

### Hydro Exports

On August 16, the National Energy Board (NEB) announced in Ottawa that three licences had been granted to the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority for the export of electricity to selected western states. Time periods for the licences extended from four to six years, with several considerations being cited by the NEB as determining factors in establishing licensing lengths (NEB news release, August 16).

One licence provided for the export of "firm" power and energy (up to 2,000 MW and 6,000 GW.h per year) for a four-year period. While BC Hydro had requested a six-year term, the NEB determined that there existed a firm power and energy surplus to Canadian requirements for four years.

A second licence was for a six-year export of "interruptible" energy (not to exceed 15,000 GW.h per year) less any amount exported under the first licence. The NEB was satisfied that this amount would be surplus in the foreseeable term of the agreement.

Because simultaneous exports would not result in a net export, a third licence allows the export of up to 3,000 GW.h per year for "unscheduled circulating loop power and energy flows" occurring with interconnections with Washington state.

The NEB also established a requirement that all exporting licence allotments be subject to interception by BC and Alberta utilities on equal terms should need arise.

### Postal Pact

Canada Post Corporation President R. Michael Warren and United States Postal Service Postmaster General William F. Bolger announced the signing of a comprehensive agreement between Canada and the US August 8. The agreement was designed to both improve transborder service and develop and expand the mail market. The two postal heads indicated that the new pact would, in effect, "evaporate the border" and make of North America "a single coordinated postal network. Revenues for Canada Post were also expected to make an increase. Mr. Warren cited recent improvements in both the "speed and reliability" of service, including the rate of "on-time" delivery. Growth would continue in a "competitive and business-like manner," he added. Mr. Warren had earlier commented that transborder mail delivery had been inconsistent and did not meet "acceptable standards" (*The Citizen*, August 9, Canada Post communiqué, August 8).

Provision was also made for the creation of a joint service improvement task force, which would establish a market development program for the increase of volume. Mr. Warren and Mr. Bolger agreed to meet occasionally for monitoring purposes. The task force is mandated to "develop common transportation links; adapt machinery to sort according to each others' system of postal coding; ensure that processing plants move toward a common mail exchange network and develop improved processing methods that will reduce damage and lower costs." At the same time, the agreement also established service "performance targets" for transborder mail, which will now receive equal treatment with domestic mail.

### Niagara Chemical Dump

The proposed US plan for cleaning a chemical dump in Niagara Falls, NY, requires improvements in order to secure the safety of Lake Ontario water, then Environment Minister Charles Caccia said late in July (see "International Canada" for April and May 1984). He called for more studies of the deep rock formations (called Rochester shales) lying beneath the dump, citing evidence contained in an Environment Canada report. Should the pollution problem not be resolved sufficiently, he added, the possibility existed that a number of water treatment plants would have to be constructed (*The Citizen*, July 30).

The dump was used by Hooker Chemical and Plastics Corp., now Occidental Chemical Corp., and contains deadly chemicals which Canada fears will endanger Canadian water and resources. Occidental had previously reached an agreement with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and New York state for containment of leakage. Recent reports indicated seepage was occurring, but provision for clean-up had not been made under the original settlement. Mr. Caccia stated that the Canadian government would seek to secure from the US government a "proper management" of the site to ensure that no leakage enters the Niagara gorge.

Occidental Chemical Corp. issued a statement in early August acknowledging that toxic wastes were, in fact, seeping from its dump into the Niagara River (a major water supply source for that region of Canada). However, Occidental dismissed the findings as similar to earlier studies, and maintained that the seepage posed "no significant threat to health, aquatic life nor to the environment" (*Globe and Mail*, August 14). Company research had found that chemicals were "migrating" from the landfill to the Niagara gorge. Environment Canada officials perceived the statement as further evidence that the gorge face was acting as a "pathway for contaminants." Occidental repeated its commitment to do "whatever is technically feasible to protect human health and the environment." The company outlined proposals for containment, including:

- a review of its original clean-up plan;
- the plugging of open wells resulting from pump tests;
- the installation of a fence along the gorge;
- a continuation of sampling and analyzing of chemical levels;
- the taking of samples at a nearby pumping station.

Following the Occidental statement, New York state's health department began a process of evaluation in order to determine what action must be taken by Occidental in clean-up procedure. Meanwhile, Canadian conservation officials welcomed the proposals as a significant improvement over earlier plans, seeing them as "reasonable steps," but remained unsure whether further recommendations would be made for the imposition of tighter controls (*Globe and Mail*, August 15).

### Ocean Ranger

A federal-provincial royal commission investigating the February 1982 sinking off the coast of Newfoundland of the US-registered oil drilling rig *Ocean Ranger* released its findings in mid-August (see "International Canada" for