

E.A.C.

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hired as Coordinator of the Neighbourhood Environment Network Project. One of the many programs of the E.A.C., this project, for the next eighteen months, hopes to give major momentum to local environmental efforts by the municipality and the community. The program will emphasize the need for better recycling programs. Laura Barkhouse said that "up to now,

recycling programs have been mainly a volunteer effort. The city should and, needs to, make more of a contribution."

A useful resource centre is available to anyone interested in the multitudes of environmental issues facing Nova Scotia and the global ecology. The E.A.C. also publishes an environmental magazine with the latest information on ecological issues. If anyone is interested in becoming a volunteer, a member, or visiting the centre, the E.A.C. is located at 3115 Veith Street, Third floor, Halifax. 454-7828.

Dam stirs controversy

by Paul Webster

"The Environmental Review Process is under attack across Canada," says Lois Corbett of Halifax's Ecology Action Centre.

"We saw it with Point Aconi, and now we're seeing it in Saskatchewan and in Quebec. ERP is some of the only pro-environment legislation we have. The move is clearly on to water down and rewrite it," she said.

The concern for the sanctity of Canada's Environmental Review legislation voiced by Corbett echoes the concern of environmentalists across Canada following the controversy this week over the Rafferty-Alameda hydro-electric

dam in Saskatchewan.

As Quebec Environment Minister Pierre Paradis noted on Oct. 18, "Things that have happened in Saskatchewan don't give more clout or more power to the environmentalists, it gives more power to the developers who don't consider the interests of the environmental aspects."

The controversy surrounding the Saskatchewan Government's decision to proceed with constructing the 80 per cent completed Rafferty project may remind Nova Scotians of the Sept. 21 Federal Government rejection of calls for a full environmental assessment of the \$436 million Point Aconi coal-powered electric plant. This was in keeping

with then Premier Buchanan's previous rejection of numerous calls for environmental review.

The need for a review has been consistently stressed by Corbett who said "environmental groups and private citizens have been forced to take responsibility for protecting the environment out of the hands of the federal government".

In Quebec, the controversial James Bay Phase II hydro project, which environmentalists say may have a global environmental impact and also violates native rights acknowledged in a 1975 treaty, is also being promoted against calls for environmental review.

Lise Bacon, Quebec Energy Minister, wants to shortcut review hearings and proceed with the project against calls for environmental review. Paradis, her provincial colleague, has been highly critical of this tactic.

Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine's apparent lack of concern with the concept of environmental review did not prompt the immediate action to protect the need for review many environmentalists expected from Ottawa.

Federal Environment Minister Robert de Cotret has thus far refused to lift a construction licence permitting the project to go ahead. He has, however, obtained a court injunction to halt work on it.

Governmental commitment to the environmental review process appears to be weakening, not growing. In Quebec, the contracts for the environmental assessment of the James Bay Project were awarded to Lavalin Inc., the engineering company awarded most of the contracts to build the mammoth project.

Despite this record of failure and rejection, ERP legislation has succeeded in forestalling controversial development plans like the Fixed Link between PEI and New Brunswick.

This has led Corbett to insist "the big question is what kind of guts it is going to take at the Federal level to keep ERP from being a theoretical exercise. We need ERP because at the Provincial level assessment is inadequate. Without ERP there's very little to slow developers down."

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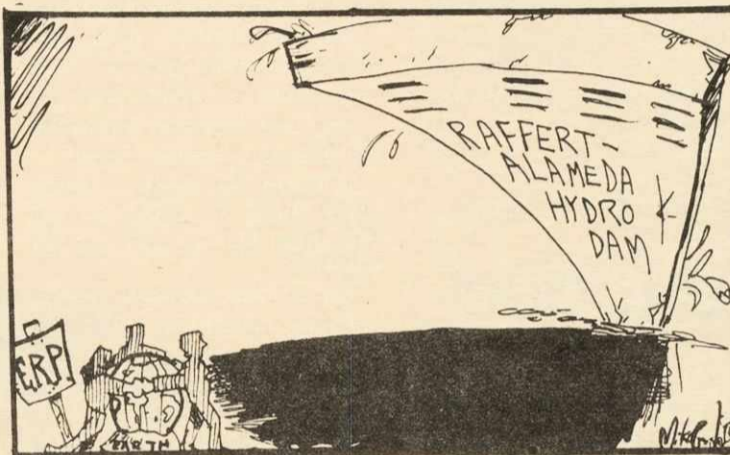
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