

Hydro scientist fed up with covering for his bosses, pollution fighter says

By ALEXANDER NORRIS
of The Gazette

A senior **Hydro-Québec scientist** probably criticized Premier Robert Bourassa's gung-ho approach to hydroelectric dam development because he is frustrated at having to "cover" for his bosses and make huge dam projects appear ecologically benign, a leading environmentalist said yesterday.

"Probably this guy is just frustrated," said Daniel Green, co-president of the Société pour vaincre la pollution. "He's telling his boss: 'I cannot cover for you.'"

The **Hydro scientist**, Jean-François Rougerie, said Bourassa is "sold on electricity," and that the premier's unwillingness to hold wide-ranging hearings on the mega-project "stinks."

Rougerie also told *The Gazette* in an interview that Bourassa and **Quebec Energy Minister John Ciaccia** try to direct the huge, publicly-owned utility to put their personal philosophies into practice.

But Green said Rougerie's remarks suggest **Hydro-Québec**

doesn't enjoy the job of having to justify the environmental consequences of its own projects.

Green said the giant utility seems to be telling Bourassa: "Listen, we'll make your dam and we'll build one anywhere, but don't ask us to bend over backwards to say they're environmentally benign — because they're not."

Green said the Bourassa government is committed to damming rivers to provide cheap energy to the United States and help "dirty, energy-intensive industries," such as aluminium plants, to set up shop in the province.

In the last three years, he said, four aluminium companies have announced they plan to locate in **Quebec** and two more have announced major expansions. Despite the lack of public debate over the environmental consequences of the dams and aluminium mills, "we're going to be the most aluminized state in the world," Green said.

In Ottawa, the environment critic for the New Democratic Party said Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard should "take the bull by the

horns" and insist on a full assessment of the proposed hydroelectric project at Great Whale River.

But Jim Fulton (NDP-Skeena) said he fears the Grand Council of the Cree and concerned citizens will have to force the government to act, by seeking a ruling by the Federal Court of Canada.

Fulton said he has lost confidence the minister intends to live up to the promise he made to the Commons environment committee last spring.

Quebec Hydro and the feds are just simply going to dodge along on the whole James Bay project, particularly Great Whale River," Fulton said.

The MP said that when he asked Bouchard what he planned to do about Great Whale at the environment committee last week, "he beat around the bush."

That, Fulton said, was a complete turnaround from the position taken in May by both Bouchard and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who vowed the environment would take priority over economic projects.

Additional reporting by
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