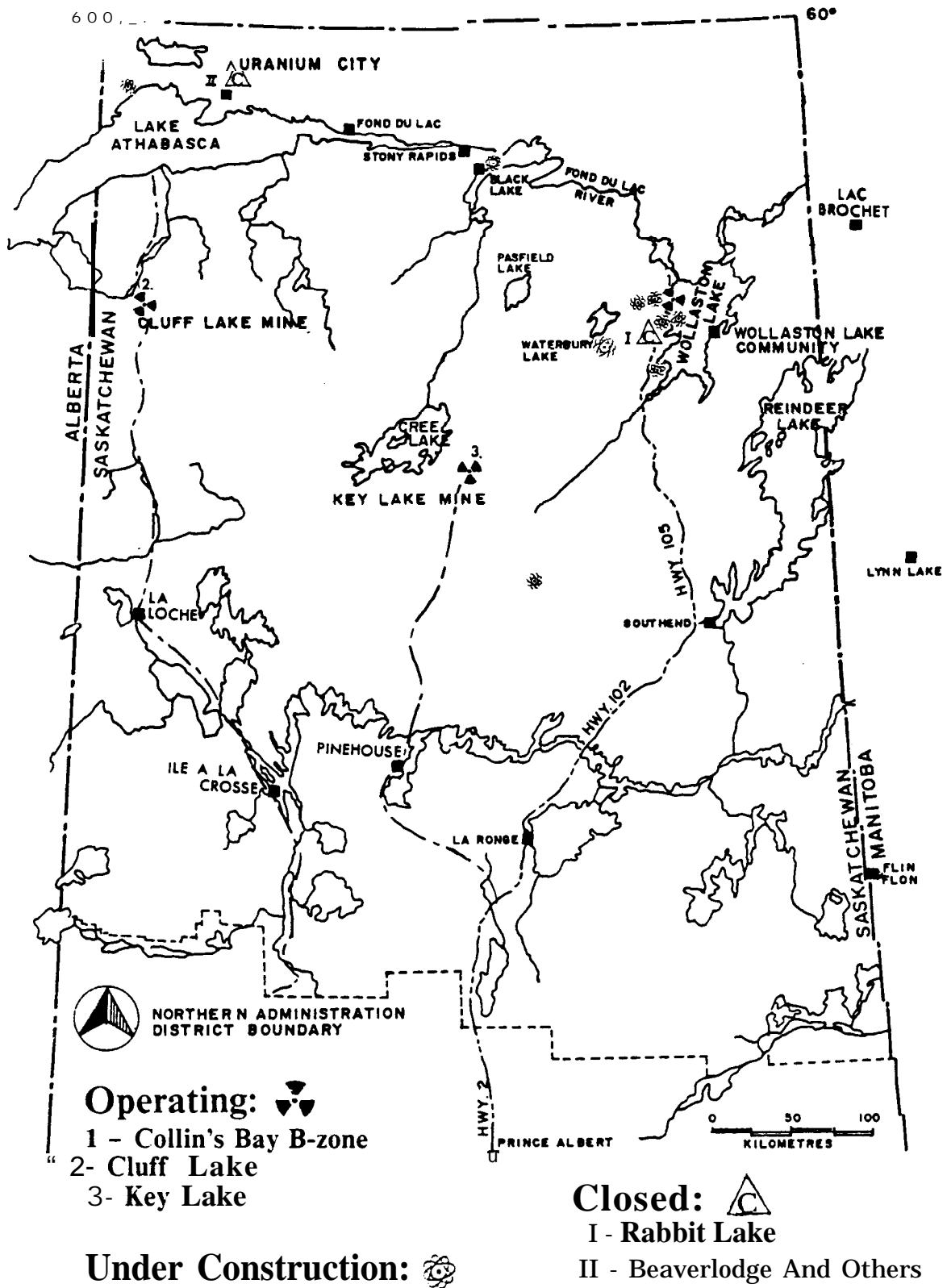
New sites in the **Wollaston** Lake area (Collins Bay, Eagle Point) near where the Rabbit Lake mine began production in 1975, include 113 million pounds of uranium bearing ore. Though most of these reserves tend to have a low percentage of uranium oxide, the **Collin "A"** site of 18 million pounds is estimated to be over 11% uranium oxide.

The **Cluff** Lake site contains 40 million pounds of uranium oxide. While Phase I of the **Cluff** Lake mine, over which the **Cluff** Lake Board of Inquiry (CLBI) deliberated over in 1977-78, still has one million pounds of uranium oxide at an average of 7%, the rest is .5% uranium oxide.

The Key Lake site was considered to be a bonanza for the crown and private uranium corporate owners. The two largest reserves (**Gaertner** and **Deilman**) totalled 180 million pounds of uranium oxide at an average of about 3%. The other, at Cobble Ore, was 15 million pounds at about .7% uranium oxide,

The Waterbusy Lake site, which includes Cigar Lake, is estimated to contain 230 million pounds at 10% uranium oxide. This is where the push is now on to expand the industry. Other undeveloped areas at the Midwest,

Uranium Mining Activity In Northern Saskatchewan



Source: Miles GoldStick, *Voices From Wollaston Lake: Resistance Against Uranium Mining and Genocide in Northern Saskatchewan*. (Vancouver, B.C.: Earth Embassy and WISE - Amsterdam), 1987.

McClellan and Dawn Lakes add another 110 million pounds at about 2% uranium oxide.

To the profit or energy hungry the mining of these reserves has a short-term advantage. To those who care about the future of the earth, and know the potential of renewable resources and conservation, such mining represents millions of tonnes of radioactive tailings which will ultimately disperse into the water, air and food chains. It also represents the continual accumulation of high level nuclear wastes and weapons grade material, which come from the reactors in which this mined uranium will be used. And, of course, it represents an affront on those who now live in the North or will come to live in the North where uranium is mined.

2. THE EXCLUSION OF ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

The Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry (CLBI) held in 1977 is often viewed as legitimizing the massive expansion of uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan. The Key Lake Board of Inquiry (KLBI), held in 1980, never purported to question whether or not uranium mining should proceed, but only how it should. It's therefore important to look at the CLBI's approach to uranium mining and aboriginal rights; and, after ten years, how the conditions surrounding uranium mining stand up to the Board's reasoning and recommendations.

In the CLBI's 300 page report there is only a half page reference to aboriginal rights.

Our terms of reference are not sufficiently broad to permit a thorough investigation of that **issue** and indeed, to have made the issue a part of the present **Inquiry** would have been a mistake, for, the very nature of the **issues** dictates that if there is going to be an **investigation** at all, it should be the subject of a separate investigation.⁵

This exclusion does not stand up to critical examination. With a similar scope both the MacKenzie Valley (**Berger**) and Alaska Highway Pipeline Inquiries

investigated aboriginal rights. The former recommended a 10-year moratorium and the latter a 4-year postponement of a pipeline in order that native land claims could be addressed. The Churchill River Inquiry in Saskatchewan also discussed aboriginal rights.

Writing in the *Saskatchewan Law Review* Bartlett said:

The Board **is** clearly empowered to **review** and recommend conditions regulating the social and **economic impact of the project. Such a review necessarily entails a study of the rights in law of the Indian and native people of Northern Saskatchewan, who' represent a significant element in the social and economic structure of the region . . .the CLBI was remiss, and in error, in construing its terms of reference so as to deny consideration of what Mr. Justice Berger termed 'the urgent claims of northern native people.'**⁶

Indigenous people are actually more than a "significant element...in the region." At the time of the CLBI Indigenous people made up 19,000 of **25,000 northerners.** About 10,000 of these people were Metis and non-Status Indians, The remainder were Status Indians. If the three mining and northern administrative centres of Uranium City, **Creighton** and La Ronge are excluded, Indigenous people were over 90% of northerners,

Attendance and participation in the CLBI clearly showed that uranium mining was a vital matter to Indigenous people. Overall 165 people, or more than half (57%) of all those who attended the 23 Local hearings throughout the province, were from the North, Half of all who spoke at the local hearings were from the North. Of these northerners, 75% in attendance and 71% of the speakers were Indigenous people. Most of those who spoke were Native men, though Native women were better represented than non-native women. Indigenous people were the vast **majority** in attendance at all hearings except the one held in Uranium City. At this hearing 60% of those in attendance were non-native, and most were in one way or another associated with the uranium industry.⁷

Neither the CLBI nor the NDP provincial government confronted the issue of aboriginal title and resource development. As “occupants” of the land for centuries the Indians and their offspring were granted certain right to lands, and to compensation for any extinguishment of such rights.

The people of Indian ancestry of Northern Saskatchewan are accordingly suggested as beneficiaries of the Indian title therein, to be entitled to the mineral resources of that region unless it is considered that such title has been extinguished.⁸

Treaties 6, 8 and 10, passed from 1876 to 1906, have a bearing upon the ancestors of the Plains, Wood Cree and **Chippewayan** Indians of the region where uranium **mining is occurring**. These treaties affect several northern bands; however, Treaty 10 is particularly relevant since it involves the bands most directly affected by uranium mining (Lac La **Hache**, Stony Rapids and **Fond du Lac**), as well as the land on which the largest uranium mine in the world at **Key** Lake exists.

The CLBI's alternative to aboriginal rights was to recommend sharing as a means to ensure a “fair” distribution of the economic benefits and to ameliorate the social costs of uranium mining. The provincial government of the time, however, did not agree. It used its own calculations to argue that more was already being spent in the North than uranium revenues would provide, as a basis for rejecting this recommendation. This shows the risk to Indigenous people of basing their claims for self-determination strictly on economic and market values.

3. THE CALL FOR A MORATORIUM

3.1 Federation of Saskatchewan Indians

Although not widely known, northern representatives of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSI) did not wish to participate in the CLBI because

it refused to address aboriginal rights. The Meadow Lake and Prince Albert District Chiefs of the FSI made **their views** about land entitlements very clear in an **unanimous statement** of "...why they could not make representation before the CLBI." These northern Chiefs said that the "... Inquiry is not dealing with the question of whether or not uranium mining should expand in northern Saskatchewan but simply with the question of how. " Therefore

...to participate in an inquiry having such limited terms of reference would mean that Indian people and their governments [Chiefs and Councils] have already concluded that further uranium development is an acceptable and desirable course of action for the Indian people of northern Saskatchewan. This is not the case.

The northern Chiefs viewed

. ..the use of Boards of Inquiry with a great deal of suspicion... [because] they create an illusion of objectivity and public participationWe have no desire to lend further support to such an illusion.

The added that:

. ..our participation would be impossible given the totally inadequate timeframe of the inquiry and the almost complete absence of resources to investigate the variety of serious issues and questions related to the uranium industry. To enter an arena where the tremendous resources of industry and government are so blatantly stacked against us, would be a politically irresponsible position for us as Indian leaders to take.

These are many of the same reasons why 17 other groups refused to participate in the CLBI formal hearings.

After these criticisms the northern Chiefs said:

Regardless of our future conclusions about these unresolved questions (about the environmental, social and economic impacts of further uranium mining on the Indians of Northern Saskatchewan) *no further uranium development is acceptable to Indians* [my emphasis] until

- (a) land selection by Bands with unfulfilled Treaty land entitlement is completed;**
- (b) the Treaty Rights of Hunting, Fishing, Trapping and Gathering are guaranteed against violation;**

- (c) **the Treaty** Rights for health, **economic** development and resources management are assured; and
- (d) we have the time and resources to carefully examine the many serious questions related to the uranium industry.

This was said **in spite** of a previous federal announcement that the federal, provincial and **Indian** governments had come to an "official agreement on the means of fulfilling outstanding Treaty land entitlements of Bands" ¹⁰ in Saskatchewan. Under the provisions of the relevant Treaties between 1871 and 1906 and the Natural Resources Transfer agreements of 1930 between the federal government and the **prairie** province governments, every Saskatchewan **Indian** Band would receive whatever land was required to bring the total land per registered person as of December 31, 1976 to 128 acres. The refusal of the northern Chiefs to participate in the CLBI suggested that they remained skeptical until the land agreements were finalized. When this communique was issued, there were only agreements on 15 of the 25 Bands out of 68 in the province for which the FSI had already advanced land entitlement **claims**. Though agreement in principle had been reached for some northern Bands, the northern Chiefs stood **firm** on the prerequisite of full settlement of land entitlements prior to any consideration of expanding uranium mining.

The federal communique also stated that:

Saskatchewan is also prepared to fulfill entitlements to the Bands concerned by providing, instead of lands, opportunities to Bands for revenue sharing in resource development or participation in joint ventures.

This suggests that even though the provincial government ultimately rejected the CLBI recommendation of uranium royalty sharing, it may have been seriously considering royalty sharing as an option to returning land to bands.

This firm position by northern Chiefs has somewhat disappeared from political memory. This, in part, may be because some of the dominant urban and southern leadership of the FSI at the time wished to cash in on uranium mining through such things as trucking and security guard sub-contracts. This

strategy has proven more **neo-colonial** than one promoting self-determination.

Revenue sharing was proposed, in part, because the treaties had not extinguished mineral rights. Some Treaty Indians have argued in the case of **Carswell Lake**, an acknowledged archaeological site near the **Cluff Lake** mine, that Treaty 8 did not extinguish Indian title to the land because no land settlement has yet been made. Furthermore, the authenticity of the Indian signatures on the original treaty has been questioned. **Fumoleau** commented:

...on the Treaty 8 documents nearly all of the marks next to the Chiefs' names are identical, perfectly regular with a similar slant, evidently made by the practiced hand of one person.¹¹

3.2 The **Metis** and Non-Status Indians

The Association of **Metis** and non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS) declared their aboriginal rights directly to the CLBI.

Our people are the aboriginal inhabitants of the Prairie Provinces, and as an aboriginal people we have an aboriginal claim to the land, a claim which is guaranteed in British law in the British Proclamation of 1763, a claim that is reiterated in Canadian law in the British North American Act, a claim that is further reiterated in the laws of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in the Canada Lands Transfer Act of 1932. These laws have completely been ignored by successive federal and provincial governments. We have been driven from our land in contravention not only of our laws as an independent nation state but in contravention of the laws of Great Britain, Canada and Saskatchewan. In short, our land has been stolen. This is an incontestable fact.¹²

After outlining the severe social and economic problems of native people who have been denied their aboriginal rights, the AMNSIS spokesperson concluded that "it is only just that it be our people who determine whether or not this development be allowed to proceed,"¹³ There was little doubt about how AMNSIS viewed the proposed uranium mine:

The proposed uranium development at Cluff Lake represents only one of hundreds of corporate and government decisions to

commit robbery, theft, and even genocide against our people.
If these comments seem harsh, You know, I think we could
substantiate a lot of what we are saying today.¹⁴

The cross-examination of AMNSIS' spokesperson by the company's lawyer showed a lack of understanding and even some hostility for the aboriginal rights of Native people. He sidetracked the issue into a challenge to this and other AMNSIS witnesses to prove they were legitimate northerners. When their Native and northern roots were shown, he then commented, "Well, I consider myself a northerner too, but I didn't come from quite that far north." Judge Bayda, who presided over the CLBI, participated in this **paternalism**.¹⁵

This shift to a facetious and petty discussion of one's personal geographic origins showed that the proponent (Amok) and the CLBI were not willing to respond seriously to the concern of AMNSIS for the collective, aboriginal rights of Indigenous people. This replacement of a position based on aboriginal rights with a geographic definition of northerner, is an extension of a well-documented tactic used to colonize the Indian and **Metis** of Canada. It was shown most strikingly when the aboriginal rights of Manitoba's Metis were undermined through deliberate European settlement of that area. Many northern Indigenous people are the descendants of Indian and **Metis** driven to the northwest by this past **colonialization**. However, northern Indigenous people are, and from all reliable estimates will remain, the majority of the northern Saskatchewan population. The approach to further colonization, therefore, seems to be to totally discredit the land rights of all native people and to accelerate the concentration of wealth within the non-native population that manages the corporate and government industries in the North.

The position of AMNSIS was reiterated by its president after the CLBI (Bayda) Report was released.

AMNSIS is not surprised by the results of the Bayda Inquiry - the decision to develop uranium in the Cluff Lake area was made long before the inquiry started . . . the more important

issue [of aboriginal rights] must be settled before Native people can be freed from government dependency and control.¹⁶

Furthermore, AMNSIS could not support the Northern Development Board (NDB) proposed by the CLBI unless it

...had the authority and resources to deal with the... protection of native rights. If... Department of Northern Saskatchewan officials hold true to their past track record, the Northern Development Board will be a useless and powerless board established simply to appease the provincial government and southern non-Natives. It would simply give the appearance that Natives have a say in the development of Northern Saskatchewan, when in reality they do not.

Metis and non-Status Indians were clearly more vulnerable regarding just land entitlement than band Indians. For the uranium mining industry to expand before the Metis and non-Status Indians had the opportunity to establish their legal claim to land further jeopardized their long struggle for self-determination. The unwillingness of the government and the CLBI to deal directly with aboriginal rights, even though these rights will be directly affected by uranium mining, indicates how they had once again been bargaining over land claims in bad faith.

There is a point at which this bargaining in bad faith comes very close to acting outside the law. A federal Cabinet Memorandum shows the government of Canada considered the right of the Metis and non-Status Indians to make land claims to be legitimate.¹⁷ The document acknowledges the need of Metis and non-Status Indians for "self-determination." It states that "... the non-Status Indians and Metis may have legal claims against the federal government and some provinces, and this might be tested in the courts at any time." Later the document explicitly accepts "...the prima facie evidence that there exists a class of Native people outside the Indian Act that may have justifiable claims to 'aboriginal title' ..." The document states as a government 'objective' "...to settle outstanding valid claims, based on aboriginal title,

by negotiation, taking full account of native requirements in terms of land and ecology to sustain a traditional lifestyle” In one place it recommends “that the government agree to provide funding, on a mutually acceptable basis, to non-Status Indian and Metis organizations at once to research legal claims” and that “...there is an urgent need for action, especially in relation to the funding of research into legal claims. ”

The Cabinet document was in part politically motivated, suggesting, as it did, that government “. .take a low-key approach in public to avoid a Native backlash like that against the 1969 policy paper, ” and that government should “,. continue to work through, and foster the Native associations and their moderate leadership. ” In particular, it stressed the need to give the “... native socio-economic problems in Western Cities (and Western Northlands) and in various rural areas.. urgent attention to forestall social unrest. ” But it did indicate that the claims of Metis and non-Status Indians, as well as band Indians, to aboriginal rights were legitimate.

The Metis claim is based on the failure to honestly provide Metis scrips for land as provided under the *Manitoba Act* of 1870.

The Metis have long assented that scrip was provided in circumstances of fraud and manipulation which enabled banks, other financial institutions, land companies, lawyers and small speculators to claim the Metis entitlement.¹⁸

As one Metis lawyer wrote:

While treaties with the Indians set apart communal tracts of land and recognized other rights, the scrip issued to the half-breeds was for a specific amount of land which was fully alienable. In addition, by this method of unilateral dealing, the government of Canada also purported to extinguish all aboriginal title rights possessed by the Metis, including the right to hunt. As a consequence of this imposed scrip system, most of the land fell into the hands of speculators.¹⁹

Specifically about northern Saskatchewan he wrote:

Because scrip could only be applied against surveyed land, a significant number of Metis were immediately at a disadvantage. For example, in the 1906 Treaty 10 area of

northern Saskatchewan, 60 percent of the scrip issued was land scrip. To this day there is virtually no surveyed land in that area. As a consequence, the Metis of northern Saskatchewan were deprived of their land base and their opportunity to acquire ownership of land.²⁰

Most Canadians do not yet realize that the Metis were the vast majority (80%) of the population in the area that became Manitoba, and that the Riel Rebellions of 1869 and 1885 were central to bringing the prairie provinces into Canadian federalism. The evidence is, however, overwhelming that the federal government always planned to cheat the Metis and undermine their aboriginal rights. After the Fort Garry insurrection by the Metis in 1869 the then Prime Minister of Canada, Macdonald, stated:

These impulsive half-breeds have got spoiled by their emeute (uprising) and must be kept down by a strong hand until they are swamped by the influx of settlers.²¹

3.3 The Northern Municipal Council

The commitment to aboriginal rights is so widespread in the North that even northern organizations that are more integrated into the political and administrative structure of the dominant society affirm them. In its submission to the first phase of the CLBI, the Northern Municipal Council (NMC) also stressed the priority of aboriginal land rights. In addition to declaring their aboriginal land rights as non-treaty northern Native people, the NMC also indicated its solidarity with the land rights of the Treaty Indians of northern Saskatchewan.

Aboriginal rights are the rights of those people who were the original inhabitants of this area. They are also the rights of the defendants of these original people. We, the native people of Northern Saskatchewan, as heirs of the original occupants of this land, claim these rights as our today . . .

There is another group of Natives in the North, approximately 6,000 Treaty Indians with rights in this area. We do not represent them and therefore we shall not attempt to present

their views. Since much of their land has not yet been allocated we have concerns that developments such as the Cluff Lake Mine may interfere with their ability to select and be granted land in areas of their choice. Will these Treaty Indians be left to select their land in areas where the reserves are scarce and where the possibilities for the economic development of their own communities is minimal?

We also have concerns about whether the increasing land areas being leased to outside mining companies will interfere with their use of their traditional hunting and fishing grounds thereby further restricting their ability to meet many of their own needs from available resources. Will this development be yet another instance of southern colonization of the North which will lead to the government of Canada again reneging on its Treaty promises to our Indian people?

We believe that our aboriginal land claims are relevant to the question of mineral resource development and in particular to the issue of uranium development. Therefore, we require sufficient time to fully study and present our case on this issue before your Inquiry makes its final recommendations to the provincial government.

We do not think a decision should be made about Cluff Lake until a method to negotiate our aboriginal rights has been firmly established.²²

Since aboriginal rights were ruled out by the CLBI, Indigenous people were faced with a "take it or nothing" dilemma regarding uranium mining. All interest groups including the CLBI pushed their own interpretation of how "northerners" actually ended up viewing uranium mining. A 3-year research project involving sampling, coding and analysis of inquiry participants' attitudes and viewpoints provides a more credible, social scientific picture.²³ None of the Native participants (in the sample) expressed either unconditional or conditional support for the uranium mine. Half of them expressed support for a moratorium, which shows widespread grassroots endorsement for the official position taken by all Indigenous organizations. About 25% were outrightly opposed to the uranium mine and another 25% were neutral. An interesting and ironic finding was that 83% of the northern proponents of uranium mining were from Uranium City, which has since become depopulated due to the shut down of the nearby uranium mines.

4. THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

There are many critiques of the way the CLBI evaded dealing with the issue of aboriginal rights. The United Church of Canada took issue with the CLBI's narrow notion of northerners controlling their lives,

A northern development Board to administer projects largely of the *fait d'accompli* type does nothing to answer the longing of the people. It merely institutionalizes the oppression evident in the planning process located far from the people. While it does provide for an opportunity for more justice in the area of the distribution of the royalties, it does not address the question of basic *control* of the productive development that leads to these royalties, control of the technology and the land on which these operations of mining are taking place.²⁴

The United Church also argued that basic control would mean regaining "the lost community control given up in the last century." Otherwise, a Northern Development Board (NDB) would fail to redress the historical injustices.

In spite of the CLBI's rhetorical statement that uranium mines and mills "...should be subject to whatever aboriginal rights exist," there was nothing done in it or any of the other Saskatchewan uranium mining inquiries to correct for this historical injustice.

The Report of the CLBI omitted any reference whatever to the ownership and control sought as an aspect of Metis land claims. The EIS of the Key Lake Mining Corporation contains no reference to the Metis claim. The suggestion of the Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry that "the establishment of uranium mines/mills in the North should be subject to whatever aboriginal rights exist" represents a gross misunderstanding of the nature of such title. If such title exists . . .the furtherance of uranium development represents an unjustifiable extinguishment of aboriginal title without compensation.²⁵

4.1 Formal, Not Substantive, Justice

This inattention to aboriginal rights continues an historical pattern. Though the Royal Proclamation of 1763 has often been appealed to as a basis of

aboriginal rights; the *Indian Act* of 1876 consistently undermined these “rights” in practice. Until 1951 the *Act* prohibited “any contribution by Indians for the development of a claim and the receiving of money for the prosecution of a claim against the Crown...”²⁶

Even with growing attacks on the paternalism of the Indian Act in the 1960s, federal authorities persisted with an assimilationist strategy. The fundamental clash over aboriginal rights probably came with the almost total rejection by Indigenous people of the explicitly assimilationist federal White Paper in 1969.

Largely due to the struggle over aboriginal rights in James Bay, Quebec, and the recognition of aboriginal rights in a case involving the *Nishga* Indians by the Supreme Court in 1973, the federal government finally issued a Native Claims Policy. Both comprehensive rights (those not extinguished by treaty) and specific claims pertaining to land, assets, and treaties were acknowledged.

The federal government has preferred negotiation and mediation as means to settle these rights and claims. The track record is not good. The Claims Commission only survived until 1979. Between 1973-80 only two comprehensive claims were settled, both in Quebec. Up until 1986 there were only 28 settlements of 414 specific claims.²⁷

The Canadian Constitution now recognizes and affirms aboriginal rights. However, in the night of the knives and horse-trading that led to the final Charter of Rights, aboriginal rights were clearly one of the **federal-provincial political footballs**. The use of the phrase “*rights that now exist* [my emphasis] **by way of land claim’s agreements**” **is clearly** more determinant than the add-on “or may be so acquired.” The onus is still on Indigenous people and their allies to win their aboriginal rights.

Furthermore, all of this **is in** the realm of formal rights and formal justice. Achieving substantive justice **is** always more complex and difficult. The coincidence of the 1973 federal policy on Native Claims and the OPEC triggered energy crisis and the consequent pressure for more resource exploitation vividly illustrates the contrast. In spite of formal commitments to settle land claims, aboriginal rights have consistently been traded off by governments working more for the interests of the resource industries than Indigenous people. The case of the Lubicon Band in Alberta, which received international attention during the Calgary Winter Olympic Games, and took 48 years and the threat of civil disobedience to get government to negotiate a land settlement is, perhaps, a well-known example.

4.2 The **Land Grab**

Governments **have** consistently side-stepped resolving issues of aboriginal rights in order to benefit from mineral wealth. A communique to the Minister of the Interior in 1897 about the advantage of pressing ahead with Treaty #8 stated:

They will be more easily dealt with now than they would be when their country is overrun with prospectors and valuable mines to be discovered. They would then place a higher value on their rights than they would before these discoveries are made and if they are like some of the Indians of Saskatchewan, they may object to prospectors going into that country until their rights are settled.²⁸

Commenting on an amendment to the Indian Act which provided for surface mining leases on reserve land, the 1920 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs noted:

...owing to local conditions, misapprehension or hostility, it is not always possible to receive a surrender for mining rights. This²⁹ obstacle has been effectively overcome by the amendment.

Indian reserves were even located in such a way that mineral rights were unknowingly being “extinguished.” In 1925 The Saskatchewan Premier wrote:

If mineralized sections are kept out of Indian Reserves, as far as possible, there is a chance for their development in the future. The placing of them within the borders of the Reserves would hamper development very materially.³⁰

This colonial strategy has persisted to the present, The Peter Ballantine and Lac La Ronge Bands reported to the 1976 Churchill River Inquiry (Aski-puke) that mining companies took “2 billion in wealth from the area with no significant benefit for the North or northern natives.”³¹ Allan Blakeney, who was the Saskatchewan Premier from 1971-1982 when the push was on for uranium mining, maintained the same colonial stance when he stated that permits to explore for uranium on Crown lands meant these lands were “occupied” and not available for any agreements on land entitlement.³² The treaties, federal-provincial agreements, and several judgments on aboriginal rights would challenge this edict that uranium exploration constitutes occupation. This statement came at the time when a minimum of 15 of 68 bands in the province, including several northern bands, had outstanding treaty land claims of over 1 million acres. Though supporting these land claims in principle, the provincial government was clearly going to protect mineral wealth for itself and multi-national partners in uranium mining joint ventures.

Bartlett believes:

The deliberate denial of mineral benefits to the Indian people of Northern Saskatchewan is (in) clear violation of the treaty obligations of the Crown.. The failure of the Province to set aside reserve lands in accordance with treaty land entitlement must raise doubts as to the extinguishment of Indian title The need of the Indian bands to reach an agreement with the mining companies for exploration permits, or risk provincial referral to transfer lands, has clearly undermined the Indian bargaining position.³³

He suggests “the payment of a treaty royalty” from uranium mines.

It is understandable why the call for a moratorium on uranium mining by Native groups was so widespread in view of the blatant infringement of aboriginal rights in the development of uranium mining. Rather than open up this colonial nest of worms, the deliberations of the CLBI were narrowed to the matter of “incidental economic benefits. ” The CLBI's chapter on the North primarily discussed ways to share the short-term benefits from uranium mining with northerners.

The exclusion of Indigenous people from even the short-term benefits of mining has a long history in Saskatchewan's North. Though a hydro dam was built at Island Falls in 1930 to supply power to mines at **Flin Flon**, the adjacent Native town of Sandy Bay never received electricity until 1958. Native people working for Churchill Power were segregated into separate toilets and lunch rooms and the lowest paying **labour** and maintenance jobs, with no certification. The housing, goods and services in the newly constructed Island Fall company town contrasted sharply with conditions in Sandy Bay where Native workers resided. When the dam was automated in 1967 the economic base of Sandy Bay disappeared.

Information provided to the Churchill River Board of Inquiry indicated that in the early 1970s only **2%** of the jobs in seven mines in northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba were filled with Native people. Figures from **Eldorado Nuclear** in 1979 indicated only **7%** of the jobs at Uranium City were filled with Native people.

4.3 A New Round of Promises

Various governments have initiated programs to try to alleviate the massive unemployment in the North, The 1978 Northlands Agreement between the federal and provincial governments was:

...to encourage the development of the natural resources of the area in harmony with resource conservation, for the benefit of northern residents and residents of the province; and to provide the opportunity for northern residents, who wish to do so, to continue their own way of life within an improved social and physical environment.

These objectives were clearly being undermined by the expansion of uranium mining occurring at the time.

In mid-February 1978 the now defunct Institute for Northern Saskatchewan at the University for Saskatchewan sponsored a conference to examine the experience of corporations, employees and northern communities with a commuting **labour** force. Representatives from Amok, Uranerz, Gulf, **Esso**, Eldorado and the SMDC attended. Spokespeople from Indigenous and **labour** groups were noticeably absent.

One afternoon was spent discussing the non-unionized Gulf-owned uranium mine at Collins Bay, which had established the *commuter* system. **This** session was chaired by a past member of the supposedly neutral CLBI. The other uranium companies were clearly interested in learning about the advantages to them of a non-union shop, with a "no return" policy for workers let go and an apparently low turn-over rate. During questioning the Vice-President of Production at **Collin's** Bay admitted that only 10% of the 300 staff were northerners, and not all of these were Native people.

At the conference, the NDP Minister of Northern Saskatchewan outlined the provincial government's policy regarding the involvement of northerners in uranium mining. It was his hope that the road construction work to the **Cluff** and Key Lake mines would train northern residents for future commuting jobs at the mines and mills. It was also hoped local businesses would get **sub-**contracts. The objective of 50% northerners mentioned in the surface lease agreement for Phase I of the **Cluff** Lake mine was noted as the proof of the success of the province's policy. He reiterated the government's opposition to

direct royalty sharing as advocated by the CLBI, instead favoring the expansion of northern local government.

5. NEO-COLONIALISM COUCHED IN LIBERAL PATERNALISM

The CLBI argued the case for its main recommendations about revenue sharing and a Northern Development Board through a highly formalistic discussion of fairness and the sharing of economic benefits. It acknowledged that:

...the fruits of the northern mining industry (i.e. the mining' of lands the northerners traditionally have occupied) by and large did not find their way into the pockets of the northerners.³⁵

Though the CLBI therefore came close to acknowledging aboriginal rights, it never questioned the underlying colonial history, structure or ideas about development. Its approach to the North can be considered neo-colonial.

S. 1 A "Just and Fair" Approach

The liberal assumptions of the CLBI are quite clear in its discussion of what it called the "Natural Distribution of Benefits and Costs." "Natural" applies not to aboriginal rights but to "market forces."³⁶ The word "normal" also obscures the pervasive bias of the inquiry, as shown in the statement "in the normal course of events social benefits follow economic benefits."³⁷ The overriding preconception was that:

the economic costs to government in relation to a uranium mine/mill are not very large in proportion to the prospective economic benefits.³⁸

Even with its artificially narrow view of costs, this preconception was not

and still is not at all self-evident.

The orientation of the CLBI was to redistribute what were seen as the unquestionable benefits of uranium mining. This was necessary both to share these benefits and to alleviate "the costs burden. " Rather than discussing the right to control a share of the mineral wealth due to aboriginal rights, or how alternative development might be more consistent with such rights, the CLBI engaged in a cumbersome and somewhat paternalistic discussion of northerners deserving "preferred status. " The Report says, again as though it was self-evident, that:

The principles of justice and fairness, as we understand them, would seem to favour the northerner's claim for that kind of a preferred status and that kind of a boost.³⁹

It is very interesting that in this discussion of the justification of royalty sharing as the "just and fair" approach, that the CLBI remarked:

...if no significant benefits flow from the development to a significant segment of the people of northern Saskatchewan, the development should not proceed unless it is shown that the benefits to the people of the province generally or the people of Canada or elsewhere will be exceptional.⁴⁰

It is now possible to appeal to the CLBI, even with its pro-uranium biases and conclusions, to argue that the outcome has not been beneficial or fair.

To ensure its principles of fair and just sharing of benefits, the CLBI also argued the North should have some control over development planning. To accomplish this it recommended the creation of a nine person Northern Development Board (NDB). If it had been created, and created along the lines suggested by the CLBI, the NDB would have likely had only five Native people picked from lists submitted by Indigenous groups. All members would have been appointed by a government Minister and would have been responsible to the Legislature; it would help "regulate and oversee" development but would not have had any veto power.

The CLBI's underlying, unquestioning ideological commitment to state capitalist development was shown in its view of this proposed NDB as doing research on "human resources" so as to address "the social effects produced by the introduction into the North of technology, industrialization and modernity,..."⁴¹ Somehow this NDB was going to be able to ensure that development "fit a coherent overall plan."⁴²

Later the CLBI reinforced this neo-colonial view by stating:

...that the intrusion of the twentieth century into all parts of Canada is inexorable and the accompanying force of industrial expansion, in sometimes subtle forms is irresistible.⁴³ "verse and

It continues:

Whether that course was set for them or whether they themselves chose the course or whether it was a combination of these two factors is arguable - and academic. The important fact remains: the Northerners are clearly moving toward a lifestyle⁴⁴ which entails technology, modernity and industrialization.

The pretense of the CLBI was that this southern-appointed and ultimately government-controlled body (NDB), with no veto over what the CLBI called "modernity," was going to ensure the North was "developed by Northerners." Furthermore, it was going to create:

... "development" not in the sense of economic development **as defined by Southerners but development as defined by Northerners and that includes human resources as well as economic growth.**⁴⁵

This liberal, neo-colonial recommendation was rejected not because of its naivete, but because of vulgar economics, This rejection showed the provincial government of the time had no fundamental commitment to aboriginal rights. While it is likely that even a weak NDB would have slowed uranium development, and perhaps have jeopardized Saskatchewan moving into the then seemingly lucrative world uranium market, the NDB would not have created anything like the kind of control that exists with the Land Councils and

revenue sharing among the Australian Aborigines in the Northern Territories where uranium mining has also expanded. Yet even with such increased Aboriginal control in Australia, the incidental economic benefits to the indigenous population have been sparse.⁴⁶

6.2 To Be Or Not To Be A Development Board

Almost as though the CLBI knew the government would reject revenue sharing and the NDB, and as though it had proposed these to appease northerners, the report included a section on the "Situation Pending the Establishment of a NDB." This further reduced the discussion from token control to sharing with northerners incidental benefits such as jobs and spin-offs from the mine, and the use of the provincial jurisdiction over the surface lease to ensure minimal standards.

In a most revealing statement the CLBI said:

. ..the possibility of Northerners not getting their fair share of jobs unless the Northern Development Board is first established is no reason to prevent the Cluff Lake mine from proceeding.⁴⁷

It then talked as though providing 55 jobs to northerners (not specifying Indigenous people) - with 3 to 10 people coming from 5 to 12 of the northern communities - was in keeping with the previous discussion of being "fair and just." This conclusion to a long paternalistic, philosophical discussion about sharing benefits would have had no credibility except for the CLBI's afterthought that this pittance of benefits "should not be looked upon as a panacea for northern unemployment."⁴⁸ Later it became clear how correct the CLBI was on this score.

The CLBI clearly did not wish to do anything to stall the "modernity" which uranium mining would supposedly bring to the North. But there is some

indication that it thought the full-scale expansion of uranium mining should not occur without putting in place, at the very minimum, its recommendations. After getting the government off the hook on the Cluff Lake mine, the CLBI wrote:

..it is our first choice that no further uranium development beyond Cluff Lake occur until a Northern Development Board is established and functioning.⁴⁹

As it turned out not only did this not happen, but the recommended inquiry on Phase II of the Cluff Lake mine was never held. This provides further evidence for the view that the CLBI served as a legitimizing device for the uranium mining industry, more than a means of providing public participation or for encouraging northern self-determination.

There is further indication that not even the incidental benefits stressed by the CLBI have been accomplished by the expansion of uranium mining. When discussing the need to ameliorate the social costs of uranium mining the CLBI wrote:

We gained the distinct impression that Northerners who squarely face the alternatives are prepared to bear some level of social costs provided they receive their fair share of the benefits and provided that all social costs are not looked upon as inevitable but that measures are taken on a continuous basis to ameliorate them.⁵⁰

It is discussed later how the northern Chiefs now consider that such costs have not been ameliorated. Furthermore, the pretense of concern about social costs was hypocritical in view of the fact that the CLBI would not even allow the time for social impact studies to be done prior to the opening of the Cluff Lake mine.

Ultimately, the inevitability of what was deceptively called "modernity" dominated thinking of the CLBI as well as the provincial government. The "unquestionable" benefits of roads, and commuting to mine labour jobs took precedence over aboriginal rights and what the CLBI called

the “unfounded fears” of northerners. Even though the CLBI admitted, “there may be a connection between the abrogation of aboriginal rights and the social disorder which exists in some segments of the native communities, ”⁵¹ the Inquiry did nothing, whatsoever, to provide an alternative to the continuation of the colonial onslaught in the North.

6. NORTHERN CHIEFS’ STUDY

To my knowledge the only evaluation of uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan undertaken by an Indigenous group was commissioned in 1985 by the Prince Albert District Chiefs. This was the same northern group that refused to participate in the CLBI due to its unwillingness to address aboriginal rights and the lack of time and resources to prepare.

The Report unfortunately fails to provide this pertinent background. It does, however, refer to the public inquiries on uranium mining as:

The most significant events in the chronology of the Industry in recent years, justifying as they did the government’s approval for various companies to operate the three uranium mine/mill operations in the province.⁵²

6.1 Focus on the North

The main focus of the Chief’s study is not aboriginal rights but what impact uranium mining has had on northern employment, economic development, and health and environment. Furthermore, the orientation “is toward presenting an overview of the industry as it affects northerners only...”⁵³ Also, there appears to be a general preconception that “. . .the general public including northerners has benefited through the economic benefits occurring to the Province as a result of uranium production and sale.. .”⁵⁴

The Chief’s Report is, however, aware of larger, global issues.

Some of the issues, like the morality of using uranium to make bombs and other nuclear armament, are only touched on as they impact directly on the presentation of an overview of the industry in relation to the original terms of reference. Those terms of reference did not include a request to evaluate the end-use that uranium is put to. While certainly deserving the attention of the reader, these issues are not concluded upon in this study.⁵⁵

Ironically, its failure to investigate these vital global issues is rationalized somewhat like the CLBI rationalized its refusal to look at aboriginal rights.

6.2 Growing Disillusionment

The key provincial policies and events in the promised "sharing" of economic benefits with northerners were: 1) the establishment of the Cluff Lake Surface Lease, and Monitoring Committee in 1978; 2) the establishment of the Manpower Secretariat in 1979; 3) the Key Lake Uranium mine Surface Lease in 1981; 4) and the revised Cluff Lake Surface Lease and the Eldorado Collins Bay Surface Lease in 1983.

There are clear indications of growing disenchantment with the attempts to regulate the uranium industry.

Although the original agreements all contained similar socio-economic goals it is apparent that the most recent surface lease agreements contain practically no enforceable provisions with regard to employment, training and monitoring conditions. Written requests were made by the authors to Amok Ltd., Key Lake Mining Corporation and Elder Resource Ltd., for pertinent employment statistics and yearly employment plans and assessments as outlined in the terms of the surface lease agreements. Replies from Amok Ltd., indicated that the information requested should be accessed through the appropriate provincial departments. As mentioned earlier . . . written requests have been made to the province, unfortunately no response has been received. In various attempts to acquire this information from the province, the authors were assured that the information would be compiled. Although, in final attempts to follow up these commitments we were informed that the release of such documentation would have to be approved by the independent mining companies. Written responses from both the Key

Lake Mining Company and Elder Resources Ltd., indicate that information will be forthcoming. To date no further response has been received.⁵⁰

Furthermore, the Report notes that both the Monitoring Committees and Manpower Secretariat ceased to operate under the **neo-conservative** provincial government elected in 1982.

The only statistics the Chiefs were able to get were for the **Cluff** Lake mine for 1979-84. On the basis of 1984 figures the Chiefs' report concluded the project

...has achieved positive results in reaching a recorded total of 44% northern employment which includes on site mining operations and the southern based office in Saskatoon.⁵⁷

The company's 1983 figures show 46% were northerners. This, of course begs the important question about how these jobs were actually distributed to Native and non-Native residents in the North, and what kinds of jobs each group got. Company figures for 1982 indicate that only 14 of 143 jobs going to northerners were for the higher paying and/or safer jobs in supervision, technical or clerical work. The rest (129) were listed as "other," which includes most of the **labouring** and more dangerous mine and mill jobs.

Furthermore, the company's own figures show that between 1979 and 1982, 311 of 408 or 76% of the northerners hired were terminated. This suggests that the northern "**labour pool**" for the mines is highly transient, perhaps an indication, among other things, of the occupational and **environmental** conditions at the mine. The company's own figures show that the percentage of northerners hired who were terminated was high (from 68 to 85%) in **all** the Indigenous communities (La Lathé, Buffalo Narrows, **Beauval**, Ile a la Crosse, Patuanak, Canoe Narrows and others) which have served as the Native **labour** pool. These figures certainly don't leave the impression that the much applauded commuter system adapted from the Rabbit Lake mine made uranium mining more compatible with the northern "lifestyle" than past company towns.

Finally, the company's own figures show a declining rate of northerners employed from 56% to 47% over the years 1979-1982. With the abolition of the Monitoring Committee in 1982, and a less stringent surface lease for Phase II of the **Cluff** Lake mine this trend of decreasing employment of northerners has continued.

The Chiefs' Report refers to an evaluation done by a former NDP Cabinet Minister who was also past Deputy Minister of Northern Saskatchewan .58 It points out that only 3% of total construction contracts at the **Cluff** Lake mine went to northerners. It noted the 1983 Surface Lease for **Eldorado's** Collins Bay mine showed a decline in the work going to northerners. Furthermore, it concluded that the now defunct Monitoring Committee had failed to act as an effective watch-dog on the company and government. In the author's words "there is no doubt about the facts, the number of people benefiting directly is very small. " The Report paraphrases the evaluation by writing that "the impact cost of uranium development on northerners may well exceed any benefit. "59

The conclusions of the Chiefs' Report are worth considering in detail. Its **first** conclusion was that the monitoring process is "in a state of neglect" and that by 1985:

There exists no such legislative requirement of the mines to employ northerners to ensure that they receive the economic and social benefits intended for them at the outset. 60

The Report indicated that the monitoring process continued to deteriorate since the Inquiries:

The initial enthusiasm generated by the **Cluff and **Key Lake** Inquiries which emphasized northern participation, has been dulled by the gradual and normal grind of implementation... the result of that process is a loss of communication between the principal actors, and a dilution of the original expectations... the apparent resistance to the sharing of information about northern employment in the uranium industry by the government for whatever reasons, is strong evidence of communication problems.** 61

The Report also expressed concern that “the northerners are gradually being ignored and forgotten”⁶² and took issue with the focus on the general category of “northern resident” in the surface leases rather than attending to the Indigenous communities who most directly experience the impact of uranium mining. It said, “In reality the provincial government has not given sufficient recognition to northern band governments as major actors . . .”⁶³ Consequently, it concluded that:

. . .the time is right to review the establishment of a Northern Board for purposes of directly involving northerners in the coordination, initiation, and direction of future economic and social development strategies in the north.⁶⁴

The skeptical tone persists:

. . .there is an overall necessity to review the actual benefit received by northerners since the Cluff Lake Inquiry. It is not unreasonable to draw a comparison . . . between what northerners have received in terms of direct and indirect benefits, and what the province as a whole has received in royalty payments from the uranium industry since that time.⁶⁵

The Chiefs also resurrect the issue of revenue sharing, partly because of “the dismantling of the DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) and the increased need by northerners to have more direct contact over their lives.”⁶⁶

The conclusion, however, seems to shift the rationale from aboriginal rights to the amelioration of impacts.

The lack of such a compensation policy by government does not properly recognize and address the probability of ongoing impact from existing mines, or the possible impact of new mines, on traditional forms of livelihood. Considering the known reality that each of the mines will close out in the future, we find that no form of contingency planning is being undertaken which would enable northerners to make a transition from reliance on uranium mining, to some other form of economic livelihood. We wonder whether or not northerners are evaluating the potential cost of taking part in a short-term economic benefit industry.⁶⁷

6.3 Socio-Economic Impacts

Though the Chiefs' report raises the issue of "outstanding land entitlements, " it warns of the' tendency for bands "to focus on the immediate benefits such as direct employment in the mines", and stresses "the necessity for Bands to consider the **socio-economic impact** of industrial development of the North..."⁶⁸ It notes "preliminary indications of social impact from several sources . . .**(including)**..."**"such concerns as high employee turnover rates in the mines, the pick-up points for northerners, the 'culture shock' adjustment..and so on."**⁶⁹

There is a call for "an indepth review of social impact on northerners from the perspective of short and long-term effects. "7° The Chiefs' Report also raises issues about regulation, and acknowledges why uranium mining is so controversial.

Anti-nuclear organizations maintain that there are no guarantees which provide absolute safety, and that we are building a problem for future generations of unmanageable proportions. In reality, it boils down to how much risk we are prepared to accept in order to have economic benefit.⁷¹

It also raises issues about markets. In this respect the Report is quite candid, especially about the weapons connections:

The growth of the nuclear industry has been a steady upward trend since man first realized the awesome power of nuclear energy in the H bomb. We do not see this trend reversing, at least not in the foreseeable future. It is furthermore difficult to believe that the best corporate minds over several years have suddenly made a gross error in calculating the potential for the uranium industry in domestic (and military) markets. The size of the investments alone is staggering to the imagination. Whether or not the movement will rally enough support throughout the world in the coming years to stop nuclear development, is a matter that remains to be seen. The first hurdle for such groups is to stop the use of uranium in nuclear weapons, and that would seem to be the major hurdle to overcome before any attempt to halt domestic use of uranium might be successful. At this point it seems unlikely that this will happen.⁷²

A similar disillusionment to that expressed by the Chiefs was found in

a follow-up interview study of participants in the province's past uranium mining inquiries.⁷³ This study, conducted from 6 to 9 years after the uranium mining inquiries, was able to **locate 183 persons and contact 134 of the 315** in a sample of participants **from these inquiries. Indepth interviews were conducted** with 106 of these **participants. The group of participants interviewed** contained a fairly even distribution of proponents, opponents and those favoring a moratorium or expressing neutrality on uranium mining.

Overall there was a 39% increase in opposition to uranium mining since the time of the inquiries. Support for uranium mining increased **by** only 5%. These shifts primarily reflect decreasing support for a moratorium or neutrality and increasing outright opposition. This was most marked in the case of Indigenous people affiliated with Native organizations where opposition to uranium mining went from 0% at the time of the inquiries **to 50%**. An analysis of themes associated with those past and present attitudes suggests **major** disillusionment with the realities of uranium mining and with the uranium inquiries.

7. ASSESSING BENEFITS AND BURDENS

There is a more accurate and helpful way to assess the economic benefits of uranium mining to northern Indigenous people and that is by looking at the value of uranium production, the costs of exploration and "development," and the wages, revenues, and taxes since the expansion began about the time the Rabbit Lake mine opened in 1975.⁷⁴ The total value of uranium mined up to 1984 was over two billion dollars. The total cost of exploration and mine site "development" was about \$650 million, more than half of which was expended **by** the government through its joint ventures with private corporations. The wages

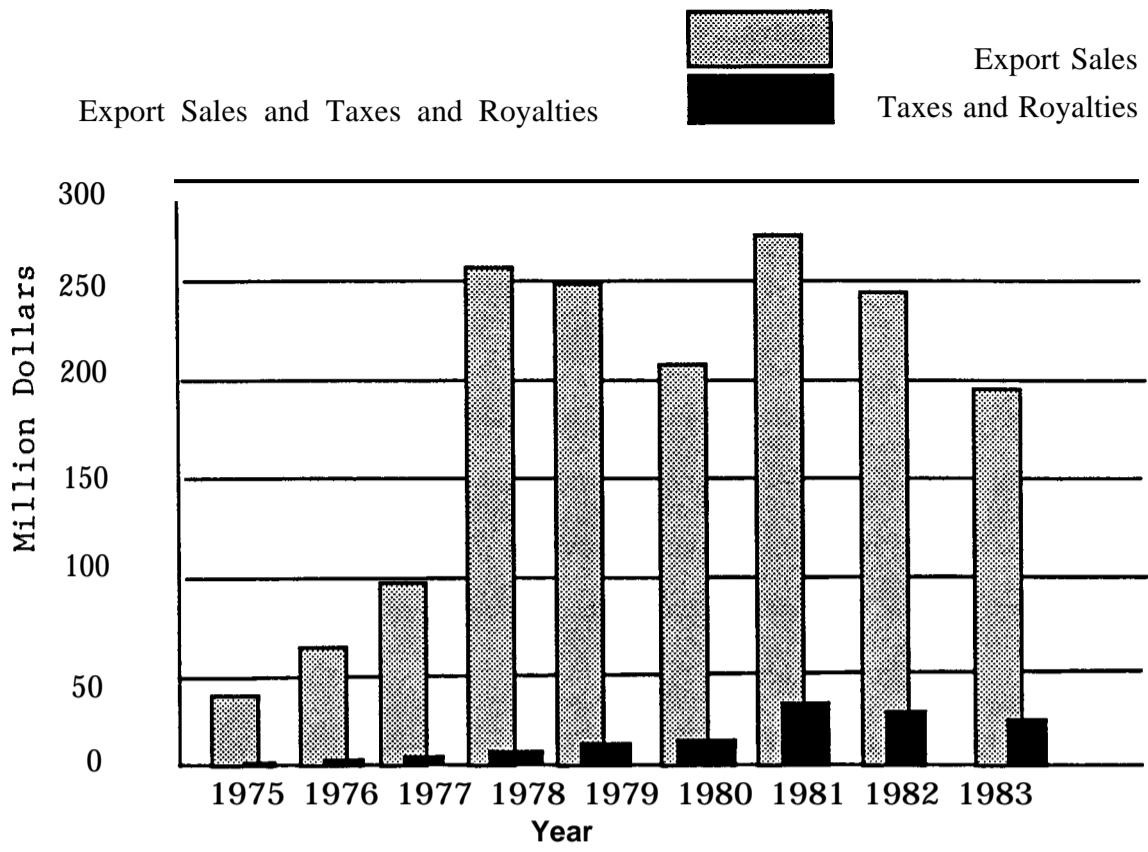
and salaries coming from uranium exploration during this period, most of which did not go to northerners, especially Native northerners, total led \$140 million. The value of **wages** and salaries coming from mine, mill and other work related to uranium production, again most of which did not go to northerners, especially Native northerners, total led \$290 million. Finally, the total received from taxes and royalties during this period was \$128 million.

The return through taxes and royalties as a percentage of the value of the sales is shown **in** the graphs I and II. The percentage increases slightly after the uranium inquiries (held between 1977-1980) but appears to have peaked **prior** to the new **neo-conservative** government taking power. Exploration, construction and production costs, including wages and salaries, were only 53% of the value of the uranium. If taxes and royalties are added in, the costs were still only 59% of the value of the uranium.

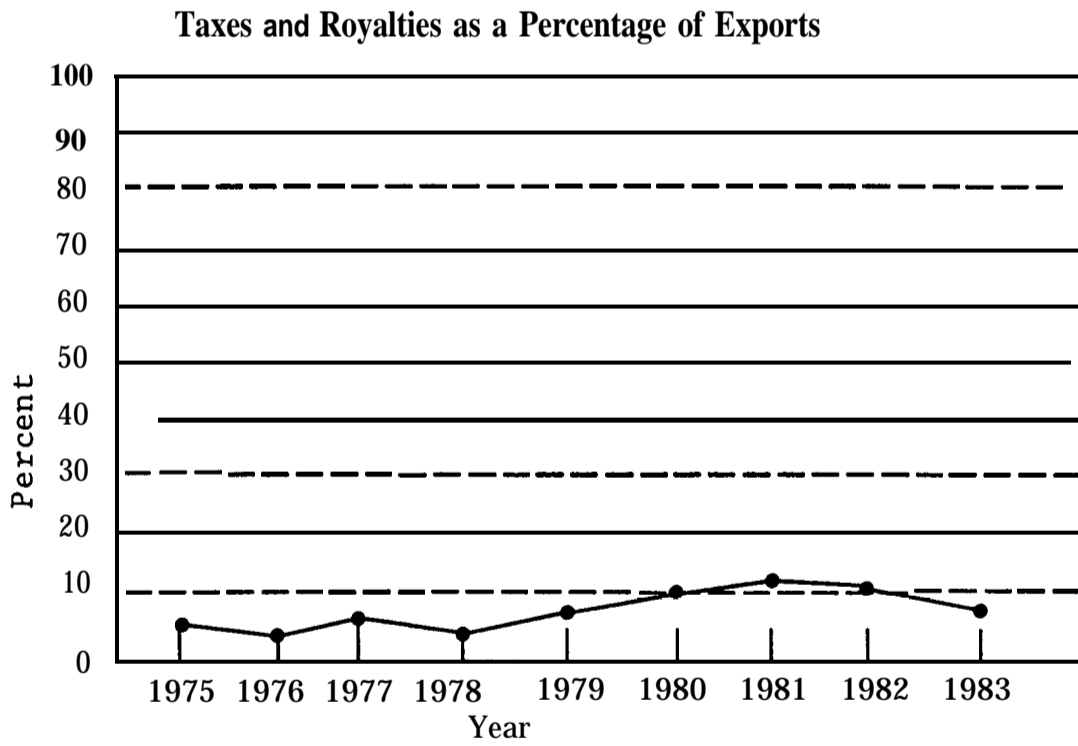
7.1 **Jobs To Northern Native People**

Even more revealing about how the economic benefits, which are the mainstay of the pro-uranium argument, were not actually distributed fairly is the number of jobs going to Native northerners. The first thing to note from graph III is that in 1984, even with the new high grade mines at **Cluff** and Key Lake in operation, the total direct employment was not as high (1204 jobs) as it **was in** 1982, prior to this expansion, when the Uranium City mines were still open (1384 jobs). After the shut-down of the Uranium City mines (1982-1983) direct employment dropped below the 1975-76 levels, before the so-called uranium boom. As shown in graph IV the jobs going to northerners in mine development work never **came** close to the 50% targeted, and sharply declined by 1984 to almost the same low levels experienced before the "boom. " The

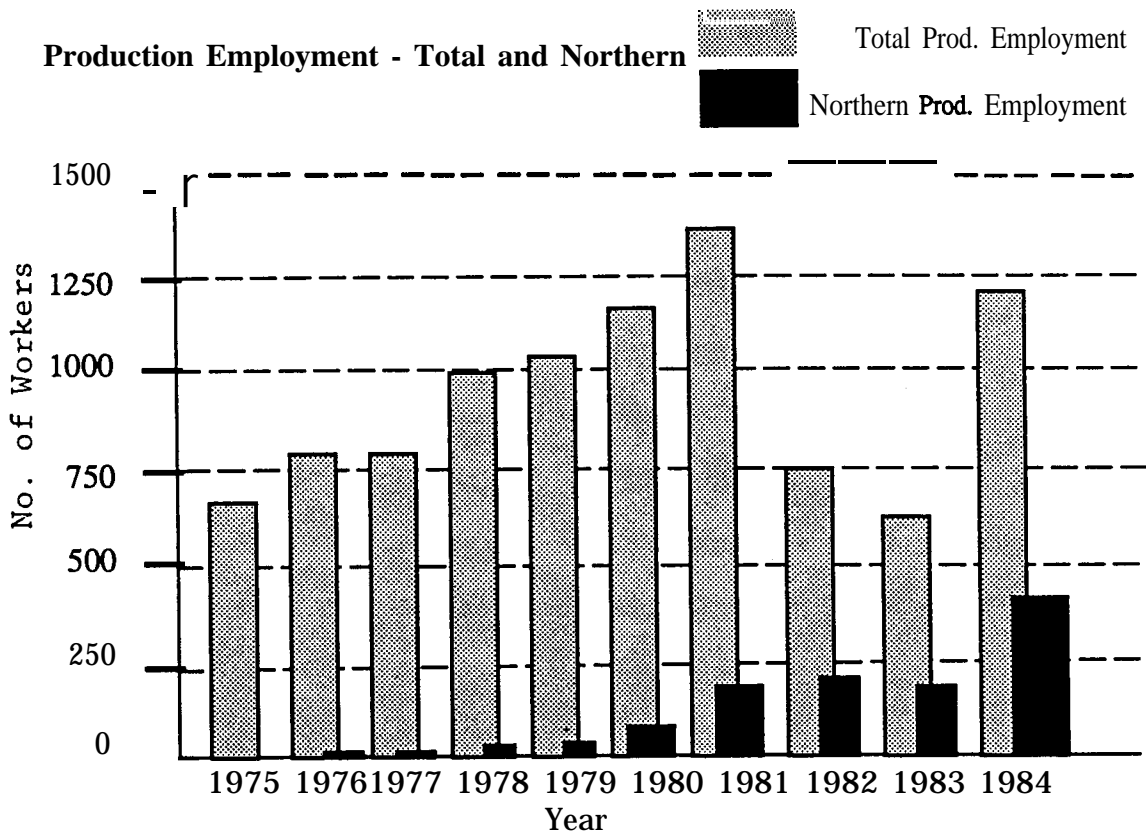
Graph I



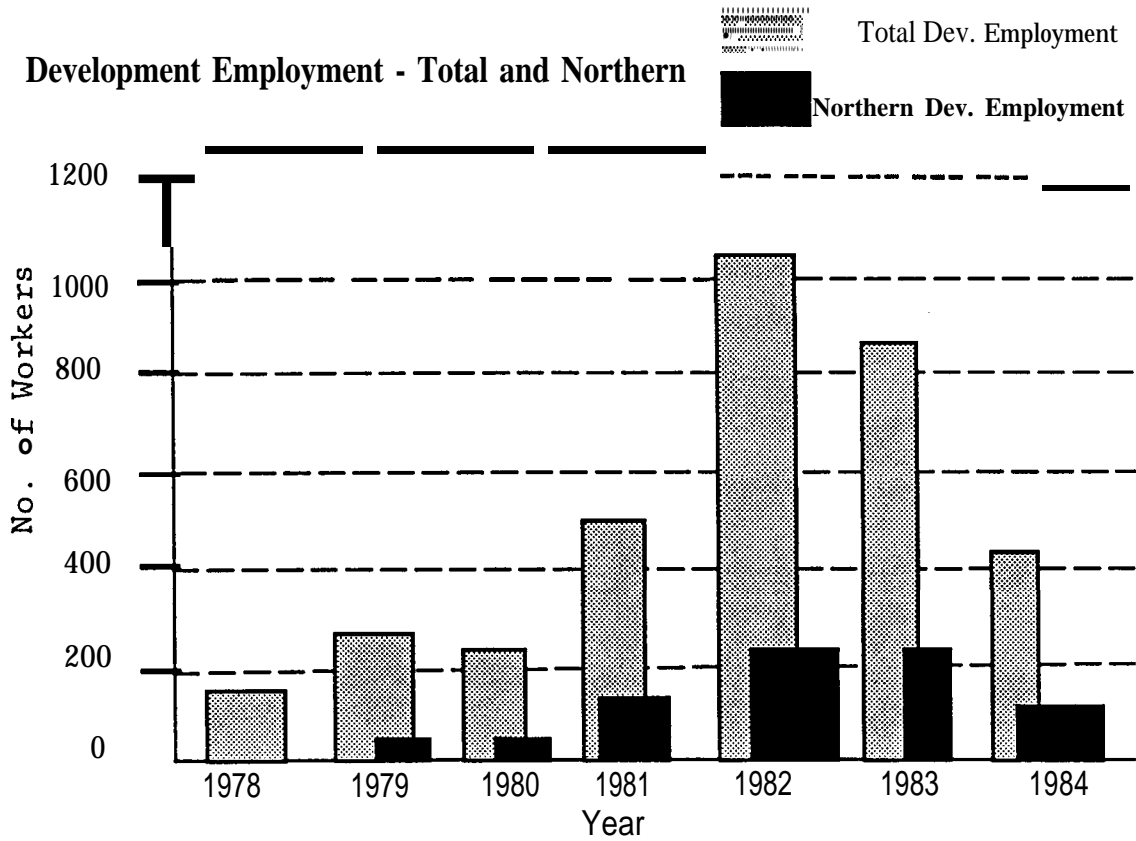
Graph II



Graph III



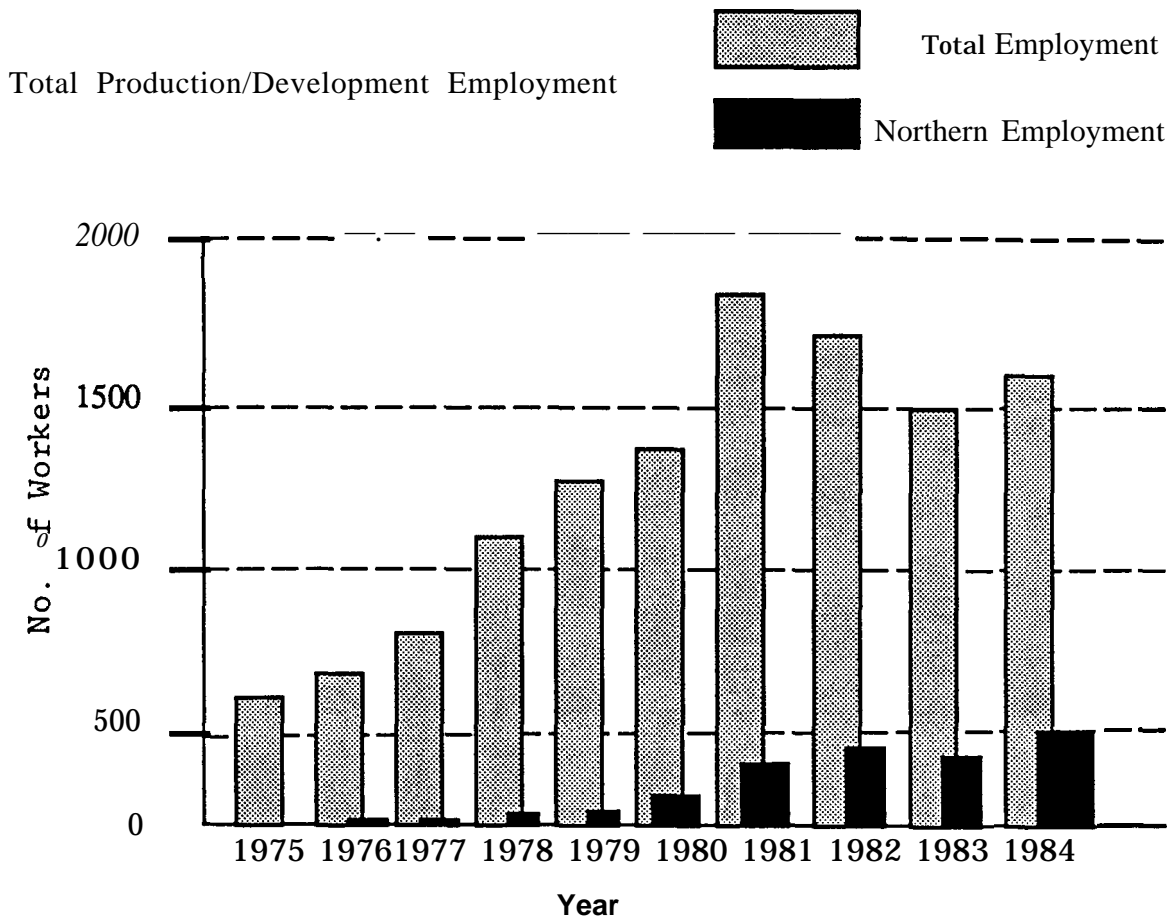
Graph N



exaggeration of the incidental economic benefits by uranium mining proponents is apparent. The suppliers of technology and capital, and the utility and defense industries, not Native people, **labour** or northerners are those who are benefiting from uranium mining.

There is no disputing that there was an increase in the proportion of these relatively few development and production jobs going to northerners after the inquiries. But, as shown in graph V, total jobs to northerners were never more than 30% of total development and production jobs at the uranium mines. And even assuming that half of the jobs going to northerners went to Indigenous people, this was only 212 jobs in 1984. This was only 18% of all direct jobs; and, once job stratification is considered, perhaps only 10% of the wages went to Indigenous people in the North. Considering the 2 billion

Graph V



dollars in sales in this period and the fact that Indigenous people are nearly 80% of northerners, this **hardly seems** like sharing the benefits or increasing self-determination.

Even putting the public **figures** of the Saskatchewan Mining Association (SMA) into their broader context does **not speak well for uranium mining.**⁷⁵ The SMA “contextualized” its statistics by saying that “. ..23% of the employment of the active **labour** force in Northern Saskatchewan...” is in uranium mining. It adds “. ..the majority of whom are of Indian ancestry.” The fact that the vast majority of the northern Native people are **not** in “. ..the active **labour** force...” is, however, not mentioned.

It also mentions that 30% of the annual salaries of the mines go to northerners. It does not mention how little of this goes to the people of Indian ancestry, who have the least safe and lowest paying jobs. It also chronicles the growing dependence of northern trucking and other service contracts on uranium mining as though this is a good thing. This indicates that little capital was left for other sectors since capital expenditures on uranium between 1981-84 “...**was** the **major** component of non-government capital investment in Saskatchewan.”

With its hidden message about free trade, **the SMA concentrates** on the **total sales from Saskatchewan and Canada and the importance of this** to the trade balance. It does not talk about how little of this stays in the north, let alone in the province of Saskatchewan.

7.2 In Conclusion

One of the main reasons there was a “boom” in the uranium industry in northern Saskatchewan was because the fundamental issues of aboriginal rights and land claims were not addressed in the public inquiries. The CLBI not only

concluded with the government when it refused to declare a moratorium on uranium mining, but also when it refused to include aboriginal rights in its own terms of reference. This" meant the expansion of uranium mining was unimpeded once it was legitimized through the public participation process.

In analyzing trends in "The World Uranium Industry" Owen wrote:

. .. Australian production was 'frozen' pending the outcome of the Ranger Uranium Inquiry and the negotiations with the Northern Land Council. The native 'land-rights', proliferation, and environmental issues which delayed the development of the fledging Australian uranium industry during the mid- 1970s only affected new Canadian developments and, even then, they were resolved more expeditiously than in Australia. ⁷⁶

It is clear from this comment that the author knows no more about the specifics or context of the CLBI than most writers in Canada do about the Ranger Report in Australia. It would be much more accurate in the case of Saskatchewan to say that these issues - particularly native land rights - were not squarely faced, let alone being resolved,

In likely the best single, comprehensive analysis of the impact of uranium mining on aboriginal peoples in Australia, Tatz of the Aboriginal Research Centre, concluded:

Why should Aborigines work in the mining industry? To what end and purpose should they work, with what benefits and to whom? Mining is seen as the magical solution to all the Northern Territories' problems: yet there is no logical reason why Aboriginal employment in uranium mines should or could cure the general high level of Aboriginal unemployment. (And when mining fails to provide 'deliverance', it is certain the next saving grace will be tourism, as predicted by the Mines Minister for Tennant). My argument is that Aboriginal employment in mining is influenced more, if not solely, by government need to justify an intrusive industry, a value shared by many companies who don't really want or need to employ them. Such employment has little to do with motives about *improving Aborigines* for their sakes: but improving them for our sakes - yes. ⁷⁷

The by-passing of aboriginal rights, the failure to create the liberal version of fair compensation and control, the pittance of economic benefits,

and the massive existing or potential social and environmental effects, could lead to the same conclusion about northern Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan - in spite of steadily increasing evidence to the contrary - the industry and government persist with false promises about jobs, training and public participation in decision-making. The motivation is clear. The motivation is not now, under **neo-conservatism**, nor before under social democracy, based on a commitment to self-determination in the North, let alone the South. Rather it is based on exploitation and oppression through both economic coercion and manufactured political consent.⁷⁸

With the struggle emerging across Canada about continent **alist** implications of the Tories' free trade deal, more Canadians may be able to come to understand the predicaments about sovereignty, investment, jobs and alternatives facing Indigenous people living under the bribe of uranium mining. The general lesson from this analysis is that for sustainable and appropriate development to be obtained, alliances which are committed and capable of achieving these must first be achieved. With the growing northern and international awareness of the risks and failings of, and alternatives to uranium mining, this potential is greater than it was a decade ago.

ENDNOTES

1. For a fuller discussion see: J. Harding, "Saskatchewan: The Eye of the Uranium Controversy," *Briarpatch* (April 1985) 10-11.
2. Stephen Salaff, "The Cigar Lake Mine," *Saskatchewan Business Report* (February 1985) 47-49.
3. See P. McKay, "Adding Fuel to the Fire: Saskatchewan Uranium Enriches Warheads and the Corporate Pockets of Free-Trade Supporters," *This Magazine* 21:8 (February 1988) 24-30.
4. These figures come from F. Thompson, the M.L.A. for Athabasca in his brief "A Report on the Saskatchewan Uranium Industry," given to the Federal NDP Hearing on Nuclear Energy, Saskatoon, February 9, 1988. For additional information also see M. Goldstick, *Voices From Wallaston Lake: Resistance Against Uranium Mining and Genocide in Northern Saskatchewan*, Earth Embassy and World Information Services on Energy (WISE), 1987.
5. Canada, Saskatchewan, Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry, *Final Report of the Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry*, Hon. Mr. Justice E.D. Bayda, Chairperson (Regina, SK: Cluff Lake Board of Inquiry, 1978).
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