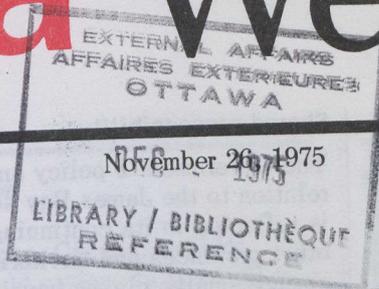


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James Bay development project – settlement of native land rights

Native communities affected by the James Bay hydro-electric power project in northern Quebec will receive \$225 million during the next 20 years – \$150 million in cash and the remainder in non-transferable government bonds – with the signing of the final agreement at midnight on November 11 settling their land claims.

Signatories to the agreement, which took place in Quebec City, were the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Judd Buchanan, the Premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa, the president of the James Bay Energy Corporation, Robert A. Boyd, the president of the James Bay Development Corporation, Charles Boulva, commissioner Yvon de Guise of Quebec Hydro, head of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, Charles W. Watt and several native chiefs of the Grand Council of the Cree Indians of Quebec.

Also under the agreement, the 6,500 Cree have exclusive rights to 2,158 square miles of land and a monopoly on hunting, fishing and trapping on another 25,130 square miles; the 4,000 Eskimo receive exclusive rights to 3,250 square miles and sole rights to hunting, fishing and trapping on another 35,000 square miles.

The mammoth program, which was estimated last year at \$12 billion, involves the diversion of three rivers, construction of four dams, power-houses, three airports and 600 miles of highway to harness the energy of La Grande River flowing into James Bay. Natives in the area objected on the grounds that it was damaging the ecology, curtailing their hunting and fishing sources and violating property rights (see issues of Canada Weekly dated November 28, December 5, 1973, January 9 and December 11, 1974).

Passages from Mr. Buchanan's address at the signing ceremony follow:

* * * *

During the past year negotiations in detail, involving the Federal Government and the six other signatories to the agreement in principle, have taken place. The result is the final agreement signed today, which for implementation will require complementary legislation by the Parliament of Canada and the National Assembly of Quebec, and supportive action by the two governments.

The James Bay agreement is a complicated and far-reaching document dealing with the whole range of issues raised in comprehensive claims from native groups. Far from wiping out the rights of the Indian and Inuit people concerned, and the responsibilities governments have for their future well-being and role in Canadian society, it establishes specific rights and régimes, defines institutional relationships and functions, and provides substantial re-

sources to ensure and strengthen native involvement in local administration and socio-economic development.

Foundation for the future

The Government firmly believes that a satisfactory settlement of land claims along these lines will assist the native people to overcome past disadvantages and barriers that prevent them from participating in and benefiting from the larger society of which they are a part. A just land settlement, which satisfies the particular needs and aspirations of native people in the area concerned, can lay the foundation for a future in which the native people have economic self-reliance, pride and self-respect, a solid stake and their own role in the social and economic evolution of the region in which they reside. For participation in and benefit from such development is part of what native claimants are seeking in areas where comprehen-