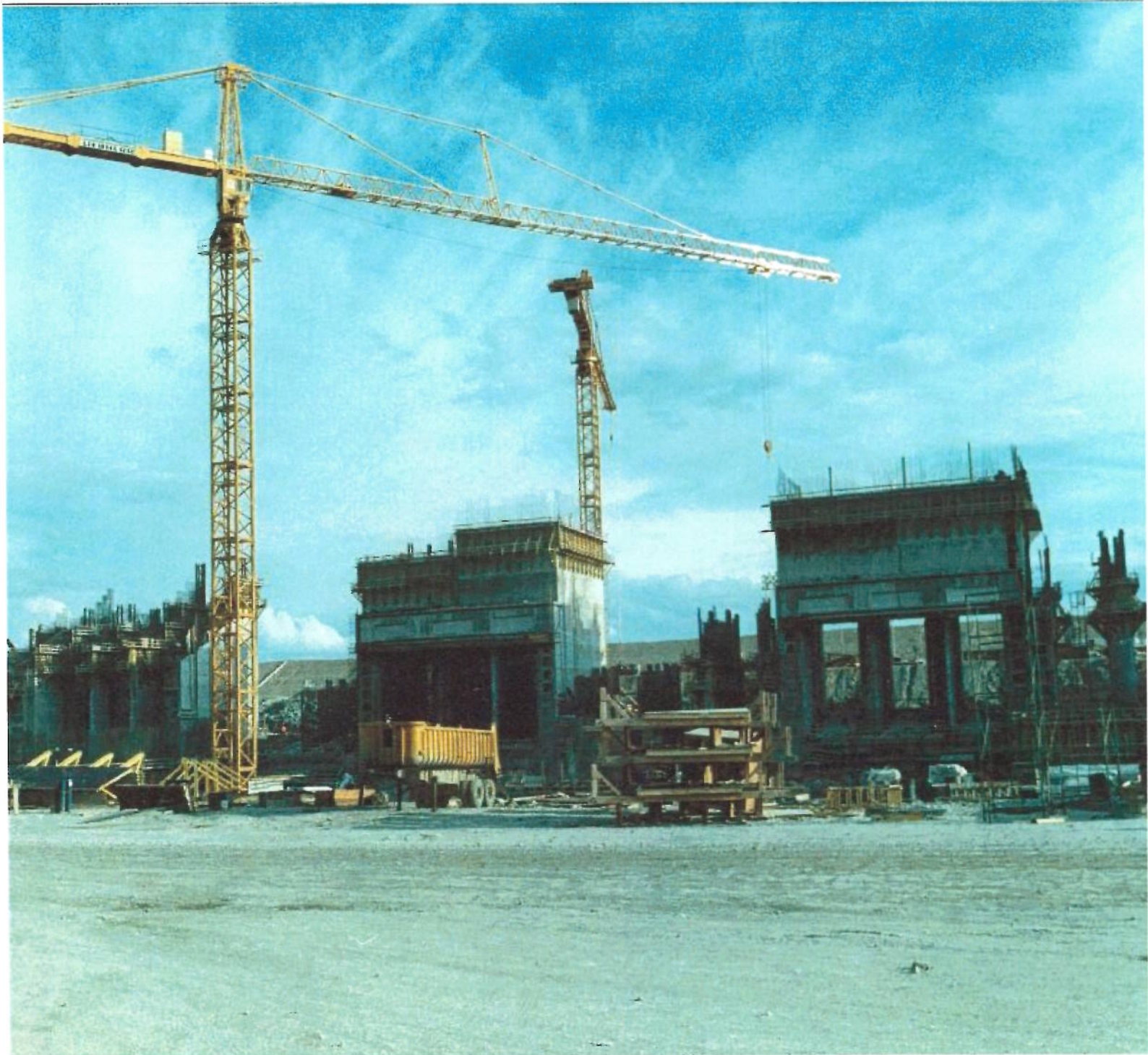




# Operating Engineers of Manitoba



**Presentation to The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission**

**Operating Engineers of Manitoba**  
**Presentation to the**  
**Manitoba Clean Environment Commission**  
**On the proposed**  
**Wuskwatim Generating Station and Transmission Project**  
**Winnipeg, Manitoba**



The Operating Engineers of Manitoba are pleased to come before the Clean Environment Commission to discuss the positive economic impact that a project like the proposed Wuskwatim Generating Station and Transmission Project would have for the diverse people of Manitoba.

The Clean Environment Commission will, by the end of this important hearing, have heard many positions on the impact of the Wuskwatim dam, both positive and negative, environmental, and economic. The environmental impact will address how a project like the proposed Wuskwatim dam might affect the environment. It is of the utmost importance that the necessary research relating to the project is carefully weighed and considered in the final decision making process. The environmental impact on the surrounding region, the province and even the country as a whole must be addressed. I understand that the proposed Wuskwatim dam will be a low impact project, involving minimal flooding of less than one half square kilometer.



Just as the environmental impact should be carefully weighed and considered, so too should the economic impact of such a project. The Commission has likely been made aware of a wide array of facts relating to how Wuskwatim might affect the economies of local communities, the province and even the country. Facts such as the creation of 7700 person years of direct and indirect construction employment on a project that is expected to last

approximately 6 years. Peak annual construction forces can range from 140 to 540 persons, depending on the season and the construction phase. As well as the construction of approximately 350 kilometers of new transmission lines in northern Manitoba to deliver electricity.

In wading through all of the information provided by various sources, we ask the Commission to keep sight of the fact that the economic impact of these communities, the province and the country, is felt first by the individual workers and their families. Individuals like Ross Bonnyman and Larry Morissette, who know first hand the positive economic impact of projects similar to the Wuskwatim dam.

Ross Bonnyman was working for Inco in the early seventies prior to start of the major hydro projects in Manitoba. His first job was on the Jenpeg project setting up the 200 person camp and then eventually moving on to build the 1000 person camp to house the employees when the project got to full speed. Ross then took a position with BA Construction doing mainly dozer and loader work. He then got an opportunity to work on the project as an oiler and helper for a whirley crane. From there he eventually gained the experience to operate the crane. Ross worked primarily on the Jenpeg and Long Spruce projects.





With the knowledge he gained, he was able to find the work and stability he was looking for in the crane rental business in Winnipeg for the past 20 years. Because of his knowledge of tower cranes he was also called upon when the Bank of Montreal Tower was built in downtown Winnipeg. Ross is the first to admit he would have never gained the knowledge that allowed for a long career if it were not for his experience working on the hydro dams.

Larry Morissette started his working career at the age of 17 as an iron worker. In order to gain secure employment Larry took a 10 month course in diesel mechanics. It was around 1968 when Larry heard about the hydro projects up north, and went to work as a pump man. After working as a pump man for a few months Larry approached his supervisor about working on the whirley cranes. So in the fall of 1968 Larry began work as an oiler on a whirley crane.



Larry's mechanical background helped him to grasp the working of the crane and before long was operating. The experience that Larry gained operating whirley cranes on Kettel, Jenpeg, and Limestone enabled him to work in the crane rental business in Winnipeg, and on projects all over the country. As recently as 1997 Larry applied those skills for 10 months working on the completion of the Confederation Bridge between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Larry believes that all of the employment opportunities were made available to him due to the diverse experience he gained while working on the Manitoba hydro projects.



The experience and the positive impact that the early hydro projects had on the lives of Ross and Larry are clearly long lasting. Long after the projects were completed the skills they developed were applied in other settings, allowing for a quality of life that may not have otherwise been possible.

As the debate continues over future hydro projects, the next generation of young and willing workers look forward to benefiting from the experience of being employed on such a project. Roger Lungal and Clarence Anderson are two such individuals.

Roger has been in the crane operator apprenticeship program since April 2001. Currently Roger is working through his Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeship in conjunction with the Operating Engineers Training Institute of Manitoba and Red River Community College. He will be writing his exam to obtain his Red Seal as a fully qualified crane operator on April 6, 2004. Roger is







employed in the Brandon area, but looks forward to the opportunities that will come from hydro projects like Wuskwatim. He is eager to gain the work experience that is exclusive to such a project. It would be tough to match the amount of experience he could gain working on a hydro project like Wuskwatim. Being able to gain so much experience in a relatively short period of time would give Roger a leg up, enabling him to secure employment as a crane operator. A project like Wuskwatim could equip an individual like Roger with the skill set needed to provide for himself and his family for years to come.

Clarence Anderson is another Manitoban who would benefit greatly from employment on a project like Wuskwatim. Clarence completed the backhoe and side boom course in 1996 – 1997 through the Operating Engineers Training Institute of Manitoba. Clarence has also been active within his Aboriginal community, sitting for a 2 year term on council for Dawson River First Nations. He has since completed his Level 1 crane course and has worked as a tower crane apprentice during the construction of True North Center. Clarence is currently working as a tower crane apprentice at the Critical Services



Redevelopment Project at the Health Sciences Center. He feels that the experience gained on a project like Wuskwatim would go a long way towards helping him meet the required 4500 hours to complete his 3 year tower crane operator program. The time in the seat on a project like Wuskatim would solidify him as an operator who possesses a skill set sought after by many employers.

The Commission will also be presented with facts that address the percentage of Northern Aboriginal people who gain employment and invaluable experience on projects like Wuskwatim. An example of such figures (found on the preceding page) were those tabulated during the construction of the Limestone Dam (pictured below).



<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Maximum Work Force</b>	<b>Average Northern Aboriginals</b>	<b>Average Northern Residents</b>
1985	358	42%	60%
1986	1208	29%	44%
1987	1310	25%	45%
1988	1043	21%	40%
1989	551	19%	35%
1990	449	17%	34%
1991	293	21%	40%
1992	122	24%	51%

When the Commission is presented with the facts and figures of how many aboriginals were employed on these projects in the past, or the percentage projected to be employed on Wuskwatim, we ask you to look beyond the statistics. Look to individuals like Clarence Anderson, who would get to benefit from the experience and training for a lifetime to come.

I too come before the Clean Environment Commission Hearing not only as the Business Manager of the Operating Engineers but also as an individual that was fortunate enough to start my career, as a crane operator, on one of the first hydro projects in Manitoba. It was during the construction of the 1272-megawatt Kettle generating station where I began as an oiler on a Bcyrus Erie 88B dragline. After working as an oiler on Kettle I continued my training as a crane operator, enabling me to provide for my family.



Taking into consideration our experiences, we feel it is short sighted to talk of the positive economic impact that this dam might have within the limited scope of the 6 years that it is scheduled to be under construction. We ask that the Clean Environment Commission look to the economic impact that may last a lifetime for those people who work on these projects. Only then can the true positive economic impact of such a project be measured.