

environmental disputes discussed above.

In the 1960s Québec's public electrical utility, Hydro-Québec, announced that it would develop the hydroelectric resources of northern Québec in three phases. The La Grande complex, to be completed in the 1970s, was to be followed by the Great Whale and Nottaway-Broadback-Rupert (NBR) projects. In spring 1972 the Crees and Inuit, the native peoples of northern Québec, mounted a legal campaign to halt the James Bay project. Hydro-Québec continued construction as the suit progressed. Hydro-Québec believed that it had acted reasonably and responsibly in drawing up its plan for the exploitation of the province's abundant hydroelectric resources. Hydro-Québec pointed out that the majority of the Québec people preferred hydroelectric dams over other energy sources. Also in 1972 the Québec National Assembly passed an Environmental Quality Act, but it exempted the James Bay projects from the requirement for environmental assessment reviews. In November 1973 a Québec Superior Court judge, to all parties' surprise, granted an injunction halting construction. A week later the Québec Court of Appeals suspended the injunction, saying that because so much money had already been invested in infrastructure for the project it was not in the general public interest to stop it. The Québec government, frightened by the unexpected intervention of the courts, sought to negotiate a land claims settlement with the Crees and Inuit. On November 11, 1975, the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement was finalized. It was Québec's first accord with the Canadian government and the Aboriginal peoples. The Crees and the Inuit relinquished their rights to almost one million square kilometers of land, permitting, the government thought, the La Grande, Great Whale and NBR hydroelectric projects to go forward. The pact provided for construction of the first phase of the James Bay project to proceed without any environmental review. The agreement further excluded the social impact of the Great Whale and NBR projects as a question