



# The Canadian Nuclear Worker

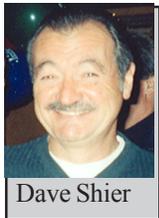
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## Message from the President

### Let's get real

*Time to shake off outdated dogma*



Dave Shier

This country faces critical decisions on its energy future – how to meet mounting energy demands in a world of dwindling fossil fuel reserves, global arming, mushrooming energy needs in developing countries, and erratic oil and natural gas prices.

In this context, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) position on nuclear power – based on recommendations of a 1992 task force – is sadly lacking in courage and foresight. Perhaps they haven't noticed the world has changed a lot since 1992! It's time for CLC leaders to pull off the blinkers and GET REAL.

Unfortunately, the CLC can't get past the knee-jerk rhetoric and tired dogma of its political and ideological mentors. 'Anti-nuke, anti-coal, pro-green' is the mantra. Never mind this is worn out thinking of environmental automatons. Never mind that more and more 'greens' are coming to the nuclear side, recognizing that nuclear power is the green solution.

**Like the CLC**, we in the nuclear industries strongly support alternative energy sources. But unlike them, we know that wind, wave, solar and other renewable options cannot begin to meet Canada's energy needs, except at ruinous cost. And that's putting aside the limited output of these technologies due to uncertainties of wind, tide and sun – even the CLC acknowledges this.

Realistically, if coal-fired power plants are to be phased-out and nuclear investment halted, as the CLC advocates, there'd be no choice but to build new gas-fired plants indiscriminately. This is what Ontario is starting to do – the worst possible option in terms of greenhouse gas emissions! The

other option is huge electricity imports at unpredictable prices (assuming it's even available). **I'm sure I don't have to tell the CLC, that if energy prices skyrocket, jobs will flee.**

For CNWC members the green solution is clear: encourage renewable energy production; convert coal-fired plants to clean-coal technologies where feasible (much cheaper than building new gas-fired plants); refurbish idle nuclear plants where the economics make sense; and initiate long-term planning for new-build nuclear. Nuclear, of course, produces no greenhouse gases, is safe, cost-effective and suited to large-scale production – exactly what we're going to need.

Getting back to the CLC's *Policy on Energy*, it's worth noting they devote only 87 words (out of 4,700) to discussion of nuclear energy. Apparently, they'd like nothing more than to steer clear of the 'nuclear debate.' But they won't be able to steer clear for long – nobody will. Listen up CLC, it's time to GET REAL! The knee-jerk dogma of the past just doesn't cut it.



Darlington NGS

## Kyoto plan shuns nuclear

Like it or lump it, Kyoto is here. And with it, daunting challenges to meet target reductions in greenhouse gas emissions – 270 million tonnes a year by 2012.

A key piece of the federal government's Kyoto implementation plan is to replace Ontario's five coal-fired power plants [see page 4] with cleaner energy sources – renewables and gas-fired generation. Several funds have been set up to boost clean energy projects and reduce consumption of fossil fuels. However, nuclear projects, including refurbishment of existing plants, are not eligible it seems. Or so New Brunswick found out on being turned down for Kyoto funding to help refurbish its Point Lepreau nuclear station.

This is disappointing, especially at a time when other nations, including our neighbour to the south, expect to

ramp up nuclear construction. According to Price Waterhouse Coopers' annual Global Utilities Survey, a majority of utilities in 36 countries expect a revival in nuclear construction. This stems from recognition that renewable energy sources "will be insufficient to bring the required environmental benefits." Included in the survey were countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and Africa.

In 2002 Canada and 54 other nations signed the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to reduce emissions that cause global warming. Notably the U.S. and China did not sign the protocol. Cost of the federal plan is expected to be \$10 billion or higher. Canada is due to present its first progress report this fall.

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## International consensus

### *Ministers confirm nuclear power*

The potential for nuclear power to meet world energy needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was the theme of an International Ministerial Conference held in Paris in March. Seventy-one nations were represented, the vast majority of which affirmed that nuclear generation will play a significant role in their future energy plans. A final statement noted that improvements in energy efficiency are needed, as are reductions in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The statement highlighted the following:

- Nuclear power does not generate air pollution or greenhouse gas emissions;
- Nuclear power is a proven technology, which... provides competitively priced electricity...in comparison with average energy prices from other sources;
- Nuclear power contributes to security of supply and the stability of energy prices by reducing exposure to fluctuations in the price of fossil materials; and
- Nuclear power can also make a valuable contribution through the production of potable water and hydrogen.

*[Anti-nuclear] forces ...are receding under the onslaught of facts that are too strong to be forever distorted or denied. All around the world, old-school, anti-nuclear environmentalism is being eclipsed by new realism that recognizes nuclear energy's essential virtue: its capacity to deliver cleanly generated power safely, reliably, and on a massive scale.* John Rich, Director General, World Nuclear Association, speaking to the International Ministerial Conference in March.

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## Top environmentalist backs nuclear



James Lovelock, one of the founding fathers of the green movement, is speaking out these days, sounding the alarm about global warming and urging his friends in the environmental movement to "drop their wrong-headed objection to nuclear energy."

The world is almost at the tipping point, he warns. Carbon dioxide levels are at 380 parts per million, and could reach

400 within seven years. Between 400-600 ppm, models predict there will be no turning back. "Clean renewable energy sounds appealing but in practice, it is ruinously expensive...there is no sensible alternative to nuclear energy."

Dr. Lovelock is inventor of the technology used to measure CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), the chemicals in spray cans that deplete the ozone layer – work that led to a ban on CFCs. A video of his remarks to the Canadian Nuclear Association in March is found at [www.cna.ca](http://www.cna.ca).

## New Brunswick waiting game

New Brunswick is still to-ing and fro-ing on whether the \$1.4 billion Point Lepreau refurb will go ahead. At play are negotiations between the provincial and federal governments and potential private investors. Considerations of greenhouse gas reductions to meet Kyoto targets are also part of the mix.

Though a decision on the project was expected by late 2004, the Provincial government is still waiting for a recommendation by NB Power. But time is running out for one possible partner. Bruce Power, the Ontario-based

conglomerate has said it will walk away unless an answer is coming soon.

The good news is that the International Brotherhood of Electrical Worker's message is getting across. New Brunswick's *Telegraph Journal* has come out in support of the refurb, saying the province shouldn't be held hostage to fossil fuel prices. The NB Forest Products Association has also announced its support. Unless Lepreau keeps operating, they say, the forest industry will be vulnerable to often wild fluctuations of foreign coal markets.

### Ad campaign slams Liberal electricity Plan

#### *Clean-coal and nuclear the better way*

The Power Workers Union, supported by CNWC, has launched a focused media and letter-writing campaign condemning Ontario's plan to close five coal-fired generating stations by the end of 2007 (see page 4).

Ads appeared in newspapers across the province in March and April. The first urged the McGuinty government to convert coal-fired plants to clean-coal technology for a saving of \$6 billion – funds that could be used to rehabilitate four idle nuclear stations with a generating capacity of 2,500 MW. The second ad repeated this theme, adding that energy prices will go through the roof if coal-fired plants are scrapped.

Show some smart leadership Mr. McGuinty, and say yes to clean coal.

### Excellence pays off big time!

Take a bow, members of PWU's Pickering B unit. Their Cobalt Conversion Team pulled together to deliver a retooling project on time and under budget – and in the process, earned a tidy bonus for one of Ontario's community hospitals.

The \$350,000 donation to Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering Hospital's nuclear medicine unit was the result of performance excellence in a joint project between MDS Nordion and Ontario Power Generation. The two parties agreed to donate a portion of the savings for under-budget completion of a retooling project at Pickering B. The work involved refitting a reactor to accommodate cobalt rods. Inside the reactor the rods are converted to Cobalt 60 and then used as radioactive sources for medical and industrial purposes.

The 'cobalt team' delivered big time, knowing their community would benefit from their dedication and effort.

## Here's a Timbit for you!

What do a nuclear generating station and a double-dipped doughnut have in common? Not much as it happens – except skilled handlers who are members of the Power Workers' Union. The 25 or so employees of Tim Horton's, located in Ontario's Darlington Nuclear Plant, are PWU members and proud of it.

They recently ratified their first collective agreement which will see them being one of the best paid doughnut crews in the country. The franchise, owned by Ontario Power Generation, is run by a management firm under contract. Its staff has been unionized for a little over a year.

## Gentilly down to the wire



It's still wait and see for CNWC members at the Gentilly nuclear station near Trois Riviere, Quebec. In mid-May a much-anticipated report by Quebec's Public Hearings Office was released. And, though it was expected to set the fate of the province's only nuclear plant, the document recommended only that Phase 1 of the refurbishment project go ahead. That phase involves expansion of radioactive waste storage capacity sufficient to bring the plant to the end of its present expected lifespan. So now it's up to the Quebec government to decide whether the refurb will go ahead. Quebec Power has endorsed refurbishment of the reactor, which otherwise will be mothballed by 2010.

# Worry mounts over shut-down of Ontario's coal-fired plants

Ontario is in a pretty fix – and it's all of its own making. It's a direct result of province's pledge (some say reckless pledge) to phase out its coal-fired power plants by 2007. And despite a flurry of announcements of new power projects by Premier Dalton McGuinty last month, opposition leaders at Queen's Park are howling. They don't see a coherent plan to replace one-quarter of the province's power supply that will be lost.

Even if there is a plan, it's hard to see where nuclear generation fits in. This, despite growing recognition that nuclear power is the only realistic option for large-scale new production. Windpower, solar, biomass and landfill gas have their place. But their potential capacity is limited. Windpower, for instance, is constrained by the fact there's little or no wind on the hottest and coldest days of the year when power demand is at its peak. So wind cannot meet baseload demand. More gas-fired plants aren't the answer either. They belch greenhouse gases, cancelling efforts to meet Kyoto reductions.

Nuclear generation is the one option that reduces greenhouse emissions while being independent from the escalating costs and unpredictable supply of natural gas markets. In Ontario, it would make far more sense to refit the coal-fired plants to use clean-coal technologies and refurbish existing nuclear stations. The cost would be 35 per cent lower than the Liberal government's current approach. It would buy time for phase-in of renewables and avoid costly investment in new gas-fired plants, which are clearly the wrong way to go. Last month the Ontario government announced a jigsaw of new-build agreements, gas-fired power projects, smaller-scale renewable energy

projects, a proposal call for renewable projects over 20 MW, and the promise of a further call in June for projects under 20MW. But the replacement figures don't cover what will be lost – there's a 3,230 MW shortfall. More project announcements are coming, we're told, but skeptics question whether new supply will be up and running by the end of 2007. Here's the gap breakdown:

<b>Closure of five coal-fired plants</b>	<b>-7,500 MW</b>
• 2 new gas-fired plants near Sarnia (combined cycle)	+1,575
• Greater Toronto Airport project	+90
• Loblaws stores reduced consumption	+10
• 10 renewable projects approved	+395
• April '05 RFP for renewable projects (over 20 MW)	+1,000
• Expected June '05 RFP for renewable projects (under 20 MW)	+200

**Shortfall** **- 3,230 MW**

That's a huge gap to fill. Refurbishment of reactor #1 at Pickering A will provide 600 MW. The proposed, Portlands Energy Centre on Toronto's waterfront could provide 500 MW but hasn't been approved and faces stiff opposition from local residents. To put this in perspective, if the province's four other dormant reactors at Bruce and Pickering A were brought back on the line, they would provide 2,500 MW. Make no mistake, that can't be made up with windmills.

## Cigar Lake gets green light

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Council gave go-ahead for development of the world's largest undeveloped high-grade uranium deposit, and a construction licence was issued in December. The project, a partnership between Cameco and Cogema Resources, will employ up to 350 workers during construction and 250 thereafter, with a planned production life of 20-30 years. Initial processing of Cigar Lake slurry will be done at McClean Lake and final processing at Rabbit Lake. The site has proven and probable reserves of 232 million pounds of U308. It will be operated by Cameco.

## McClean Lake a winner

The Supreme Court of Canada dismissed an appeal in March against a lower court decision upholding the operating licence for the McClean Lake uranium mining and milling project in northern Saskatchewan. The dispute, which goes back more than 10 years, was over whether the site required an additional environmental assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. This, despite the fact that an EA was already underway under previous legislation when the new *Act* took affect in 1995. McLean Lake is operated by Cogema Resources.

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