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A Note on the Investigation We want to thank all the people who helped us in the preparation of this article on the Wreck Cove Hydro-Electric Investigation. We spent a good deal of time at the project site and found the people working there generally candid and helpful with questions of design and construction. As we travel the island we find a great deal of misunderstanding about the project. We have tried here to explain some aspects. But we have been asked questions which we could not answer. We were disappointed in not being able to gather more information on the social and environmental impact the project will have. We could not answer important questions ranging from water quality and quantity, effect on inshore fishing, mammals on the Highlands and so forth to the general question as to whether it is wise to tamper at all with the Highlands • the last wild area left in Nova Scotia and to many people important as that. When we approached people who should have some of the answers • people involved in the impact study that is supposed to be made • these people refused to be interviewed because they are under contract to Nova Scotia Power Corporation, who will have the final decision on whether to make the completed study public. This study will answer a lot of the public's questions and thus should be made available as soon as possible. Moreover, we've run into several widely diverse concerns such as that high tension transmission wires should run back on the mountain, perhaps following existing lumber roads; that caribou have been sighted in the reservoir area (the project will flood some of the best caribou-feeding grounds); that all gravel pits opened along the Cabot Trail be carefully restored. Jack MacKillum, Lands and Forests Superintendent, is particularly concerned that several hundred men on the Highlands in summer is a tremendous fire hazard and wants adequate precautions established; also, he wants the reservoir areas cleared of all vegetation including stumps. Nova Scotia Forest Industries plan to take out only merchantable wood. Someone must be responsible for stumping if the area is ever to have recreational value and to maintain water quality • decaying vegetation will highly acidify the water • and no one we've talked to is quite sure what effect that will have on soil, drinking water, fresh water fish or inshore fishing near the tailrace. There should be a proper context in which such concerns as these could be aired and firm commitments made about them. Public meetings seem the best arena for this. The Highlands are a precious area • and it is the entire island that should somehow share in the assessment of impact and the relative value of these effects. Four rivers and several lakes will be destroyed and twenty-five percent of the Cheticamp diverted. One of the dams will be over 2000 feet long, 500 feet wide at the bottom and 120 feet high • and that means an enormous excavation somewhere on the Highlands. And that is only one of 11 dams* And yet this is called a small project • which it is* It will produce only 200 megawatts for about 2 hours a day. And the question we have often been asked is whether a portion of the Highlands and those rivers is worth that small amount of power they will get. Nova Scotia Power Corporation should put this project on a firm foundation of island-wide



understanding and trust • that the greatest care will be taken, no unsightly damage will be left, that potential social and environmental impact has been thoroughly researched and the need for the power is great. The impact study should be published and there should be public informational meetings where NSPC could detail its plan for the Highlands and the public could ask questions and offer guidelines. Cape Breton's Edited & Published by Ronald Capien OCTOBER 1974 MAGAZINE WRECK COVE CAPE BRETON NOVA SCOTIA Best wishes to Cape Breton's Magazine SHAD'S SBRVICB STATION 6BNBRAL STQRB & RESTAURANT Skir Dhtt Speedy Propane FILLING STATIONS: J* E. Benoit, Arichat Robin's, Cheticamp Inlet Campground, 5 miles W, of Baddeck Speedy Propane, King's Road, Sydney e??jk PRINTERS LTD. 180 TOWNSEND STREET, SYDNEY, N. S. TELEPHONE (902) 564'245 Formerly Cape Breton Printers