

# On Uprooting and Rerooting: Reflections on the Columbia River Project

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Relatively few people in Canada have suffered the dire experience of being uprooted and driven from their homes. But it happens all the time as public bodies expropriate private properties to satisfy public needs. From the viewpoint of political theory no realistic person will gainsay the need for such power, but public benefit is often secured at the expense of private pain which no amount of financial compensation can lessen.

When the Columbia River Project was built, about two thousand people were displaced. Something of their experience was described in *People in the Way*.<sup>1</sup> This reported on a survey, carried out in 1970 by one author (Wilson), which caught the bitterness and sense of outrage felt by the displaced people; in 1981 the other author (Conn) repeated the survey. This paper examines the reasons for the original feelings, the changes which occurred between 1970 and 1981 and some of the policy implications for any agency charged with a similar task.

## *The Setting*

The Central Arrow Lakes lies about halfway between Vancouver and Calgary. In Canadian terms it is beautiful country and its climate is neither harsh nor extreme. In 1964 it was not the most accessible of places, and the nearest town of any size was eighty miles away across the mountains. Furthermore, it had seen very little change since World War I except for the stabilization of the logging industry in the forties. Lastly, it could properly be described then as an area of public neglect, most apparent in its rough and often tortuous roads and its archaic but functional ferries. At the same time it was a well-loved home to its inhabitants; their weatherbeaten communities, based on sternwheeler landings of an earlier era, were as comfortable as old shoes; and the shores of the lakes, fringed by farms and small-holdings, were beautiful, varied, accessible and enjoyable. Life in this setting was relaxed, slow-paced and quite

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Wilson, *People in the Way* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

without the pretensions and competition of the city. The sense of community was strong, manifesting itself in neighbourly help, self-government and self-amusement of considerable vitality.

### *The End of an Era*

In June 1964 the Canadian Parliament approved the terms of the Columbia River Treaty and the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority became “the Canadian entity” responsible for constructing three large dams on the Columbia River system. One of these, the Arrow Dam (now the Hugh Keenleyside Dam), interrupted the flow through the Arrow Lakes and brought about profound changes in both the regime of the lakes and the lives of their inhabitants. The tempestuous spring freshets were stored harmless behind the dam, which raised the top water level by some thirty-six feet. This displaced some 1,100 people in the Central Arrow Lakes. And for all the inhabitants the physical setting of their lives changed from a free-flow lake to a reservoir whose level fluctuated over a range of seventy-six feet, twice the old range. Furthermore, the old natural cycle was disrupted. Previously the annual floods were over in a few short weeks and the lakes subsided slowly and regularly; now they could be depleted rapidly at any season at the call of the United States. The disruption of the landscape was equally profound. Four villages and many hamlets at the old flood level were destroyed along with miles of sparsely settled riparian shoreline; three smaller new communities have replaced them at the new flood level; and between them a band of landscape completely cleared of trees disappears and reappears with the rise and fall of the waters.

### *The Outcome as the People Saw It*

The requirements of the Columbia River Treaty could not possibly have been more terse — *provide x acre-feet of water storage at designated sites*. These terms Hydro met as a matter of course. On the other hand the vexing human aspects of the task were left entirely up to Hydro, being governed only by very general undertakings given by its chairman, Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, to the External Affairs Committee of Parliament — that displaced people would be treated “fairly and generously.” (It was fortunate for the people of the Arrow Lakes that this responsibility lay where it did — directly on the conscience and honour of a man who had earlier demonstrated his tough-minded sense of humanity. For example, Hugh Keenleyside’s role in opposing the wartime displacement of

B.C.'s Japanese citizens has now been documented in *The Politics of Racism*.<sup>2</sup> It was due to his leadership at the level of the Hydro Board of Directors that sensitive and humane resettlement policies were adopted on the Columbia River Project, and to his personal authorizations that the various mitigative programs and actions noted later were undertaken.)

In the summer of 1970, a year after the Arrow Dam came into service, a detailed survey of the relocated people in the Central Arrow Lakes was carried out using a mailed questionnaire. This survey, which elicited forty-two responses, enquired into the feelings of the residents about the project and about Hydro. In the summer of 1981 a similar questionnaire was sent out and followed up by personal interviews, this time with twenty of the same people, the rest having died or moved away. The essential results of these surveys are set out below in comparative form. Despite their obvious statistical limitations they seem credible, being buttressed both by internal consistency and by the oral responses of the interviewees.

In all matters except one the responses to the 1981 survey are very close to those of 1970. The Arrow Lakes region is seen as somewhat less livable than before, the new communities as considerably better on the whole; and a great majority think they made the right decision in staying in the region. If these are regarded as comments on the *substance* of what was done to them, it would seem that for those who chose to remain the flooding of the Arrow Lakes region was not an unmitigated disaster. But how do they feel about other, less tangible matters and especially about Hydro as the "agent of change"? They are still divided about the adequacy of their compensation but one thing does seem to have changed — their perception as to whether they were treated "fairly." The overwhelming feeling of bitterness towards Hydro that was so evident in 1970 has changed to a dogged reluctance to give Hydro, the monster, credit for doing anything well.<sup>3</sup> This is an interesting finding in itself and one which begs explanation. But more than that, since the

<sup>2</sup> Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism; The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1981).

<sup>3</sup> It is necessary here to remind the reader of the limitations of these surveys quite apart from the difficulties posed by small numbers of older people and a long period of recall. In his study *Mental Health and Environment*, Lord Taylor found that one-third of the population of the English new towns suffered from "the sub-clinical neurosis syndrome," a constitutional state expressed through anxiety, "nerves," undue irritability, depression or sleeplessness, *regardless of their environment*. One would suspect that this would apply to some degree to any ordinary human population queried about the state of its emotional health.

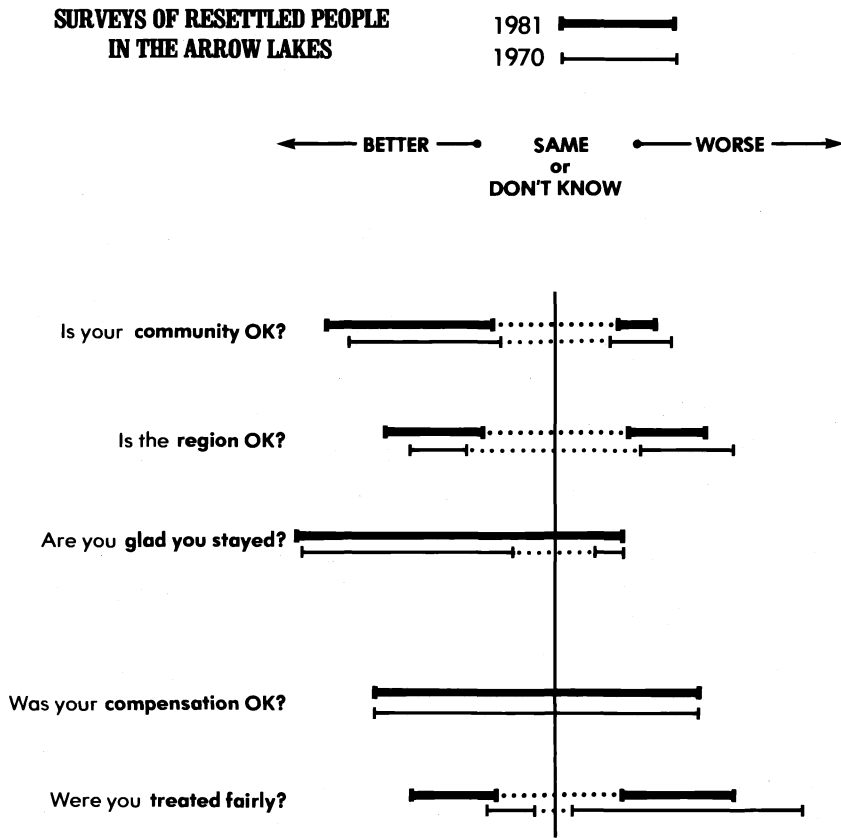


FIGURE 1

*Surveys of Resettled People in the Arrow Lakes*

question about fairness probed probably more directly than any other into the *feelings* of the people about their experience, it is an invitation to ask what may have given rise to these feelings and whether there are any lessons therein for public policymaking.<sup>4</sup>

*A Framework of Enquiry*

As a framework of enquiry this paper employs four useful parameters which may help to explain the success, or lack of it, of “agents of change.” These are: the *mandate* of change agent, the *nature of the*

<sup>4</sup> Lord Taylor and Sidney Chave, *Mental Health and Environment* (London, 1964).

*task*, the *environment* in which the task is addressed, and the *legitimacy* the agent may or may not achieve.<sup>5</sup> The meaning of these concepts in the present context will become clear from the discussion.

*The mandate.* As has already been said, Hydro's engineering responsibility was explicitly and tersely set out in the Columbia River Treaty.<sup>6</sup> Its related social responsibilities were implicit and constituted only a moral commitment given by Hydro's chairman: the treatment of displaced people would be "fair and generous."

But definition of the task does not alone constitute an effective mandate. Were Hydro's responsibilities underpinned by appropriate resources? In the monetary sense they were, even though the original cash payment of \$274 million made by the United States in 1964 fell far short of the ultimate cost of the scheme after inflation had taken its toll.<sup>7</sup> In other senses they were not clearly underpinned, primarily in that some of Hydro's responsibilities — the replacement of inundated highways, for example, or the opening up of Crown land on other lakes to Arrow Lakes residents — normally fell to other provincial government agencies which gave only qualified and reluctant co-operation to Hydro. Of that, more anon, but it can be said in the meantime that Hydro did not have full jurisdiction over some of the impacts of its project.

*The nature of the task.* While Hydro's statutory obligation was clear, what remained shadowy until the nettle had to be grasped was the accompanying destruction of human settlements, artifacts and institutions — homes, schools, churches, community halls, playfields, boat docks, cemeteries, wells, streets, ferries, power and telephone lines. Along with these things much of the old familiar landscape itself disappeared — contours, features, trees, and the richness of flora and fauna peculiar to the shores of the lake. In the context of this enquiry these features have no significance of themselves. What alone matters is the way they had been woven over time into the daily living patterns of those who dwelled among them and had assimilated them, we know not how, into their psyches: the slant of the sun, morning and evening; the wind on the waters and the waves slapping on the shore; the balky well by the

<sup>5</sup> Brian Wharf, ed., *Community Work in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), pp. 16 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *The Columbia River Treaty and Protocol* (Ottawa: Departments of External Affairs and Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, April 1964).

<sup>7</sup> B.C. Hydro's Eleventh Annual Report, March 1973, reported the gross cost of the Treaty work as \$54.7 million and the net cost, allowing for the American payments and interest earned, as \$68 million. (Caveat: the subject is extremely complex and these figures do not lend themselves to superficial use).

back door, the ginko tree by the front; the venerable school which nurtured your children; the cemetery, home to friends and neighbours; the fairground ringing still with the sounds of Fourth of July jollities. What price landscape, what price memories?

Anyone tempted to dismiss these comments as nostalgic romanticizing should read *Grieving for a Lost Home* by Marc Fried.<sup>8</sup> Reporting specifically on studies carried out in Boston's West End, Fried shows that people displaced from working-class areas exhibit reactions which correspond closely to medical definitions of "grief." He describes how residents hold "a conception of the local area beyond the dwelling unit as an integral part of home." Furthermore, he records that "the greater a person's pre-location commitment to the area, the more likely he is to react with marked grief." Our view is that these observations were wholly applicable to the flooded villages of the Arrow Lakes in which, as we have said, people had for decades lived in coherent communities which they knew very intimately. Despite the jargon Fried's article should be required reading for anyone involved in the business of displacing people from their homes.

In addition to this there was the fact that communities died not mercifully overnight but slowly and sadly, departure by departure, as its members came to terms with the Hydro and went their separate ways. And this was only a prelude to the final, time-consuming task of re-establishing in new places the whole *modus vivendi* of their families.

In short, those aspects of Hydro's task which were merely ancillary to its formal mandate were bound to create stress, anger and bitterness in those affected. Of such situations, and of the process of expropriation in particular, D. Gordon Blair, former member of Parliament for Grenville-Carleton, has written:

The power of the state to expropriate property of a citizen is one of the greatest and certainly the most terrifying it possesses. The sense of outrage which it creates in the person expropriated is almost indescribable, as I can say after some experience in dealing with ordinary people whose property has been taken away from them . . . there remains a rankling sense of injustice long after the event of expropriation, and despite reasonably generous settlement . . . a person who has had his property taken from him can perhaps never be fully compensated for . . . the sense of outrage he invariably feels.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Marc Fried, "Grieving for a Lost Home," in *The Urban Condition*, ed., Leonard J. Duhl (New York: Clarion Books, Simon and Schuster, 1963).

<sup>9</sup> D. Gordon Blair, "The Canadian Expropriation Act," *The Appraisal Institute Magazine* (Summer 1970).

Fried, approaching the subject from a totally different angle, supports this view when he mentions "expressions of both direct and displaced anger" as one kind of grief reaction. Expressions of this kind were common in the 1970 survey.

*The environment.* We will examine here the human and political environment in which Hydro went about its task. In the first place Hydro was the heir of the Columbia River Treaty, a most unfortunate legacy to be saddled with in the Arrow Lakes country. For the most obvious reasons the Treaty was not looked on with favour — people can scarcely be expected to welcome the disruption of their lives.

But there were less obvious reasons why the legacy of the Treaty was particularly bitter. One was that the Arrow Dam was not a power-producing (i.e., "useful") dam but merely gave rise to a storage reservoir whose principal beneficiaries were first the United States and second the people of British Columbia in general. The states of Washington and Oregon (and incidentally the city of Trail, B.C.) benefited through increased flood control, and the whole of the Pacific Northwest through improved flow of water to the power dams on the lower Columbia River. British Columbia, and especially its major users, gained from the money paid by the United States for the water stored in the Arrow Reservoir, which helped to pay for the power-producing Mica Dam farther up the river. As the displaced people saw it, their valley was to be destroyed for money or, as they used to say, "for thirty pieces of silver."

Apart from feeling used, the people of the Arrow Lakes felt betrayed and bitter about the way decisions were made, and there was much for them to be cynical about. In October 1960 they had been told, in writing, by the B.C. Minister of Lands and Forests, R. G. Williston, that public hearings would be held prior to the granting of a water licence, which in turn would precede treaty discussion by the two national governments; yet three months later, in January 1961, an agreement was signed by Prime Minister Diefenbaker and President Eisenhower. The promised hearings *were* held — in September 1961, at which time the Water Comptroller ruled that the Arrow Lakes project and its justification, as policy matters, would not be admissible as evidence. As one resident later put it, the hearings were "a farce."

Behind this lay a greater wrong. In all the years of negotiation the Columbia Project was never presented for debate in the provincial legislature. Despite the scale and impact of the project this was apparently no oversight but a deliberate policy of the W. A. C. Bennett government.

No doubt Mr. Bennett did not wish to have the scheme, already complex enough in engineering, financial and political terms, further roiled by the addition of troublesome local views. But in effect the people of the Arrow Lakes were thus disfranchised in relation to a proposal which affected their very lives, while it was probably seen by the rest of the province as a remote and romantic construction project justified by its promise of cheap and abundant energy. Adding insult to injury, however, the Arrow Lakes country was NDP territory both provincially and federally, and Mr. Bennett, hardball politician par excellence, and his Highways Minister, guided by divine promptings of remarkable political sensitivity, never missed an opportunity to rub the opposition's nose in the mud — evidenced by the termination of road paving precisely at the riding boundary for many years.

Lastly, there was the length of time it took to decide the matter — let us merely say from 1959, when specific proposals were made to the International Joint Commission, to 1964, when the Treaty was finally ratified by Parliament, although surveys and studies had visibly been under way since 1944. During all that time the people in the region were completely cut off from first-hand, specific information about the proposed project, to the point where the same R. G. Williston, a provincial minister in a rich province, could write to the Nakusp Chamber of Commerce: “We do not have any spare copies of this [Engineering Board] report but it can be obtained from the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission”!

So ended in 1964 the years of waiting, “of never knowing, of trusting and being let down, of being overborne, and ultimately of being ignored. For them (the displaced people) this was only the end of the beginning of the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't dance of politicians and their advisers. But it was not an auspicious start for the last act. For now the harsh deeds implicit in the Treaty had to be done as best they might, in the presence of those who had lived through the long years and had little reason to be complaisant or co-operative with those responsible for the execution of the Columbia project.”<sup>10</sup>

In passing, a disturbing comment must be made about the way the Treaty proposal was presented to and handled by the Parliament of Canada. It must first be understood that the scheme was viewed primarily as an engineering matter — and a very massive, complex and controversial one at that — with substantial financial implications. As

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, *People in the Way*, p. 24.



such it was exclusively the domain of teams of engineers, administrators and lawyers on both sides. The negotiations were protracted, sometimes heated, and exhausting, and even a necessarily tentative agreement between the negotiating teams was not to be taken lightly. Thus when the Treaty proposal came before the Standing Committee on External Affairs, the following fascinating *pas de deux* took place between one of its members, Dr. L. E. Kindt, and the Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs:

Mr. Kindt: As I understand it our function here is to improve this treaty.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): No, not at all.

Mr. Kindt: Well, to improve the situation with respect to Canada.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): No, your function is to indicate whether you approve of what the government has done. . . . Any variation of it would of course involve a repudiation of the position taken by this government or by its predecessors in regard to the treaty.

Mr. Kindt: Does this not put the committee into the position of being pretty much a rubber stamp?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Not at all. By careful study I think you can bring out the merits of various arguments, but we have agreed, as I stated in Parliament, that after we had negotiated with the United States . . . then we would enter into an exchange of notes with the United States, which we have done. But before we would ratify, we would come back to Parliament and Parliament could accept the course taken by the government or reject it.

Mr. Byrne: I was simply going to ask the minister if when the former administration suggested that the treaty be put before a parliamentary committee, it was prepared to have it altered in any way?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Of course not. The treaty was signed in Washington by the President of the United States, by the Prime Minister of Canada, and by the Minister of Justice . . . under our practice the government of the day takes its responsibility, and having taken its position and responsibility, then it asks Parliament to approve or reject.<sup>11</sup>

It is obvious that an international agreement endorsed by the Prime Minister will not lightly be amended, especially when it has also been endorsed by the President of the United States. But can one imagine such a proposition being put to a committee of the United States Congress?

One other aspect of the environment in which Hydro worked should be mentioned — the circumambient environment of provincial departments. Suffice it to say that Hydro had to carry out its ancillary tasks in the presence of a group of largely unfriendly, if not actually hostile, pro-

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, no. 2, Canadian House of Commons, Standing Committee on External Affairs, 7 April 1964, p. 67.

vincial “collaborators.” The reasons for this must be speculative — envy of Hydro’s freedom of action as a Crown corporation and of its relatively free-wheeling ways; envy of its “huge” Columbia budget seen in ignorance of its equally huge responsibilities; or pique over past “wrongs” perceived by relatively weaker provincial departments. Whatever the reasons, and despite Dr. Keenleyside’s efforts to gain collaboration at the ministerial level, provincial co-operation tended to be reluctant and unreliable, and many attempts were made to freeload on the Columbia budget.<sup>12</sup> The most damaging event — or rather, non-event — occurred when, in midstream as it were, the Highways Department reneged on an undertaking to build a bridge across the Arrow Lakes, thereby undermining part of the rationale for the resettlement pattern to which Hydro was by this time ineluctably committed.

For all these reasons, historical, political and administrative, it will be clear that the “environment of change” in which Hydro had to operate was distinctly unfavourable to acceptance of the Authority and its works by those most affected.

*Legitimacy.* “Legitimacy,” as used here, means acceptance *by the people affected* of Hydro as a body with a “right” to do what it was doing. In this sense it means not an endowed right but one that had to be earned by Hydro and accorded by those affected. And while it was obvious that in 1970 Hydro had not achieved legitimacy for reasons which the above history makes very clear, by 1981 a noticeable change had taken place. But before we discuss this, one more element in the jigsaw needs to be put in place — the experiences of the Arrow Lakes people with Hydro between 1970 and 1981.

### *The Experiences of the Seventies*

In the eleven years between the two surveys much happened to the resettled people. They learned to live on the shores of a managed reservoir, experiencing for the first time naked and exposed banks, dust storms, and boats and pontoons occasionally stranded by summer draw-downs. They squabbled with Hydro about the continued maintenance of the new communities, having refused to this day to accept any responsibility for them. And they complained because Hydro refused under these circumstances to facilitate expansion of the communities. (The irony of the latter situation will not have escaped the reader. The residents: “You

<sup>12</sup> See *On the Bridge of Time: Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside*, vol. 2 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982), pp. 533-34.

guys created this situation, so we wash our hands of it. *You* repair the pumps, fix the roads, clean out the sewers — for ever.” Hydro: “Nobody but nobody lives totally tax-free. We’ve paid our dues.” Residents: “Not bloody likely. But by the way our sons and daughters now want to live here; how about making some more land available?” Hydro: “Under these conditions? Get lost.”)

To balance these negative experiences much of the infrastructure of the region had been renewed, most notably in new houses, new highways, new ferries. The region’s major centre, Nakusp, spontaneously underwent considerable renewal of both commercial and community facilities. In short, the region as a whole was markedly spruced up. In addition, once it was clear that the reservoir banks were stable, Hydro had fulfilled a long-standing commitment by making waterfront properties available for settlement, giving preference to previous shoreline residents, thus returning a human presence to the denuded stretches of the lakeshore.

So there were both continued irritations and a continuing stream of responses by Hydro. But Hydro maintained its presence in the region throughout in the persons of solid, unpretentious, conscientious men who went about their daily tasks in ways which, in the long run, the people of the Arrow Lakes were bound to respect. Thus, however changed their region was, the experiences of the resettled people, as they settled down and became comfortable again throughout the seventies, were by no means all bad.

### *An Interpretation*

The stage has now been set for an interpretation of the residents’ change in attitude towards Hydro between 1970 and 1981. They had suffered a truly traumatic experience administered by Hydro under circumstances which from the Authority’s point of view could scarcely have been less auspicious. The outrage they voiced in 1970 could not have been more predictable or, from their point of view, more justified. But by 1981 their anger — at least at Hydro — had cooled considerably. Why?

Answers can only be speculative, of course, but the most obvious is simply that the passage of time, permitting reflection on events, ultimately assuaged much of the pain. As Lord Taylor said in his study of English New Towns, “full satisfaction with environment is a product of time. It takes time to establish strong roots. The longer one lives in any community, the greater appears to be the degree of satisfaction.”<sup>13</sup> In the

<sup>13</sup> Taylor and Chave, *Mental Health and Environment*, p. 174.

Arrow Lakes situation this process of settling down took place in the same valley, in the presence of old friends and relatives and often in more modern domestic settings than before. What could be more natural than that under these circumstances people should be assimilated into the new environment, caught up in their new lives and gradually lose their sense of hurt?

But the results of the 1981 interviews permit a further answer. Adapting the conclusions of Fried<sup>14</sup> and Schorr<sup>15</sup> to the circumstances of the Arrow Lakes, we may first postulate several principles which should govern resettlement planning:

1. Real settlement options should be provided.
2. Included in these should be the possibility of resettling as close as possible to the old settlements.
3. New communities should be as similar as possible in style and aura to the old communities.
4. Human support services should be provided as necessary to those displaced, and operations in general conducted in ways that respond to the emotional needs of those involved.

By these standards how did Hydro perform?

1. In the matter of options the people of the Arrow Lakes had, broadly, three options: to leave the region, to relocate in Nakusp, the "capital" of the Central Arrow Lakes, or to resettle in one of the new communities. The essential base, of course, was sufficient property compensation, including moving and relocation expenses, to make the choice real. The analysis conducted in *People in the Way* concluded that compensation, while not clearly "generous," was adequate in most cases, and in the event each of the three options was taken up by a substantial number of people.<sup>16</sup> In passing, it should be noted that the decision to provide replacement communities was not a routine one for Hydro. It could easily have been argued that the opportunity to settle in Nakusp was quite a reasonable option for those wishing to stay in the valley, and there were influential people in government who so little understood, or sympathized with, the residents' attachment to their homes and landscape as to believe that, given sufficient compensation, they would be only too glad to "get the hell out."

<sup>14</sup> Fried, "Grieving for a Lost Home," p. 115.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Schorr, *Planned Relocation* (Lexington Books, D. C. Heath, 1975), p. 119.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, *People in the Way*, chap. 15.

2. In the event, Hydro provided the land and service infrastructure for three new communities as close as possible to the inundated villages. This was not the corporation's own preference but a conscientious deference to the displaced people's desires. Hydro had suggested, in fact, that one larger and better-serviced village would make more social sense than three minuscule hamlets, but the recipients would have none of it. Their attachment to place was immensely strong and Hydro honoured it.

3. Attempts to recapture the style and aura of the old communities were effected by finding sites not too dissimilar to the old ones and by utilizing houses salvaged from the old communities. Site options were extremely limited but it may not be insignificant that the new community which was slowest to "find itself" sits on an extensive, open sloping site quite unlike its predecessor. The house-salvaging operation was deemed successful by those involved and presumably did something to overcome the reborn communities' aura of raw newness. One particularly outgoing and sympathetic act on Hydro's part was its offer to provide to each of the new communities a physical symbol commemorating the old life while heralding the new.<sup>17</sup>

4. To a large extent Hydro's dealings with people in the Arrow Lakes can be described as open and direct. It maintained a liaison staff in the region in an effort to see and be seen, to hear and be heard; it went to considerable lengths to keep people informed of its plans and policies, to make them aware of their rights and options and to garner their responses; it gave personal assistance to people contemplating settling beyond the valley but unable to drive themselves to investigate; and it sought out and gave individual attention to old people.

By the standards postulated it can be argued that Hydro went about its task humanely, thoughtfully and in a most enlightened way for the times. (In this context it is both surprising and rather saddening to note Schorr's comment on policies of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which, during its renowned dam-building years at least, did little to assist re-settlement. Up to 1970 "the TVA relocation programs are probably representative of most federal agency activities in this field . . . at best empathetic; many lacked material resources such as money, housing land or social services. . . . If one utilizes the Lillienthal yardstick of grass-roots participatory democracy to measure relocation effectiveness, in these cases there seems to be a significant gap between rhetoric and reality."<sup>18</sup>)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> Schorr, *Planned Relocation*, p. 57.

However Hydro's performance may be judged, by 1981 the mood of the displaced people had softened and few shafts of anger were directed at Hydro. What there were seemed to be directed more at the governments that had perpetrated the Columbia River Treaty than at Hydro as its instrument. Both the explanations given here — that the change in mood resulted from the mere passage of time and that in fact Hydro performed its task rather well — are plausible and mutually compatible. The second is the more important for public policy, for if Hydro's methods were sound they deserve to be noted and, in spirit at least, emulated.

But before we leave the topic it is worthwhile to essay a generalization which is not offered in an altogether coherent way in *People in the Way* about the task of resettlement. This postulates that an agency such as B.C. Hydro is operating in "occupied territory" and that all its actions should be planned with the reactions of the resident population in mind, for everything it does has some local implications. Most agencies will, of course, seek to avoid stirring up local opposition. But that is a negative, defensive concern. A more positive approach is to arrange that to the greatest extent possible the construction of the main and ancillary works, the provision of supplies and materials and the accommodation and servicing of work forces should be done so as to nourish local people and institutions. The concept is not new and there are usually myriad opportunities to do this in any massive project; the problem is not only to get preoccupied, single-minded engineers and administrators to take such a goal seriously, but for them to find the time, energy and often extra money to do things in locally sensitive ways. However productive it may ultimately be, it is not the easiest path to follow.

A third concern has to do with resettlement and starts with the reminder that displaced people are required not just to change their houses but often to reconstitute their whole lives. Not only does this task fall on their shoulders alone but they are likely to be burdened with feelings of bitterness, resentment and rage as they go about it — scarcely the best of motivations. It is this real but emotion-laden problem that all resettlement policies must address. They must not only face the practical problems of compensation, sites and land but they must try to do so in ways that will help the victims to get over their emotional burdens and find energy for their unwanted task. This is really the end to which openness in planning, the physical presence of agency personnel as both advisers and "lightning rods," and the provision of human support services are directed.

At the centre of this concern lies the vexed matter of compensation. Our argument is that unmistakable generosity is required as an obvious and practical salve for hurt done. The considerable difficulties in the way of overt generosity on the part of a politically vulnerable public authority are obvious and cannot be downplayed. Easier said than done, it may well be said. Certainly it would require the establishment of an appropriate policy at the top level of the agency, if not in fact of the government, for to the extent that "generosity" means the exercise of a very sensitive kind of discretion it should not be expected of bureaucrats.<sup>19</sup>

This question is discussed extensively in *People in the Way*, and we conclude with a quotation from that book which today seems as valid as ever.<sup>20</sup>

... a humane taking authority will ask itself not "How can we acquire the necessary land?" but "How can we best enable these people, whom we are displacing for the public good, to get established again with maximum efficiency and least stress for them?" Viewed as a partial but important answer to this question, compensation becomes much more than a pound of flesh required by law and measured on the scales of the property market; it becomes a tool by which the dispossessed can solve the taking authority's problem by looking after themselves.

<sup>19</sup> It should not be deduced from this comment that Hydro did not exercise compassionate discretion in compensation matters. It did, using an "elastic yardstick" in cases of real need, as discussed in *People in the Way* (p. 152). This, however, is a different thing from a prescriptive principle that compensation *in general* should be more generous than routine application of market evaluation principles would produce.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, *People in the Way*, p. 160.