POWER SHIFT:
A MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE OF ELECTRICITY DEREGULATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Despite a record of low rates and significant public revenue generation on the part of the public utility, BC Hydro, the government of British Columbia in recent years has begun to deregulate the provincial electricity system. Measures undertaken include breaking up the utility and transferring responsibility for new generation to the private sector. I provide a content analysis of the process of electricity deregulation in British Columbia as represented in the Vancouver Sun and the Times Colonist. Narrative themes of the necessity of change, the public/private dichotomy and environmental responsibility are examined. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, I contend that a symbolic violence of neoliberalism is evident, one that inculcates the "natural" superiority of private production while occluding alternatives to deregulation. Gaps and inconsistencies in the dominant discourse are considered and suggestions made for strategies to increase the effectiveness of voices resisting deregulation.

Keywords: electricity deregulation; BC Hydro; independent power producers; electricity production and the environment; Boudieu; Foucault; symbolic violence

Subject Terms: B.C. Hydro; Electric Utilities – Deregulation – British Columbia; Privatization – British Columbia; Energy policy – British Columbia; Power resources – economic aspects – British Columbia; Power resources – environmental aspects – British Colurnbia

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCSEA:	BC Sustainable Energy Association
BCTC:	British Columbia Transmission Corporation
BCUC:	British Columbia Utilities Commission
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CPP:	BC Citizens for Public Power
CUPE:	Canadian Union of Public Employees
DSB:	Downstream Benefits
DSM:	Demand-side Management
IPABC:	Independent Power Producers Association of British Columbia
IPP:	Independent Power Producer
JIESC:	Joint Industry Electricity Steering Committee
MEMPR:	Ministry of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources
NAFTA:	North American Free Trade Agreement

Chapter One: Introduction

Beginning with the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s, governments around the world have increasingly adopted deregulatory agendas, the hallmarks of which are diminished public involvement in the economy and a corresponding increase in the power of private capital—capital that must be freed of "onerous" government regulation in order to maximize profits and, by implication, the public good.[1] One of the more recent sectors to undergo deregulation is the electricity industry.[2] Over the last 15 years, many jurisdictions have implemented deregulatory programs for their electricity sectors. British Columbia is now following suit.[3]

Various researchers have undertaken notable critical analysis of the social, economic and environmental consequences of electricity deregulation in British Columbia.[4] As well, numerous studies have considered media representations in a neoliberal context.[5] To date, despite the central role this institution plays in reflecting and shaping the development, presentation and understanding of social and political issues, the discourse and counter-discourse of electricity deregulation within the media remain largely unexamined. To help elucidate this dynamic in regard to representations of electricity deregulation in British Columbia, I undertook an ethnographic content analysis (Altheide, 1996) of coverage of electricity deregulation in the province from 2001 to 2007. This approach allows for the iterative development of categories and variables from an initial set of core questions underpinning the project (Altheide, 1996, pp. 6-7).

My intent is to shed light on how the deregulatory agenda is both advanced and resisted in and through the media. To this end, I draw upon the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, two theorists whose work offers insight into reconciling problems of structure and agency in social analysis.

Electricity Deregulation in British Columbia

From its establishment in 1962 and until very recently, the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (commonly known as BC Hydro) existed as a vertically-integrated Crown corporation, responsible for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity within British Columbia. The corporation serves over 94% of BC's population.[6] Ninety percent of BC Hydro's production comes from hydro-electric generation and more than 80 percent from large dam hydro-electric facilities on the Peace and Columbia Rivers (BC Hydro, 2008, p.8).

Unlike under a market model, electricity rates in British Columbia are set on a cost-of-production basis, meaning that, thanks to the efficiency of BC Hydro' system, BC Hydro customers enjoy the second lowest electricity rates in North America (Hydro Quebec, 2007, p.9).[7] At the same time, BC Hydro has a demonstrated high reliability rating and customer satisfaction record (despite providing service over a large and highly mountainous province, fraught with difficult terrain).[8] The Crown corporation has also proven to be a valuable financial asset, returning revenues of almost three quarters of a billion dollars annually to the public purse (BC Hydro, 2008, pp. 73-95). As well, BC Hydro has functioned as an engine of economic development in British Columbia, providing

employment in remote parts of the province and the affordable power that, historically, has been a key part of British Columbia's industrial development.

With their election to government in May 2001, the British Columbia Liberal party began a process of bringing fundamental change to this model.[9] Before coming to power the Liberals had indicated their keenness for greater private involvement in the electricity system (Calvert, 2007b, p.33), and once at the helm they quickly began moving to this end. In August 2001, the provincial Liberal government struck the Task Force on Energy Policy (the "Task Force") and charged it with making recommendations for a new provincial energy policy.[10] The Task Force's Interim Report (Task Force, 2001), issued December 2001, was met with a hostile reception from a wide range of parties, including industrial users, who were disturbed by a recommendation for dramatic and rapid price increases. (See, for example, JIESC, 2002.) Following this reception, the Task Force regrouped, and in its Final Report omitted the call for a swift transition to "market prices" (Task Force, 2002). Such a transition would have amounted to increases in the price of electricity of 30 percent for residential users, 40 percent for commercial users and 60 percent for industrial users. The move to market pricing was now to be phased in over a ten-year period (p.13).[11]

The heart of the Task Force's (2002) recommendations, however, remained a shift to a market-based electricity system integrated into a continental energy market. British Columbia is to develop a "wholesale electricity market based on open access to the electricity transmission system" (p.60). To facilitate this, the Task Force recommended breaking up BC Hydro into separate

generation, transmission and "non-core" entities (p.95). BC Hydro retains control of existing generation, but is prohibited from developing new capacity, which is to be developed entirely by private energy companies (p.54).[12] BC Hydro's existing capacity is to operate on market principles, and as a further constraint, strict regulations are to be put in place to ensure that the corporation does not unduly abuse its market power. The new transmission entity will be a "commercial operation," charging for its services and facilitating the movement of electricity from BC Hydro, private energy companies and generators in neighbouring jurisdictions on an "open access" basis (p.52). This means that BC Hydro can be given no preferential treatment when moving electricity through the transmission network, regardless of whether this would serve public policy objectives or distributional efficiency within the system. Non-core assets (e.g., administration) will be devolved to the private sector over time. Electricity distribution (the delivery of electricity to individual customers after it has moved through large-scale transmission lines) is also to be hived off and broken up. BC Hydro's foundational policy of non-discriminatory pricing may be ended with the establishment of four separate regional distribution utilities, which will be "separate, regulated entities, operating on commercial principles" (p. 55).

The key Task Force recommendations were incorporated into the government's 2002 Energy Plan (*Energy for Our Future: A Plan for B.C.*; hereafter "2002 Energy Plan"). The plan's recommendations include the reestablishment of the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) as the agency responsible for setting electricity rates,[13] a commitment to further

integration of British Columbia's electricity system with that of the Pacific Northwest region, and an intention to outsource more of BC Hydro's services. The plan committed BC Hydro to acquiring 50 percent of new energy from "green" sources.[14] Transmission services are to be separated from BC Hydro under a distinct company, operating on the principle of granting full access to private power developers on a "non-discriminatory" basis. As well, BC Hydro is to be prohibited from constructing any new generation facilities, which, coupled with its continued responsibility to plan for future demand, binds the utility to purchasing all new power from the private sector (Government of B.C., 2002, pp. 26-32). Taken together, these latter two recommendations perhaps have the most import for the restructuring of BC Hydro and the fostering of the private energy sector in British Columbia.

In February 2007, the provincial government released the latest iteration of its plan for British Columbia's electricity system, *The BC Energy Plan: A Vision for a Clean Energy Leadership* (MEMPR, 2007; hereafter "2007 Energy Plan"). While remaining grounded in the 2002 Energy Plan, the plan responded to increasing public concern regarding the environment and global warming by offering some genuine greening of provincial energy policy. Notable changes include a requirement for zero net greenhouse gas emissions from all new electricity projects (which likely quashes previous plans to build private coal-fired plants), support for the development of clean energy technology and a target of acquiring 50 percent of BC Hydro's incremental resource needs through conservation by 2020 (MEMPR, 2007, p.3).[15] The primary course of facilitating

transition to a private sector-driven electricity system laid out in the 2002 Energy plan remains unchanged, however. And this new "green" production is to come solely from private producers. In fact, the 2007 Energy Plan accelerated this process, setting a goal of "electricity self-sufficiency" by 2016 and acquiring further "insurance power" to minimize "the risk and implications of having to rely on electricity imports" (MEMPR, 2007, p. 10).

The provincial Liberals have gone a large way toward the implementation of the agenda laid out in the Task Force's recommendations and its own Energy Plans. Outsourcing, already underway prior to release of the 2002 Energy Plan, cumulated in the transfer of BC Hydro's administrative, customer service, accounting and information technology services (formerly comprising one third of the workforce of BC Hydro) to a subsidiary of Accenture. Accenture is the descendant of Arthur Anderson, the international accounting firm disgraced in the Enron scandal (Mulgrew, 2002). As well, BC Hydro has been broken into separate generation and transmission companies, with BC Hydro's responsibility now confined to "endowment assets" (the existing hydroelectric dams and Burrard Thermal generation plant) and a new company, the British Columbia Transmission Corporation (BCTC), has been created to ensure open access to British Columbia's transmission grid. (See *Transmission Corporation Act.*) The provincial government has begun entering into Energy Purchase Agreements, long-term contracts with private power corporations—committing in the 2006 tender call alone to buy $15.6 billion worth of electricity (Calvert, 2007a; 2007b, p.92). There has also been a corresponding rapid sign up by private power

producers for water licenses on the rivers and streams most favourable for hydro-electric development. Since 2003, 495 water licenses for power have been approved or are pending. (See Calvert, 2007b, pp. 238-239 for a complete listing.) A ten-year rate freeze was lifted in 2003, and rates have increased steadily since (BC Hydro, 2007, p.40).

Despite their profundity, there has been little public consultation and debate regarding these changes. It appears that the level of public awareness regarding the sea change underway in British Columbia's electricity system is generally low.[16] Given this lack of public awareness, I attempt to obtain a better understanding of how issues of electricity deregulation are constructed by and through (a portion) of the media in British Columbia, specifically newspaper reporting in the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Times Colonist.* Broadly speaking, the framework for this research is interpretavist in its skepticism toward claims of absolute objectivity or the possibility of data being ascribed a fixed interpretation independently of a particular conceptual framework or set of values. At the same time, I proceed on the assumption of inter-subjective commonality, and, speaking reflexively, my point of departure is an opposition to electricity deregulation, which I believe is at root ideologically driven and harmful to the public good (a socially constructed discourse, itself).

This research may be classified as contextual, in that it aims to reveal narratives present in the media, explanatory in its attempt to unearth linkage between these narratives and connections to broader systems of power, and generative in the hope that it may further the development by individuals and

organizations of strategies to counter dominant constructions and advance alternative models of electricity production (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp. 26-31).

NOTES

[1] For elaboration on the rise of neoliberalism, see for instance, Derthick (1985).

[2] In reality, the term *deregulation* applied to electricity is a misnomer, as "deregulated" systems typically require an even greater degree of regulation in order to manage the complexity of electric markets and the introduction of a new level of intervention between the generation and distribution of electricity. Nonetheless, I employ the term in this study, given its general recognition as shorthand for a transfer of power and influence to the private sector. The specific details of polices under consideration here are hopefully made clear in context.

[3] See, for example, Beder 2003; Hampton, 2003; Jewell, 2003; Swift & Stewart, 2004; Timney, 2004, Thomas, 2004; and Wallace, 2001.

[4] The most comprehensive examination of the issue is Dr. John Calvert's (2007b) *Liquid Gold: Energy Privatization in British Columbia.* Important contributions include: Calvert 2007a; Cohen 2006, 2003a, 2003b, 2002, 2001; Shaffer, 2007; Wallace 2000; along with numerous others. I should make clear that, while drawing on existing policy analysis work on this issue in order to help contextualize and explicate the themes that emerge from the media discourse, my aim is not to fully reproduce or directly extend it. Instead, my goal is to add to the understanding of how such critiques are reproduced in media coverage of electricity policy in British Columbia and to consider how they might be further advanced in popular discourse.

[5] For instance, McMullan and McClung analyzed media coverage of the Westray disaster through the lens of formal media processes as constituting a "politics of truth." Cukier and Thomlinson (2005) compared media discourses of privatization of health care, education and policing.

[6] Fortis Inc., investor-owned distribution utility, is the only other major supplier, serving southeastern B.C.

[7] Hydro Quebec, Quebec's provincial electricity utility, conducts annual survey comparisons of electricity costs in major North American cities. In the latest survey, for rates in effect April 1 2007, users were grouped by energy consumption into seven classes. BC Hydro rates were the second lowest in all categories but one ("small consumers"—consumption of 10,000 kWh and power demand of 40 kW), where they were ranked third (Hydro Quebec, 2007, pp. 9-15). BC Hydro consistently places in the top three positions.

[8] For instance, in a survey of major Canadian utilities conducted by J.D. Power & Associates BC Hydro finished second to Hydro Quebec on all measures: power quality and reliability, price and value, corporate citizenship, billing and payment, communications, and customer service (Kane, 2007).

[9] Whereas this study is focused on the active policy of electricity deregulation began in 2001 by the Campbell government, it should be noted that the policy did not emerge sui generis at this time and important precursors exist. The separation of natural gas distribution from BC Hydro and its privatization began with the Social Credit (Socred) government of Bill Bennett in the 1980s. The Socreds also initiated the development of the current model for purchasing electricity for private producers (albeit on a modest scale), which demonstrated the viability of using BC Hydro to subsidize the development of private producers. This effort saw the birth of the Independent Power Producers Association of B.C. (IPABC), which, as will be seen in this study, was to become an influential lobby.

In the 1990s, the provincial New Democractic Party (NDP) government also entered into private energy contracts, but did not adopt a widespread policy of deregulation. This government struck a task force to examine deregulation (the Task Force on Electricity Market Reform), chaired by SFU economist Mark Jaccard, whom the NDP had appointed chair of the British

Columbia Utilities Commission. The task force could not reach consensus and Jaccard issued his own pro-deregulation report, whose recommendations the NDP did not feel obliged to implement. (See Calvert, 2007b, pp.19-34.)

[10] The Task Force was chaired by Jack Ebbels, former Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines and its membership comprised: J. Peter Meekison, former Deputy Minister, Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, Alberta; John Bechtold, former senior executive with Petro Canada; Erik Westergaard, an energy consultant who worked extensively on electricity deregulation in Australia and New Zealand; and Brenda Eaton, Deputy Minister to the Premier and a former Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines.

[11] Whereas the Task Force's final recommendations imply more gradual price increases, their magnitude is still dramatic. Although not put in percentage terms in the Task Force Final Report, the recommended increases amount to 37 percent for residential rates, 65 percent for industrial rates, and 30 percent for commercial rates. (See Task Force, 2002, p. 46.) These calculations are based on comparison to the cost of combined-cycle natural gas generation and derive from the assumption that gas prices will remain unchanged over the ten-year period. Should they increase—and with them market electricity prices—a transition to market prices would require proportionately greater increases.

[12] These energy interests use the term *independent power producer* (IPP) to describe themselves. The positive connotations of *independence* are addressed below in the discussion of emergent themes. While I consider a term such as *private energy interest* more accurate, I use *independent power producer* in this study as its adoption within the discourse is part of the deregulatory construction under consideration.

[13] The original purpose of the BCUC was to provide oversight of private utilities, setting rates and authorizing new development. In the 1980s, the Socred government of Bill Bennett extended its mandate to include BC Hydro. The NDP subsequently reversed this policy, adopting a practice of setting rates by Cabinet. Returning the rate determining function to the BCUC in the context of the Liberal's energy policies also transfers the formal responsibility of integrating the new high cost private power into the rate structure—which, as Calvert notes, offers to government a political shield against a backlash against resulting rate increases (2007b, p.45)

[14] This left the option of acquiring 50 percent from non-green sources, such as coal. When compared to BC Hydro's existing generation, which can be considered 90 percent green, this actually constitutes a regressive step.

[15] New production sources will be "green," meaning mostly "run-of-the-river" hydroelectric generation. While such production is usually of a smaller scale than large damn hydroelectric generation, it is not necessarily as environmentally benign as its name might suggest, as will be discussed. Other sources include wind power and "biomass," the burning of waste wood. The greenness of the latter is highly questionable (also discussed below).

[16] Recent protests around planned private power projects in Pinecone Burke Provincial Park and in the Kootenays (in the British Columbia Interior) may have raised the profile of this issue, however.

Chapter Two: Theory and Method

1. *Theoretic background*

My conceptual approach to this study recognizes power exercised by and through the media as interwoven with hegemonic institutional interests but also sees power in Foucauldian terms, filtering through the matrix of governance to the micro- or capillary level of everyday life. For Foucault, the press is an "apparatus of truth" (1980, p.132), influencing its flow and production through determining such things as who is qualified to speak truth, what form such utterances take, and how they are verified. Subordinated discourses can be reconfigured, however, and hence the domination of truth-telling by powerful actors is never absolute. Power is not simply wholly oppressive and is, in fact, productive of resistance.[1]

Given the prominence of risk in the discourse under examination, I also will at times draw upon Foucauldian analysis of risk as a "moral technology" incorporated into techniques of governmentality (Ewald, 1991). Parallels can be made here to risk linked to responsibilized forms of control that work to fortify institutional power (e.g., O'Malley, 1996). I believe that, at the level of policy, appeal to risk functions to naturalize certain options, making them appear self-evident, while simultaneously rendering others invisible.[2]

I also draw a connection here to the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, whose work like that of Foucault can be interpreted as preserving the utility of a structuralist approach to culture, while offering a way out of its deterministic

implications. Bourdieu's concept of habitus—the socially cultivated predispositions of thought, speech and action (see, e.g., Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992)—offers predictive and descriptive value for culture and practice, without implying mechanistic reproduction. An active agency persists, one with the ability to "engender an infinite array of discourses that are grammatically conforming" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 145). An actor thus can be expected to "encode" cultural artifacts in diverse and unique ways even if he is to some extent bounded by the "limits of the system of categories he owes to his upbringing and training" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.126).

Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence—a process of legitimating and reinforcing structures of inequality through the imposition of systems of meaning (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977)—proves a useful explanatory tool. Symbolic violence is a form of misrecognition: "the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. xiii). I believe that symbolic violence is at work in much of the rhetoric of neoliberalism, where it functions to engender the acceptance of neoliberalism as an economic, cultural and political system and occlude the harmful effects resulting from its operation. Symbolic violence operates not only through positive inculcation but also via the exclusion of ideas deemed unthinkable. So a significant focus here is that which is *not* said. Thus, "naturalization" and exclusion through symbolic violence links to the Foucauldian moral technology of risk described above. As in the reproduction of habitus, symbolic violence is not exercised deterministically.

There is always resistance by strategizing agents in a struggle over social categorization and recategorization—and always the potential for actors to advance counter-narratives (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167).[3]

One point of particular interest is the representation of the corporation in the discourse. I contend that the construction of the corporation under neoliberalism is itself a form of symbolic violence, a means for groups wielding capital to legitimate their power through a process of reification and occlusion. This symbolic violence operates through legal discourse to create the corporation as legal person, as well as through broader social and cultural capital to instantiate an abstract individual, providing products and services to the consumer; hidden behind it are the real human beings and the profits that result.[4] As such, a sense of normalcy of the corporate form is inculcated, while the effects of corporate profit and corporate harm are excluded, or at least rendered dim. Under neoliberal ideology, the corporation presents a dual identity, personified as an ideal market actor and model of the sovereign citizen, while simultaneously de-ontologized when it comes to the social effects of its actions and responsibility for them. Through symbolic violence the corporation fulfills a normative role while masking the actual economic and cultural capital that lie behind it.

2. Methodology

For this study, I employed a research technique based on Altheide's (1996) ethnographic content analysis methodology, a reflexive interaction between investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis whereby categories and

variables guide the initial development of the study, while others emerge as the study progresses. This emergent aspect, in which patterns and meanings develop through the iterative examination and comparison of documents over time, is fundamental to the methodology.[5] At the same time, a quantitative component is also a part of this investigation, allowing for an analysis of more manifest coding categories within and across papers on variables such as location, classification, types of claims-maker[6] and stance.

In accord with this methodology (and theoretic approach described above), I approached this investigation from an epistemological stance that eschews attempts to achieve an absolutely neutral or objective stance external to the data. My position is informed by extant research and analysis, which exert an influence on the construction of themes and categories observed in the sample. The formation of such classifications inevitably draws on the researcher's pre-existing analytical structures, both specific and general, that shape—and are in turn shaped by—both data and analysis. At the same time, I attempted not to let my preconceived notions rigidly delineate the parameters of the content analysis. I endeavoured to approach the research topic with an open but not empty mind (Janesick, 2000, p.384), alert for non-conforming evidence that did not easily fit within a preconceived theoretical accounting of the discourse in question. Moreover, I am alive to the fact that the contradictions I address are constructions themselves. I am explicit, however, in locating this as my epistemological starting point—part of a general attempt to increase validity.

At the outset of the investigation, a series of core questions were present: Who are the claims-makers seeking to speak to the issue and how do they attempt to portray it within the media? What is the prominence given to official accounts as opposed to competing understandings? To what extent is a critique of deregulation present in reporting? What elements of the issues are not reported? How does coverage differ by format and by source?[7] Questions arising from the chosen theoretical approach form a backdrop: How is habitus evident both in the tacit assumptions of the reporting itself and in the strategies agents used to advance alternatives? Does the reporting exemplify symbolic violence that subordinates while creating opportunities for subversion? How does the operation of power through deregulatory discourse create avenues to advance alternative understandings?

A challenge when undertaking an interpretavist inductive analysis of this type is that the "double hermeneutic" of social science (Giddens, 1976) becomes a "triple hermeneutic." The researcher interprets the newspaper, which itself is interpreting and filtering the statements of the various claims-makers—and in the world at large each is reciprocally influencing the other. This presents a problem of interpreting negative evidence: does the absence of a particular critique, for example, mean that that it was not advanced or that it was not reported? Comparison with direct sources, such as the critical analysis that I draw on as background for this study, offers some opportunity for triangulation. A more thorough-going triangulation would involve interviewing or surveying claims-makers who appear in the reporting with the objective of comparing their analysis

with their reported claims. Such a project is beyond the scope of this thesis, but presents a promising opportunity for further research.

Initially, I contemplated an analysis of reporting at the local, regional and national level. Upon running preliminary searches, however, it became clear that such a range would be too broad to allow a sufficiently thorough analysis within the limits of this project. Consequently, I decided to restrict the focus to the regional level (British Columbia). The reality of media concentration in British Columbia means that opportunities for a diverse "mainstream" media comparison by ownership are limited. All major papers of significant circulation are owned by media giant Canwest Global Communications Corporation. Similarly, a majority of local community papers belong to one individual, media mogul David Black. With this in mind, I decided to draw from the *Vancouver Sun* ("the Sun") and the *Times Colonist* ("the Colonist") (circulation: 203,390 and 71,215, respectively), thus making for a comparison of papers of similar type—both broadsheets, each having comparatively high circulation, common ownership and a significant focus on provincial issues—but which also exhibit notable differences. In my estimation, the Sun exhibits a pro-business and right-of-centre stance, as seen, for example, in the consistent support of the editorial board for the policies of the governing provincial Liberal party and for the minority federal Conservative government.[8] The Sun is Metro Vancouver's only broadsheet newspaper and one that may be regarded as the "paper of record" in British Columbia. Politically, the Colonist could be seen as left of the Sun, a tradition that appears to persist (perhaps in weakened form) now that it shares a common owner. Located in the

provincial capital, the Colonist has a notable focus on British Columbia provincial politics, making it a logical choice for examination in regard to the provincial policy issue under consideration. The selection therefore allows for comparison of coverage in British Columbia's major urban centre with that in its provincial capital, while presenting something of a political distinction (limited though it may be by the extant British Columbia media spectrum).

Using the Canadian Newsstand database, I ran a search on each paper for the term *hydro*, combined with any of the following terms: *energy plan*, *task force on energy policy*, *electricity*, *deregulation*, *prices*, and *green energy*.[9] The time-frame for the search was from one month prior to the release of the Interim Report of the Task Force (October 1, 2001) to December 31, 2007. The intent was to cast a wide net and catch as many potentially relevant documents as possible across the sampling frame. When ran on the Sun, the search returned 1,182 documents; on the Colonist it returned 727 documents.[10] These results were perused to gain familiarity with the coverage, broadly conceived. Based upon this initial examination, I confirmed the decision to utilize these two papers for the analysis. From here, results were limited to documents either pertaining directly to a major instrument of electricity policy in British Columbia. (e.g., the Task Force Interim or Final report, the 2002 Energy Plan, BC Hydro's 2005 integrated 20-year plan, or the 2007 Energy Plan) or that mentioned an area addressed by such policy vehicles (e.g., the establishment of private power facilities or the raising of electricity rates).

In the adopted "progressive theoretical sampling" strategy, the selection of materials is inexorably linked to an "emergent understanding of the topic under investigation" (Altheide, 1996, pp. 33-36). Therefore, a final sampling strategy was not determined in advance but allowed to emerge after an initial iterative engagement with the documents. Electricity deregulation is a complex issue touching on multiple economic, social, environmental and other policy areas. Moreover, examination of the documentary record revealed an evolving and dynamic issue that presents various complexions at various times. Thus, it became clear that attempting to do conceptual and theoretic justice to the range of meanings and themes present would require a sizable sample. Considering this, I decided that for the Colonist I would include the entire population resulting from the application of the above relevance criteria to the search results, a resulting population of 177 documents. For the Sun, where the number of documents was notably larger, I employed a combined cluster and random sampling approach. All articles dealing directly with electricity policy statements or events (such as the release of Task Force reports) were included. Random sampling was applied to other relevant articles. This strategy afforded the opportunity to examine the paper's coverage during periods of relative mundaneness, when reporting is less likely to be in response to an active media roll out of a major policy announcement. It also allowed for comparison of coverage of planning and theoretical elements of deregulation (issuance of energy plans, for example) with concrete ones (granting of water licenses, calls

for private power contracts, etc.). This process resulted in a total of 235 documents sampled from the Sun.

I created a database for the tracking and analysis of data in Microsoft Excel and assigned each paper its own worksheet. Data collection began with the creation of a draft protocol—a set of initial questions intended to guide data collection and spur the emergence of further questions and categories (Altheide, 1996, p. 26-28). In the initial coding, I included categories for "manifest content" variables that are lower on the "analytical hierarchy" (Spencer et al., 2003, pp. 213-217). These include identificationary and factual features, such as author, date, location and title, as well as direct reference to specific components of deregulatory policy, such as the severing of the transmission system or outsourcing of services to Accenture. As well, significant already-identified features of deregulation in British Columbia were categorized—the high rates BC Hydro is paying to private producers, the break-up of BC Hydro or the lifting of energy restrictions on Independent Power Producers, for example. Prior to this project, I undertook a pilot study of electricity deregulation in British Columbia, which examined, to a more limited extent, coverage in the Sun. Themes emerging from this study were provisionally coded.[11] At the outset, a *notes* section was also included as a reflective section where cases could be compared and considered.

Through the iterative process of engagement with the documents, the protocol was subject to repeated refinement and revision. Testing of the protocol involved reexamination of documents with the intent of determining whether their

relevance to the study was fully captured. If not, additional categories were added and the document reconsidered. New categories emerged as examination of the sample proceeded, spurring the reexamination of the entire sample for instances of the new category. As universal latent qualities emerged from more basic categorizations, themes began to develop, in turn leading to subthemes. It is here that the theoretical analysis identified above came most fully into play. I concluded the data analysis by producing mini-summaries for themes and sub-themes. These included highlighting "typical" cases, as well as "extreme" examples and non-conforming instances. An overview of the process is provided in Figure 2.1. The complete protocol is presented in Table 2.1. Subthemes appear below each thematic heading, and further sub-categorizations are presented in parentheses.

I present below the outcome of this process. I begin with a numerical breakdown of categories, looking at the types of claims-makers speaking on this issue and their stance on electricity deregulation. I also look at the classification of documents and location in each paper, while also making comparisons across paper. I then go on to examine the major themes and subthemes that emerged from my analysis. These include discourses of change, the public and the private, and the environment.

I should note two specific policy areas that I coded in the protocol but did not include in the discussion of themes. One is the tortuous tale of efforts to bring additional power to Vancouver Island, either by building more capacity on site or upgrading connections to the mainland. In some ways this presents as a

microcosm of the general discourse, reproducing many of the same themes at a more local level. The other issue surrounds BC Hydro's relationship with long-standing private power producers, Alcan (now RioTinto Alcan) and Teck-Cominco: both granted water rights to generate electricity in exchange for industrial development and both have sought to sell this electricity for profit rather than put it to industrial use. Doing justice to these narratives would require a study of some length in itself. Hence, given space restrictions, my focus here is on the discourse at the general level.

Figure 2.1: Coding Process

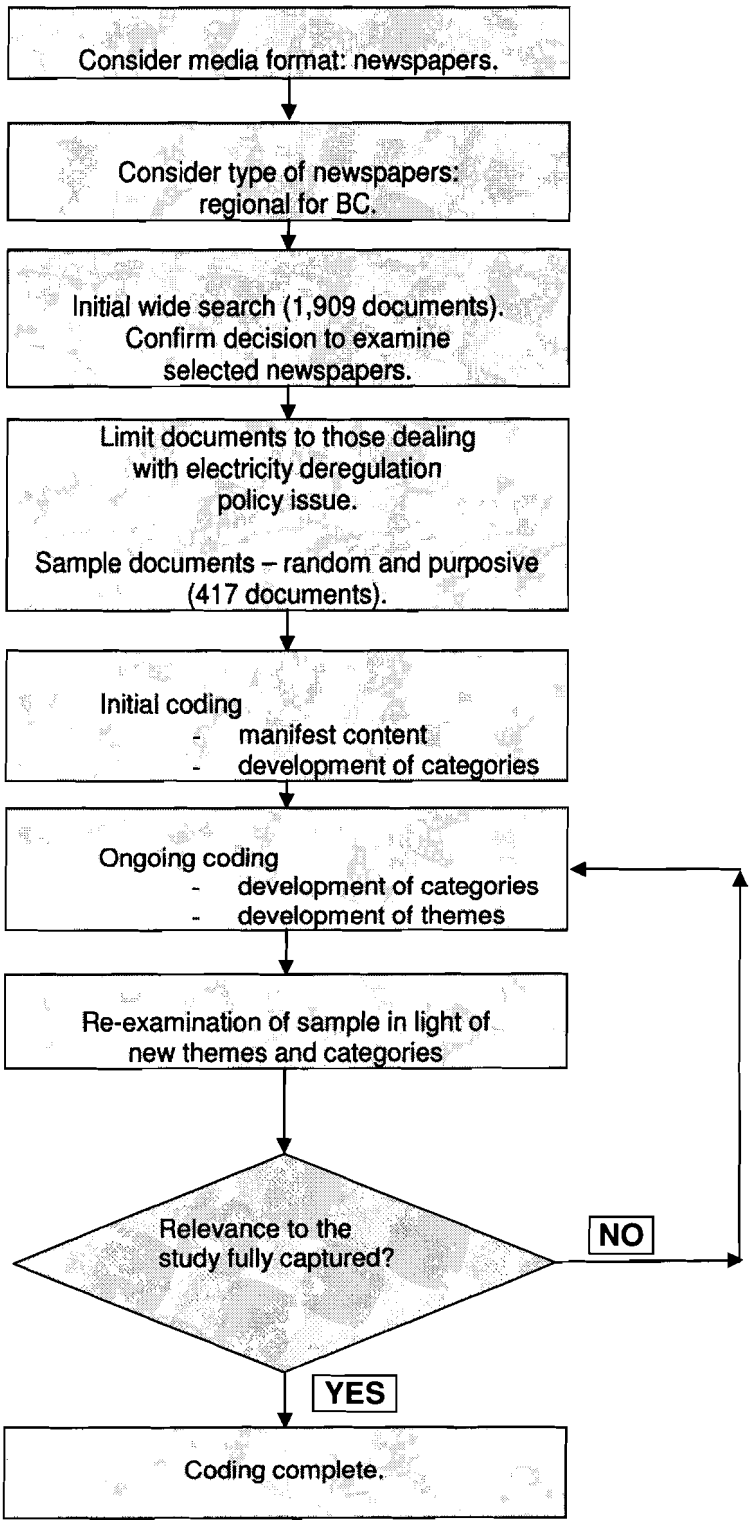

Table 2.1: Coding Protocol

Manifest Categories	**Latent Categories**		
Date; Title; Length; Author; Classification (news story, editorial, opinion editorial, letter, column), Topic; Location; Claims-makers and position on deregulation; Mention of deregulation/ privatization; Presentation of critique of energy policy specifically; Mention of problems in other jurisdictions; Mention of outsourcing to Accenture; Mention of severing of transmission system; Mention of alternatives for meeting increased power demands; Mention of lifting of export restrictions; Mention of links to continental policy/ NAFTA.	**Themes/Subthemes**		
	Need for change	*Public/private dichotomy*	*Environmental benefits/harm*
	Crisis; Need for energy self-sufficiency; Change as inevitable (progress); Nothing is changing (critics as fear-mongers); BC Hydro ain't broken, so don't fix it (economic/policy value of BC Hydro, current low rates, IPPs not up to job).	Public impotence vs. private efficacy (bureaucracy as impediment); Public system subject to political manipulation (unaccountable); Unquestioning faith in markets; Deregulation = lower prices/more choice/better service; David versus Goliath (the 800 lb gorilla); Jobs/development from IPPs; Deregulation = disaster (public giveaway to private sector, high rates BC Hydro paying, all new power required to come from IPPs); Value of BC Hydro; Deregulation undermines accountability; Slippery slope; Hidden agenda (ideologically driven); External puppet masters; Contradiction between conservation and exports.	Environmental links to deregulation; Green power is going to cost us but it's worth the price; Back to the 19th century; Environmentalists and deregulation.

NOTES

[1] See, for example, Foucault, 1980, pp. 104-105, 109-133, 151.

[2] Connections could also be made to Ulrich Beck's (1992) conceptualization of the "risk society," in which society is increasingly organized around risk that originates in modernity and that continually escapes quantification or control. In a self-referential process, modern society's attempts to control risk themselves lead iatrogenically to new and further risks—such as potentially catastrophic environmental threats—that can no longer be fully managed through the actuarial techniques of an earlier era. Certainly, the deregulatory frame creates risk while claiming to conquer it. Risks to supply posed by importations, lead in actuality to huge price risks from expensive private power, for example. And, as will be seen, a discourse of environmental responsibility and need to reduce environmental risks such as climate change is used to justify the development of private power. Regarding risks to the electricity system, whether perceived or "objective," I will contend that much of the deregulatory agenda is enacted in *spite of* rather than because of them. While it is impossible to know with certainty the subjective intentions of government decision-makers, I believe that the sheer implausibility of many arguments advanced on the side of the deregulatory agenda make it difficult to see these policies as a genuine attempt to reduce—or even manage—risk, either perceived or real.

[3] While such commonalities between these two theorists make them a useful pairing in which to ground the analysis embarked upon here, it is important to note also their differences and incompatibilities. Often considered a post-structuralist, Foucault eschews grand narratives, while his genealogical approach unpacks the "naturalness" of epistemological categories. Perhaps as a corollary of this, Foucault's thought tends toward a non-normative framework of analysis, which sees as problematic attempts to make an ultimate distinction between legitimate and illegitimate uses of power. Reconciling this stance with the politically engaged nature of his writing and praxis—which clearly sides with the "dominated" and "subjugated"—presents challenges for Foucault. Nonetheless, I believe prescriptive implications of a genealogical approach can be bracketed, without detracting from its value in analyzing the operations of power.

Bourdieu, on the other hand, does seek a reducible social experience. The effect of constructs such as habitus, fields and symbolic violence is to limit knowledge, to restrict access to a truth that, while not necessarily absolute, is to some sense external to social constrictions. The challenge for those studying such phenomena, then, is that they themselves are embedded in field and doxa. Reflexivity on the part of the researcher provides one means to, if not escape from the prison-house, at least to begin to reconstruct it from within.

[4] For a detailed analysis of how the corporate form is used to avoid personal responsibility see Glasbeek, 2002.

[5] Altheide (1996) lays out a 12-step process as follows: (1) Pursue a specific problem to be investigated (p.23). (2) Become familiar with the process and context of the information source (e.g., ethnographic studies of newspapers or television stations) (p.24). (3) Become familiar with several examples of relevant documents, noting particularly the format. Select a unit of analysis (e.g., each article), which may change (p.24). (4) List several items of categories (variables) to guide data collection and draft a protocol (p.25). (5) Test the protocol by collecting data from several documents (p.26). (6) Revise the protocol and select several additional cases to further refine the protocol (p.26). (7) Arrive at sampling rationale and strategy (p.32). (8) Collect the data, using preset codes, if appropriate, and many descriptive examples (p.37). (9) Perform data analysis, including conceptual refinement and data coding (p. 41). (10) Compare and contrast "extremes" and "key differences" within each category or item (p.41). (11) Combine the brief summaries with examples of the typical case as well as the extremes (p.41). (12) Integrate the findings with your interpretation and key concepts in another draft (p.44).

As I undertook a preliminary investigation prior to this study, I did not follow these steps to the letter. I believe that, given the centrality to this methodology of reflexivity and iteration, such an approach is not inconsistent with Altheide's process.

[6] For the purposes of this study, I defined *claims-maker* as an individual, group or organization whose opinion is referenced in the item.

[7] Newspapers are also a vehicle for another kind of content, of course, that being advertising, from which most commercial papers derive the bulk of their revenue. Advertising is clearly relevant to the messaging of claims-makers regarding electricity deregulation. For instance, BC Hydro spent $1.5 million on an advertising campaign in Fall of 2006, describing the "energy crisis" and the need to purchase power from private producers (Tieleman, 2006). While the role of advertising in the electricity deregulation discourse and its relation to reporting present a fertile ground for analysis, they are beyond the domain of this present study.

[8] I temper this and subsequent remarks with the recognition that locating a paper on a left-right continuum is problematic, given such constructions are highly influenced by the media themselves and thus exhibit circularity. Furthermore, my comments on the recognized political positioning of the papers should not be taken as an a priori judgment on the expected shape of the coverage of the issue under consideration or necessarily on the ability of claims-makers to speak through the papers. Such remarks suggest instead only tentative initial suppositions in the selection process.

[9] Reporting on British Columbia's hydro-electric utility used both *BC Hydro* (correct) and *B.C. Hydro* (incorrect). By searching for just *Hydro* both usages were captured (along with, also desired, references to hydro-electric power).

[10] In accord with Altheide's terminology, I use the term *document* to refer to all items included in the sample.

[11] Coding for already identified deregulatory measures allowed for the tracking of what was *not* said.

Chapter Three: Results

1. *Data Analysis*

Regarding the location of the documents coded within the paper, a majority of items in the Sun—52.3%—appeared in the *Business BC* section. This was followed by the letters/comment section[1] with 28.5% of documents. 16.1% appeared in the news section, and 3.0% were located in several other sections.[2] For the Colonist, most of the sample—50.2%—appeared in the letters section. 33.9% of documents were located in *Business*, 13.0% in *News* and five in *Capital Region*. (See Table 3.1.) 23.8% of coded items from the Sun and 15.3% of those in the Colonist appeared on the front page of their respective sections, suggesting that both papers feel this to be an issue of some import.[3]

Given that this issue has wide-ranging implications for all British Columbians, the Sun's construction of electricity deregulation as predominantly a business story is telling and seems consistent with the paper's aforementioned pro-business stance.[4] While the majority of documents classified as news reports in the Colonist appeared in the *Business* section, the greatest portion of the sample appeared in the letters/comment section, reflecting a considerably higher number of letters and opinion-editorials on the topic when compared to the Sun.

Table 3.1: Location of documents

Section	**Vancouver Sun** Total number (percentage)	**Times Colonist** Total number (percentage)
Business	123 (52.3%)	89 (33.9%)
Letters/Comment	67 (28.5%)	60 (50.2%)
News	38 (16.1%)	23 (13.0%)
Other/Local	7 (3.0%)	5 (2.8%)
Total	235 (100.0%)	177 (100.0%)

The majority of sample documents from the Sun—61.7%—I classified as news stories. In addition, 11.5% of items were columns, 10.6% letters, 8.9% opinion editorials, and 7.2% editorials. In the Colonist, news stories made up 45.2% of items from the sample, and 24.3% were letters, 14.1% opinion editorials, 10.7% columns and 5.6% were editorials. (See Table 3.2.) The distinction between such formatting categories is sometimes blurry and arguably is ultimately ideological. (See, for example, van Dijk, 1988).[5] However, I generally followed the classifications as defined by the paper, with a small number or exceptions that were classified by the Sun as columns but which in form more closely resembled news items.[6] The most notable difference in frequency of item type between the two papers was the number of letters in the sample. Letters composed 24.3% of the items from the Colonist, as opposed to only 10.6% of those from the Sun.

Table 3.2: Classification of Documents

Section	Vancouver Sun Total number (percentage)	Times Colonist Total number (percentage)
News stories	145 (61.7%)	80 (45.2%)
Columns	27 (11.5%)	43 (10.7%)
Letters	25 (10.6%)	25 (24.3%)
Opinion Editorials	21 (8.9%)	19 (14.1%)
Editorial	17 (7.2%)	10 (5.6%)
Total	235 (100.0%)	177 (100.0%)

The breakdown of claims-makers is detailed in Table 3.3, which indicates for the entire sample the number of claims-makers by category and the breakdown within that category in regard to stance on electricity deregulation. As expected, pro-deregulatory voices received considerably greater coverage than anti-deregulatory ones (by a ratio of 2.2:1 across the whole sample). Pro-deregulation voices comprised 59.7 % of the entire sample; neutral or mixed voices, 13.1%; and anti-deregulation voices 27.2%.[7]

Provincial Government (BC Liberal party) politicians or their spokespeople was the category of claims-maker appearing most frequently (13.2%), followed by private producers (12.1%), BC Hydro (11.9%) and public interest groups (11.6%). Government voices outnumbered those of opposition parties by 2.2 to 1. Not surprisingly, this group was almost universally in favour of deregulation.[8] BC Hydro and its staff were also largely for deregulation, senior management universally so. While environmental and public interest groups where largely

opposed, some were of a mixed opinion or in favour (60%, 27%, and 13% of the category respectively). Energy experts were largely in favour (67% of the category, compared with 5% mixed/neutral and 28% against). Readers (as measured through published letters to the editor)[9] were largely opposed (11% for, 15% mixed/neutral, 75% opposed),[10] particularly so in the Colonist (8% for, 13% mixed/neutral, 79% opposed), where much of the informed critique of deregulation was found in the letters.

A marked absence was electricity workers (either those work who work for BC Hydro or for private producers). No workers were quoted and no direct reference was made to the opinions of workers. Unions were represented but only made up 2.5% of claims-makers. Local government was also notably low (3.5%), especially salient given the potential impact on communities from the development of numerous localized power projects. Similarly, local residents[11] composed only 1.2% of claims-makers. First Nations—a group which tended to be talked about more than talked to—made up a mere 0.7% of claims-makers. In many areas where private power projects are planned, First Nations are the primary local residents, often having a close connection to the land, fish and wildlife that will be disturbed. Hence, it appears that the voices of those who in general stand to be impacted most by the government's electricity plans were the ones heard least.

Table 3.4 details the distribution of claims-makers by paper. As predicted, the preference for pro-deregulatory voices was exhibited more strongly in the Sun than in the Colonist. The ratio of pro to anti was 3.1:1 for the Sun and 1.5:1

for the Colonist. For the Sun, the breakdown was 65.2% pro, 13.6% neutral/mixed, and 21.3% opposed; for the Colonist: 51.9% pro, 12.5% neutral/mixed, and 35.7% opposed. Other notable differences include the amount of quotation given to government and opposition politicians (3.6:1 in the Sun, 1.3:1 in the Colonist). Editorials in the Sun where universally in favour of a deregulatory electricity agenda (94% pro, 6% mixed/neutral, 0% opposed). In the one example I coded as mixed/neutral, the editors took issue with the 2007 Energy Plan for placing restrictions on coal. No criticism from a progressive perspective was evidenced. The editors of the Colonist, by contrast, exhibited a more varied opinion: 38% pro, 13% mixed/neutral, 50% opposed.

Table 3.3: Claims-maker type and position on deregulation—entire sample

Type of Claims-maker	Total Number	Position on Deregulation		
		For (%)	Neutral/ Mixed Opinion (%)	Against (%)
Government politicians and spokespeople	**96**	99%	1%	0%
Opposition politicians (former opposition MLAs, Dissident MLAs)	**43**	2%	21%	77%
Local Government	**26**	42%	8%	50%
BC Hydro (or BCTC) executives, spokespeople or representatives	**86**	79%	17%	3%
Unions and labour associations	**18**	0%	0%	100%
Public interest groups/ NGOs	**84**	13%	27%	60%
Energy "Experts"	**57**	67%	5%	28%
Task Force Members	**12**	100%	0%	0%
IPPs and IPP Associations	**88**	98%	2%	0%
Industry groups/ industrial users	**31**	61%	6%	32%
First Nations	**5**	100%	0%	0%
Utility Regulators—BCUC and Other regulatory bodies (NEB)	**6**	67%	17%	17%
Businesses/ Business groups	**31**	97%	0%	3%
Residents	**9**	0%	56%	44%
Editorial Board	**24**	75%	8%	17%
Readers (letter to editors)	**55**	11%	15%	75%
Columnists	**26**	81%	12%	8%
Other	**28**	29%	68%	4%
TOTAL	**725**	**59.7%**	**13.1%**	**27.2%**

Table 3.4: Claims-maker type and position on deregulation by paper

	VANCOUVER SUN				TIMES COLONIST			
Type of Claims-maker	**Total Num-ber**	**Position on Deregulation**			**Total Num-ber**	**Position on Deregulation**		
		For (%)	**Neutral / Mixed (%)**	**Agai-nst (%)**		**For (%)**	**Neutral / Mixed (%)**	**Agai-nst (%)**
Government politicians and spokespeople	**62**	98%	2%	0%	**34**	100%	0%	0%
Opposition politicians (former opposition MLAs, Dissident MLAs)	**17**	6%	18%	76%	**26**	0%	23%	77%
Local Government	**9**	22%	0%	78%	**17**	53%	12%	35%
BC Hydro (or BCTC) executives, spokespeople or representatives	**59**	76%	22%	2%	**27**	85%	7%	7%
Unions and labour associations	**12**	0%	0%	100%	**6**	0%	0%	100%
Public interest groups/ NGOs	**48**	17%	31%	52%	**36**	8%	22%	69%
Energy "Experts"	**41**	76%	2%	22%	**16**	44%	13%	44%
Task Force Members	**11**	100%	0%	0%	**1**	100%	0%	0%
IPPs and IPP Associations	**57**	100%	0%	0%	**31**	94%	6%	0%
Industry groups/ industrial users	**20**	60%	5%	35%	**11**	64%	9%	27%
First Nations	**1**	100%	0%	0%	**4**	100%	0%	0%
Utility Regulators—BCUC and Other regulatory bodies (NEB)	**4**	75%	25%	0%	**2**	50%	0%	50%
Businesses/ Business groups	**21**	95%	0%	5%	**10**	100%	0%	0%
Residents	**7**	0%	71%	29%	**2**	0%	0%	100%
Editorial Board	**16**	94%	6%	0%	**8**	38%	13%	50%
Readers (letter to editors)	**17**	18%	18%	65%	**38**	8%	13%	79%
Columnists	**9**	67%	11%	22%	**17**	88%	12%	0%
Other	**17**	18%	76%	6%	**11**	45%	55%	0%
TOTAL	**428**	**65%**	**14%**	**21%**	**297**	**52%**	**12%**	**36%**

2. *Frames and Themes*

Having considered quantitative results, I move now to an analysis of the emergent semantic content. The dominant construction of deregulation—what I term the deregulatory frame[12]—exhibits a clear overall narrative: Our electricity system is under threat. The public system is not capable of responding. The private sector will save us. The arc of this master narrative is sometimes explicit, often implicit. While there is allusion to alleged problems with the public system, there is little by way of direct consideration of why the private rather than the public sector is best positioned to address ostensible supply problems or to plan for future electricity needs. Once the problem is identified, deregulation (which is infrequently actually referred to as such) is simply presented as the natural and inevitable road.

At the same time, I unearthed contesting constructions of deregulation. This counter-deregulatory frame is less well-defined and appears less frequently. It centres on the effectiveness of public power and on deregulation as leading to the loss of public control of the electricity supply, resulting in increased prices, worsening service and social, economic and environmental costs. Unlike its deregulatory counterpart, the counter-deregulatory frame was often manifest explicitly, which may result from its subordinate position: because its claims are much less inculcated into general understanding, they must be explicit in order to be seen as coherent. As these narrative frames unfold, numerous themes emerge that lend the narratives rhetorical force. While by no means an exhaustive account, I detail here the major themes I observed.[13]

In the articulation of these themes and subthemes claims-makers invoke various constructions of risk. Theoreticians of governmentality in the risk society point to the adaptation of actuarial methods of risk classification in the (reflexive) construction of populations and identities. (See, e.g., Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; O'Malley, 1996; and Parnaby, 2006.) I believe that risk in the deregulatory frame constitutes a form of governmentality, but one where risk as an absolute assumes prominence over actuarial assessment. Proponents[14] of deregulation frequently construct risk such that, paradoxically, its strength as a driver of change derives from transcending probabilistic calculation. Risk escapes its classical epistemological boundaries, ceasing to function as a rationalistic assessment of possibility and instead becoming a kind of absolute, a certain uncertainty whose very link to the unknown serves only to lessen its indeterminacy. In so doing, it becomes a disguised subjectivity, deepening the existential fear induced along with the demand that *all* available measures to avoid it—without the requirement of rational justification. In blocking more extensive consideration of the outcomes of electricity deregulation, particularly as weighed against alternative policy options, proponents' construction of risk functions as a form of symbolic violence, casting deregulation as the only available, and hence "natural" option.

Those opposed to deregulation also appeal to risk in terms of an absolute danger (and also thereby exercise a form of symbolic violence), here one that is associated with making—rather than not making—deregulatory changes. However, opponents also at times invoke a classical construction of risk as a

semantic device for the rational calculation of possible outcomes. Perhaps ironically, given the links between governmentality and actuarial calculation, it is opponents who present a more fully developed probabilistic analysis. This divide is fluid, however, with both groups utilizing each (and still other) conceptions in various contexts.

The neoliberal governmentality at work under the deregulatory frame links to a responsibilization and individuation of energy policy. Analogy can be made to Garland's analysis of the individuation of the public good in contemporary crime control strategies as a disaggregated symbolic victim.[15] The electricity system no longer appears as an anonymous public service but is personified, adopting the characteristics of the idealized neoliberal citizen—self-sufficiency, responsibility, independence and prudence—notions that are themselves grounded in the omni-presence of risk. This process projects both onto human beings as individuals (regarding specific measures people should take to reduce their consumption and environmental impact, for example, as discussed under *Deregulation and Environmental Benefits/Harm*, pp. 111-133) and onto the state as a representative collective individual (one that must strive to preserve our collective self-sufficiency).

It also is manifest through the private producer as idealized corporate citizen, a construction that recurs across subthemes. Continuing the comparison to Garland's analysis of crime control, the public system now appears as the individualized monster, preying on the idealized "victim" that is the IPP—"bullying" and stifling it into submission. Analogous to Garland's "criminology of

the other" (2001, p. 137), in which the offender is demonized in the furtherance or retributive punishment, BC Hydro is made to embody popular fears and resentments about, in this case, the negative effects of "big government" and state collective action. (See *The Public/private dichotomy* below, pp. 74-110.)

A. We (Do Not) Need Change

A pervasive theme on the part of advocates of deregulation is the need for change. Proponents argue that the status quo is untenable and that change is both necessary and inevitable. Opponents counter that the current system serves us well and adaptations to changing needs and conditions are best met within it. Claims-makers on both sides ground their appeals in constructions of risk. I discuss below the major subthemes under the rubric of change. I begin with those adopted by proponents and then consider those of opponents.

i) Crisis: proponents

For proponents, the risk of maintaining the present course becomes sufficiently grave that it constitutes a *crisis*.[16] The language of crisis is most prevalent around the release of the Task Force reports and in lead up to the 2007 Energy Plan. The cause of this putative crisis is an increasing inability to meet our own electricity needs and subsequent reliance on imported power. References to this alleged deficit—normally given as in the order of 10 to 15 percent—were ubiquitous. Here are just a few examples:

> On average, B.C. is now importing about 10 per cent of its electricity—enough to power roughly 500,000 homes for a year. (VS104)[17]

> British Columbia is becoming increasingly dependent on electricity imports from Alberta and the United States, relying on power from sources outside the province to provide about 10 per cent of B.C.'s annual needs. (VS95)
>
> Though we in B.C. once anticipated that we could export our surplus power, we have come to rely on imports for 10 per cent of our annual needs. (TC96)
>
> A decade ago the province was self-sustaining but is now dependent on imported U.S. electricity for about 15 per cent of annual supply. (VS171)
>
> The key goal of the new plan will be to achieve energy self-sufficiency as soon as possible, likely 10 years. That means replacing the 10 to 12 per cent of power currently imported with home-grown electricity. (TC165)
>
> About 14 per cent of B.C.'s annual electricity supply is purchased in the U.S.—largely because B.C. has not added a major new power source since the Revelstoke Dam came on-stream in 1984. (TC135).
>
> I don't think I want to be tied to imports for 12 per cent of our energy like we are this year. I think to be perfectly honest that's nuts because it holds us ransom—maybe not today but at some point in time. (VS131)

As a result, "B.C. is on the verge of losing our electricity independence" (VS23) and "by the end of the decade BC Hydro estimates we will no longer have the capacity to generate enough electricity to meet our own needs" (VS138).

Ominous language prevails as proponents presage threats to the affordability, reliability and security of British Columbia's electricity supply. "Implementing energy policy now the critical task" (VS63) asserts one headline, as demand threatens to outstrip supply. "The consequences of standing still are dire," (TC33) we are told by the CEO of a private producer. Unless something is done, we will face a supply shortage that will lead to grave financial costs, a fearful future of "crisis years" that "could leave taxpayers with an additional $1.1-billion bill" (VS104). A private producer warns that "critical electricity shortages have 'become the norm'" and that British Columbia can expect to spend at least

$400 million a year on electricity imports for the next decade—with costs reaching far higher during crisis years" (VS104). According to the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce, "British Columbia risks an electricity crunch that could leave business and household consumers at the mercy of the volatile[18] North American spot market within five years" (VS25). As a result, "customers will face significant rate increases" (VS23). Bob Elton, CEO of BC Hydro, voices such concerns:

> B.C. could be importing as much as 45 per cent of its electricity from spot-trading markets in Alberta and the Pacific Northwest within 20 years—leaving the province's residents and industries increasingly vulnerable to price volatility and supply risk. (TC134)

The result is that "we will be forced, therefore, to pay a much higher premium for imported power in coming years, or to live with brown-outs, or quite possibly to suffer both" (TC129).

The dire forecast—from proponents inside and outside of the media—continues, threatening the foundations of our economy and even our ability to control our destiny. The consequences are an "economic bombshell" that threatens our very way of life. The editors of the Sun warn that "any dependency on external power generation can lead not only to inconvenience and expense for consumers, but also sabotage the economy" (VS132). A background to the 2006 tender call states that "in a competitive, ever-changing global economy where energy will become more expensive and scarce, electricity security is really about helping to ensure future generations enjoy our current standard of living" (VS140). And when "BC Hydro president and CEO Bob Elton were [sic]

asked to discuss whether or not British Columbia was in charge of its own energy future. The short answer was no, not entirely" (VS104).

In response urgent action is needed, requiring "tough choices" (TC130) and "hard decisions" (TC5).[19] "B.C. needs to act now to turn the situation around" urges Bob Elton (VS140). Moreover, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Minister Neufeld states:

> When we see that in 2010 if you had all the generators working as hard as they could and we'd still be out of electricity, that tells me we better produce something soon.... That's not very far in the future. (TC5)

The result is that "somebody needs to ramrod some fairly urgent action on this front," exclaims columnist Les Leyne (TC131). "[T]he biggest risk is to do nothing. The status quo is not an option" (VS200).

Thus, our alleged failure to produce sufficient domestic electricity and reliance on imported power creates a crisis sufficient that change can be demanded without further justification. Stripped of its aetiological complexity—and couched in the language of fear—risk amplified to the point of crisis enables proponents to demand change on the basis of simple platitudes. Minister Neufeld merely tells us that "B.C. will be forced to buy electricity on continental markets—at volatile market prices—unless it adds capacity and stability" (VS37). "Stability" trumps "volatility." But of course prices that are stable but high, in fact, may be preferable to ones that are volatile but, on average, low. The possibility of a rational calculus that places a finite and calculable value on stability is precluded, however.

Likewise, "self-sufficiency" is presented as a self-evident "advantage"—one that we risk losing: "The main reason for asserting control over Hydro is the

paramount goal...of regaining self-sufficiency in electricity, an advantage that was lost around the turn of the century" (TC131). The only explanation why self-sufficiency offers such an advantage is a negative one, the spectre of absolute risk, which presents as potentially cataclysmic:

> We buy most of [the electricity we import] from south of the border, and when they get to the point where they are consuming all of that electricity themselves and perhaps they haven't built any new generation, they're not going to sell to us. (Minister Neufeld, VS131)[20]

A prospect as stark as running out of power simply overshadows the possibility of a cost-benefit analysis of electricity importation and its alternatives.

Whereas quantifications feature as part of the threatened consequences of inaction, the fuller analysis required to render them meaningful—the means of calculation, cost of implementation, and links to the broader context—do not. Projections by proponents sum only the benefits while ignoring the costs. They attempt to put a price on the cost of power we will need to import should we continue on the present course, yet fail to tally the corresponding costs of planned "self-sufficiency." Hence, we have a choice between two—and only two—options: the government deregulatory agenda or the status quo (a path to catastrophe). While figures for the latter are presented as a kind of opportunity cost (even though in this false dichotomy no other options are presented)—figures for the former are completely absent.[21] In this way, the parameters of allowable thought and speech within the media representation are shaped.

When one begins to examine the actual costs of the other side of the equation—the costs of private power—the results are striking.[22] Within the timeframe under consideration, the government issued three major tender calls

for private power, the most significant of which was the 2006 call.[23] According to BC Hydro, this one call alone resulted in a commitment to purchase $9.6 billion of electricity from private producers by 2006 and $15.6 billion by 2051 (BC Hydro, 2006b, p.31).[24] BC Hydro's own figures indicate that for the 90 percent of this power that will come from private "large projects," BC Hydro is paying a total price that is 75 percent higher than market rates (BC Hydro, 2006b)—market rates that, as predicted by the American Energy Information Administration, are expected to remain flat over the next two decades (Calvert, 2007b, p.90). Unlike the extensive coverage of the "energy crisis," however, reporting on the Energy Purchase Agreement process was almost non-existent.[25]

For a striking illustration of the costs of the private power purchases BC Hydro is making, consider that figures from the corporation's 2008 Annual Report show that BC Hydro is spending $477 million annually on power from private IPPs and $318 million for electricity from its own facilities (p.56). This means that acquiring the 13 percent of BC Hydro's electricity that is now supplied through private producers costs the Crown utility 1.5 times what it does to produce the remaining 87 percent from its own capacity.[26] For the largest set of private purchases to date, the 2006 call, the cost per unit of electricity from BC Hydro's own dams was roughly nine percent of that of the power it was purchasing from private producers (Calvert, 2007b, p.79). This disparity arises because BC Hydro owns its generating assets, amortizing them over time, and operates them on a cost-of-production basis. The result is that electricity produced by BC Hydro is extraordinarily cheap, when compared with the private power it is purchasing.[27]

Shaffer (2007) has analyzed the cost of the government's 2007 energy plan, specifically the cost of precluding imports and making mandatory purchases of new power from private producers.[28] He concludes that, by privileging energy self-sufficiency and insurance power through the purchase of power from IPPs over a rational cost-benefit analysis, the plan needlessly increases the cost of electricity for consumers, while greatly diminishing the value of publicly-owned reservoirs. Instead of putting in place a policy of buying from private producers to the extent it is economic and reasonable, it instead issues the dictate to buy no matter what the impact or cost and thus ignores the ability of BC Hydro to make cost effective purchase of power.[29] The result is that, by one estimate, self-sufficiency will cost an additional $160 million per year. The further requirement to add 3,000 GWh insurance power will lead to uneconomic acquisitions that potentially double the cost of the self-sufficiency policy (Shaffer, 2007, p.4). Hence, a rationalistic cost-benefit analysis yields results completely excluded from consideration within the deregulatory frame.

Requiring BC Hydro to purchase power from private producers regardless of need (and to the exclusion of all other options) undermines one of the innate advantages of a hydro-electric system: that production can be timed. This presents particular opportunities for strategic importing and exporting of electricity (a practice known as "arbitraging"). At night, when loads are light, BC Hydro can purchase cheap power from neighbouring thermal plants that must run continually. In spring, when prices for hydro exports are low, it often makes sense to import power and maintain levels in reservoirs to be used for generation

when prices are higher.[30] BC Hydro's own figures (from the 2006 Integrated Energy Plan) indicate how effective this policy can be, resulting in estimated savings of $180 to $280 million over self-sufficiency through IPPs and $550 million to $650 million over self-sufficiency plus insurance power (Shaffer, 2007, p.8). According to Shaffer, the issue in reality is not one of *supply* but of *price*: Is it better to rely on market prices to back up energy demand or on long-term fixed contracts? Is it better to source the planned additional power from 100 to 200 run-of-the-river sites or from imports? (Shaffer, 2007, p.10)

Therefore, consideration of the cost of acting—rather than just the cost of *not* acting—dissolves the attempt by proponents to take the risk out of risk and present one course of action as justified a priori. Price certainty through long-term contracts does not eliminate economic risk—rather it merely changes its nature. The question now becomes: What is the risk of entering into long-term high-priced contracts as measured against the projected market price of electricity over their term?[31] By lifting restrictions on exporting power while simultaneously requiring the purchase of surplus electricity at projected above-market prices, the government's energy plan amounts to a policy of acquiring new private power resources for export while transferring the associated risk to BC Hydro and its customers. Thus in the name of eliminating risk and averting crisis, the deregulatory frame instead creates public risk (in its non-absolutist, probabilistic form) while subsidizing private profit.

According to Mary Douglas, "risks are identified and discursively framed within a universe that is inevitably moralized and politicized" (Parnaby, 1992,

p.18). In the deregulatory frame, the need for change in the face of crisis takes on a normative shading. Notions of *self-sufficiency*, *independence*, and *responsibility* as moral virtues pervade the sample and connect to a process of neoliberal responsibilization.[32] Now we are "consuming more than we produce, and it's prudent that we generate the electricity that we consume domestically and to do that has consequences" (TC133). Until our fall from grace, "B.C. [had] long been admired for its abundant hydroelectric assets" (TC33). Now we must turn in shame to others for help as British Columbia transforms "from a prosperous exporter into a place that can't get by without buying extra electricity from our neighbours" (VS162), having lost our "once-vaunted self-sufficiency in electricity" (VS162). Despairing of the situation, an IPP representative states that, "we just shake our heads. I think for the sake of B.C.'s own energy security we shouldn't be basing an essential service like electricity on imports" (VS107).

Given the extent of the perils resulting from importing power and the normative imperative to avoid them, obtaining the virtue of provincial self-sufficiency through the provincially-owned public system might seem a logical policy option. Instead, it is eschewed as proponents' calls in both papers echo the official policy of barring any new public production in favour of the private sector.[33] This is accepted despite that the problems to be avoided—the high prices, insecurity and unreliability of foreign supply—only take on such qualities when viewed against the superior performance of BC Hydro.[34]

A further non sequitur in the media claims of proponents is that, while concerns for energy security necessitate turning to private producers for new

power, actual energy self-sufficiency is undermined by the lifting of restrictions on private producers exporting power from British Columbia. In 2004, the government removed the requirement for private companies to obtain an energy removal certificate to export power.[35] Once, the Energy Purchase Agreement contracts expire, private producers will be under no obligation to sell their power within British Columbia and the "non-discriminatory" BC Transmission Corporation will be obliged to facilitate direct exports—should private producers prefer that to indirect exporting via BC Hydro's subsidized purchases of generation in the name of "surplus" power. The billions of dollars that BC ratepayers will direct to private producers will acquire no equity in any of the facilities and no guarantee of access to electricity over the long run. Hence, appeals to "controlling our destiny" seem chimerical.

In fact, symbolic violence is powerful enough that this contradiction almost can be stated outright. Minister Neufeld at one point admits that "self-sufficiency" is really about exports: "Neufeld also confirmed earlier government commitments to make the province independent of electricity imports—and thus in a position to market surplus power at a profit to the United States—by 2016" (VS189). Bob Elton makes a similar admission: "In time, the combination of these renewable energy sources, and changing our habits toward greater conservation, will allow us to become a net exporter, not importer, of clean energy to our Pacific neighbours" (VS200). It does not take a great leap of logic to see that if this state is reached solely through private power, then BC Hydro will in effect become an export service for private producers. And since the prices paid for exported

private power likely will be considerably in excess of the prevailing market rates at which it will be sold, it also will be a process of subsidization.

Further de facto admissions appear not in the context of "crisis" but rather of hyping business opportunities. In this context, the rhetoric of self-sufficiency often stands side-by-side with the business potential of exporting power into the North American market. I believe that the habitus of business reporting that presents business export opportunities as an unconditional good (unlike the ever-increasing import-dependency that is the alleged inevitable result of electricity trading in the public sector) means that the same document can champion export potential while simultaneously reproducing the rhetoric of self-sufficiency, all without feeling any need to address the innate contradiction. In the following exemplar, the president of the newly-formed BCTC tacitly admits that adding private production is really adding power for export:

> Over the next 10 years, he says, the over-all market will grow by at least 30,000 megawatts, even though B.C.'s demand is projected to grow only one per cent annually....
>
> Selling surplus power is a way of keeping over-all costs down: B.C.'s electricity sales are based on production costs rather than what the market will bear, and selling into the power-hungry U.S. centres to the south is a way of keeping costs down. (VS95)

An implicit admission of BC Hydro as a clearing-house for sales to U.S. can be seen in the following example, in which the chair of a private wind power project (Stothart Group) "described the potential for wind power in B.C. as 'tremendous' and said he has been encouraging B.C. Hydro's power trading subsidiary Powerex to get behind the project because it could increase the amount of electricity that B.C. can sell on to U.S. markets" (VS92).[36]

In the example below, we see "self-sufficiency" not as a strategy for avoiding crisis, but paradoxically as the exporting of private power into the U.S. market. First, private power appears as the key to "self-sufficiency":

> The company [Katabatic Power]—with offices in Richmond and San Francisco—wants to develop its power "as fast as we can" and believes it can help B.C. become self-sufficient in electricity and trade power into U.S. market. (VS195)

Then, in the same story, we learn that fostering "self-sufficiency" means fostering private power for export:

> In meetings last year and this year before the California public utilities commission, Katabatic supported a proposal by Pacific Gas and Electric Company to spend $14 million on a study looking at opportunities to buy green or renewable power from sources in B.C.[37]
>
> That proposal was approved late last week by the California commission,[38] and comes shortly after the B.C. government announced a goal of making the province energy self-sufficient by 2016 using green or zero-emission power—and developing surplus power for export....
>
> "Obviously BC Hydro is the logical off-taker for the first few phases of the project, and maybe the whole thing," [Katabatic chief operating officer] Raymond said. "As much as they are interested in getting wind power to get to self-sufficiency under their mandate, we are happy to help in any way we can as fast as we can." (VS195)

So the most desirable option for the company, as presented in this media story, is to have BC Hydro buy their power. The IPP-only "self-sufficiency" directive guarantees a market with a high price and a long-term contract, after all. If BC Hydro does not purchase it, then the company will look to sell the power directly to California. Given that the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (California PG&E) is willing to spend $14 million evaluating green power options from British Columbia, the prospects seem good.

In another business-oriented example, the president of Plutonic Power is unreserved in his view of BC Hydro as providing an export service. The assumed

desirability and inherent virtue of private production persists even when its profits derive from dependency on the public system:

> I'm excited because B.C. Hydro has the ability to contract with us and other renewable power developers and package our product, green electricity, into a better product for California.
>
> For the Californian utilities to come up here and try to do a deal with 40 different companies like Plutonic, well, the logistics of it would be unbearable. (VS208)

There is no recognition by proponents that BC Hydro should receive a benefit for providing such an apparently valuable service. Considering the above-market prices paid for IPP-generated electricity in the electricity calls to date, it would be difficult to claim that the benefit is reflected in those contract prices. When it comes to the ambitions of private producers to export for profit energy produced with British Columbia's resources, the normative admonitions similar to those that framed the call to turn to these corporations in the first place were completely absent. The picture of the Liberal's energy policy of "self-sufficiency" and (crisis-aversion) that now comes into focus is of mandating excessive purchases of private power at excessive prices from companies that otherwise would have difficulty accessing U.S. markets and then selling that power into those markets at a loss.[39]

I believe the absence within the deregulatory frame (and, as will be seen, limited critique within the counter-deregulatory frame) of acknowledgement of the policy as a scheme for facilitating and publicly subsidizing the export of private power is particularly salient given its striking semantic inversion. I contend that accomplishing such a reversal is indicative of the power of the symbolic violence

of neoliberalism—manifest in a taken-for-granted superiority of privatization—to restrict and redefine the universe of possibility.

ii) Change as inevitability

Normative responsibilization is also prominent in a supplementary pro-deregulation discursive strategy: *change as inevitability.* Global transformations are underway. The CEO of a large international energy company (Centrica) opines that "the continent is rapidly moving towards a North American energy grid and the biggest threat to consumers could be regulatory constraints on provincial and national markets... [E]nergy market deregulation and competition is [sic] an unstoppable international trend" (VS28)." As Mark Jaccard puts it,

> [y]ou see it clearly today in Europe with Electricite de France. While most Europeans are willing to vertically deintegrate, Electricite de France is dragging its feet, but slowly making changes in order to keep access to export markets.... What everybody else is trying to say, mainly the U.S.—and we need them, we need that trading power—is to break transmission off into a separate corporation.[40] (VS34)

"Everybody" is of a consensus. B.C. must read the writing on the wall and deregulate its electricity supply. This inevitability of change connects to notions of progress. We are being left behind (leading to the aforementioned grim consequences):

> While the North American economy and the continental energy market continue to evolve, B.C.'s electricity industry has not kept pace... Little has changed since the 1960s and the birth of BC Hydro. We need a forward-looking plan of action and restructuring. The consequences of standing still are dire. (Fauzia Lalani, CEO of Utilicorps Networks Canada, VS23)

Note the use of the passive voice, which depicts the previous policy choices as unrelated to intentional decision-making. For better or worse, the choice not to

add further publically-owned generating capacity is a policy decision. Yet such policy deliberations are simply excluded from the frame. Likewise, the trajectory of global energy markets is determined by force of nature. There is no holding back the tide.

The following exemplar, a commentary on the release of the energy plan, is representative of business reporting on the inevitability of deregulation. The author is the most prevalent reporter on electricity deregulation in the sample, Scott Simpson.[41]

> Gordon Campbell's opponents might not want to hear it, but opening the door to higher electricity prices and breaking up Hydro isn't some manifestation of a premier's ideologically driven vision for minimal government.
>
> Even state ownership-loving Quebec, which boasts the cheapest network of publicly owned hydro facilities in North America, has conceded that the era of hydro mega projects is over.[42]
>
> Developed nations around the world came to that conclusion in the 1980s, and it was considered several times in this province by the former New Democrat government....
>
> B.C. is out of step with powerful changes in technology, market dynamics and public sentiment that have transformed global electricity markets since the 1980s, former B.C. Utilities Commission chair Mark Jaccard warned the government in a series of studies. (VS65)

Moralizing language appears again, as British Columbians remain blissfully unaware of the problem, immersed in comforting myths. "The B.C. public is not well-informed on energy issues," says an energy consultancy group (TC127). As Gordon Campbell puts it,

> [o]ne of the challenges is you have to lay out the facts for people in what is in effect an environment of myth. The myth of British Columbia is we have so much power we don't know what to do with it, and why don't we do whatever we feel like with it? That is not the case. (VS37)

Bob Elton echoes these sentiments:

> "We have a province where people have never had to think about electricity...We need to change that view." British Columbians are beset by myths, including that "B.C. is an electricity-rich province" or that "BC Hydro is profitable and should not be restructured." (VS188)

Similarly, Minister Neufeld states that "[e]nergy in B.C. has traditionally been abundant and cheap, and consumers have had no reason other than personal conviction to change the way they use it" (TC5), referencing the view of the Task Force's Interim Report that "in British Columbia's current regulated, average-cost-based system, customers do not see price signals that would encourage a change in energy-consuming behaviour" (TC5).

When British Columbians do think of our power supply it is with an unwarranted self-satisfaction in its assumed abundance: "Smug British Columbians could be in for a shock as our energy-rich province becomes a net power importer," say the editors of the Sun (VS135).[43] As Minister Neufeld puts it, "For the past 40 years, we have enjoyed the luxury of generating all the electricity we needed in B.C." (VS166). Self-sufficiency achieved through a purely public system that does not depend on private production for its supply is a "luxury," one that we have taken for granted as we have become oblivious to its increasing supposed inadequacies. We have been "lulled" into thinking that "our province has an infinite electrical supply. Now, with the power needs of a growing population, we have little choice" (TC67). Hence, British Columbians need to be shaken from complacency and recognize the impending change. The breaking up of BC Hydro and a shift to new private production presents an inevitable course. Why this is so—why our ostensible problems could not be met through a

public system—is not addressed. While we are "nearing a historic crossroads" (VS164), it seems only one road is available.

At the same time as changes are justified on the basis of the need to avoid the perils of high priced electricity imports, we see under the subtheme of inevitable change media claims of impending and unavoidable increases to the cost of electricity. "No one wants to see increased hydro bills. But a hike is inevitable," pronounces a Vancouver Sun editor (VS31). The British Columbia Chamber of Commerce states that "anyone who thought we would have maintained the same rates forever was living in a dream world anyway" (VS67). Adding production, whether private or public, will incur costs, reporters and proponents tell us. The result is increased prices:

> Electricity generated in new facilities will cost more to produce. ... Any time you build something today, as compared to 1970, obviously the cost is going to be greater. (Craig McInnis, VS49)
>
> Whatever we buy or build in this cost environment we are in now is going to cost more than what we are currently supplying ... [which] was built over a 40- or 50-year period [and] is paid for.... Now what we're dealing with is today's construction costs, today's labour costs and today's interest rate and it's more expensive. (Bob Elton, VS151)
>
> It has to do with new generation. The cost of new generation is high, and obviously rates are going to have to go up. (Minister Neufeld said, VS228)

Any possibility that new capacity added through the public sector would offer notable cost savings that could defray price increases—through access to lower interest rates, economies of scale, or the lack of a requirement to include a profit on revenues– was not addressed.[44] Moreover, the issue of how ownership itself affects pricing goes wholly unacknowledged in the deregulatory frame. According to the editors of the Sun,

> "[s]upporters of B.C. Hydro's status quo claim that prices will rise only if Victoria decides to privatize it. That's nonsense. Whether any given aspect of the company is in public or private hands, lenders will have to be paid for the money they lend" (VS59).

The critical difference is that, while either way "lenders will have to be paid for the money they lend," in the case of public power rate-payers are acquiring equity in their facility. In the case of private power, rate-payers are only ever acquiring electricity, while providing the revenue for private producers to acquire all the equity in the facilities.[45] As mentioned, the effect of this distinction can be seen in the difference between the cost of electricity from BC Hydro's (publicly-owned) facilities and the price paid to private producers for new power.[46]

Ironically, any implicit recognition by proponents of the long-term economic value of British Columbia's investment in a hydro-electric system was made only in the context of justifying inescapably higher prices. For instance, reporter Scott Simpson states that

> [t]he technology to develop small-scale generators has steadily improved since the 1980s, accompanied by a steady reduction in the cost of the electricity it produces. But it's still two to four times as expensive as B.C.'s existing hydro system. As a result, over the next decade electricity prices will rise by at least 50 per cent as new sources are added and their costs blended into the price of electricity coming from the hydro reservoirs. (VS61)

Yet in the same document he favourably references Jaccard's claims that "improved technology makes it possible for small operators to provide electricity at a reasonable price," hence justifying a "[m]ovement towards competitive generation markets in British Columbia" as "the most likely scenario for this decade" (VS61)—a two to four-fold resulting increase constituting a "reasonable

price." It would appear that the inevitability of significant price increases makes them reasonable by definition.

While proponents made no direct recognition of the possibility of increased prices as not purely the result of greater costs of production but as a necessary prerequisite to the economic viability of IPPs, they did at times call for higher rates in order to attract investment: "In B.C., consumers are going to have to be persuaded that the long term supply gap will require higher rates to fill" (VS135). Taken together with the claims of deregulation as necessary to avoid price increases, it is little exaggeration to say that we have reached a level of Orwellian doublespeak: by raising prices, we lower them. That neither reporters nor proponents address the seemingly blatant inconsistency of this media message is indicative of the power of symbolic violence of the deregulatory frame.

iii) Nothing is changing

The strong cross-sector opposition to the Task Force's recommendations found under the *don't fix what isn't broken* subtheme described below may have influenced a parallel subtheme expounded by proponents: that *nothing is changing*. Both subthemes are most prominent around the release of the Task Force's reports, particularly around the ill-received Interim Report, with its call for dramatic price hikes. Thus, Premier Campbell moves to distance himself from the Interim report and its recommendations:

> We're not in favour of a 30-per-cent hike in electricity prices. And I don't think the task force said that. When you roll out all the scenarios, you get up to that's what might happen....
>
> Our goal is to have the lowest possible competitive prices for industry, ratepayers and commercial users.... I think energy is going to remain a

> competitive advantage[47] for British Columbia.... We're not going to "markets"—we're going to have a regulated energy industry in British Columbia, there's no question about that. (TC37)

The *nothing is changing* subtheme may also link to the negative results of deregulation—including runaway price increases—playing out in other jurisdictions (e.g., Alberta, Ontario and California)[48] in that timeframe, as well as the evidenced strong public support for BC Hydro and for public power.[49] As seen above, opponents met with some success in their attempt to link these issues to the Liberals energy plans. Minister Neufeld declares "reforms in Ontario, Alberta and California failures" (VS64). Also:

> We're not going to deregulation so we're not even close to what Ontario's facing.... Everybody wants to keep the rates as low as possible, including us, so that's what we will do.... Secondly, people have a very huge attachment [to B.C. Hydro] in British Columbia, and we know that—all the polling shows that. (Minister Neufeld, VS49)

Cognizant of this public attachment, Premier Campbell speaks though the media of the value of BC Hydro and the careful consideration it puts into relevant policy decisions affecting it:

> In British Columbia we are in a much healthier situation and the reason that we have taken as much time as we have, in spite of the impatience that some people have, is that we see B.C. Hydro as a significant asset for the people of British Columbia that we want to enhance and improve upon. (VS53)

To minimize the extent of the deregulatory agenda, proponents nuance language and terminology, suggesting that the ostensibly urgently needed, critical changes are really not that significant after all.[50] One minimization technique sets up the straw-man of the immediate and full-scale privatization and dismantling of BC Hydro. Minister Neufeld stresses repeatedly that the "Liberal

government is not planning to sell the Crown agency to private interests" (TC8) and that "the assets... the bolts and nuts will still be owned by B.C. Hydro and British Columbians will own B.C. Hydro from here into the future" (TC59). A BC Hydro spokesperson characterizes the outsourcing of BC Hydro's "back office" operations as "not the beginning of a move to privatize, but a means of creating an opportunity outside the company for the private sector" (TC3). A further straw-man approach is to contrast the government's policy with one involving an immediate shift to a fully laissez-faire system. As Minister Neufeld claims "we are re-regulating, not deregulating, B.C. Hydro" (VS49). He goes on to asserts that "we're going to provide the lowest possible rates we possibly can to British Columbians" and that re-establishing the BCUC's oversight "guarantees B.C. residents the cheapest possible electricity rates" (VS49). British Columbia Chamber of Commerce delegates "agreed that the proposed policy changes are not about deregulating B.C.'s electricity industry. If anything, these changes foresee a better-regulated industry under the watchful eye of an empowered B.C. Utilities Commission" (TC42).

The context necessary to meaningfully consider the above claims that "We are not selling B.C. Hydro. We are not going to market rates. We are not deregulating, as a lot of other provinces have," (VS59) is not forthcoming. Instead we see the repetition of decontextualized, simplified and, I argue, highly misleading messages. The large-scale hydroelectric facilities remain in public hands. But much of the rest of BC Hydro's operations is to be outsourced, and all new power is to be produced by the private sector, which, as discussed, will

inevitably lead to significant rate increases. And while regulation will still be required—more in fact than a public system—it is for a wholly different energy model. The primary purpose of much of the new regulation is to ensure private producers are fully integrated into British Columbia's electricity system. Finally, "lowest possible rates" means lowest possible within a policy of sourcing all new power from long-term contracts with private companies at above-market prices. This reality makes clear the highly restricted meaning of the claim.

The semantic distinction made between "core" assets and "non-core" assets also operates to minimize the extent of the changes underway. Proponents' media representations emphasize that the former, consisting of existing hydroelectric dams and the transmission network, are to stay in public hands. For example, BCTC head Yakout Mansour asserts that "B.C. Hydro and the legacy assets, the core assets, are going to remain under public ownership." Continuing this assurance: "From my conversations with both the premier and [Energy Minister Richard Neufeld], they not only have concluded that, they both believe that to be the best thing for British Columbia" (VS95).

And the outsourcing of non-core assets in reality is no big deal:

> This is outsourcing customer service and back-office functions. Most companies have outsourced these types of functions years and years ago... B.C. Hydro's core activities are not up for sale. (Shawn Thomas, BC Hydro senior vice president of public affairs, VS90)

These non-core functions involve 1,500 employees, now outsourced to a subsidiary of Accenture in a $1.45-billion deal (for which no business case was offered) that saw the company take over "customer services, human resources and payroll, information technology, building maintenance and purchasing, for

the next 10 years" (Boei and Mercer, 2003). While these "back office" functions may be "non-core," they clearly are integral to BC Hydro's operations.

Regarding the creation of the BCTC and its take over of responsibility for the transmission network from BC Hydro, proponents again here claim that it will make little difference:

> Energy and Mines Minister Richard Neufeld says the new company [BCTC] will be subject to all of the same regulatory constraints as the crown-owned B.C. Hydro, including the Freedom of Information Act, and will have to report its financial activities in the same manner as a fully regulated crown corporation.
>
> "It's the same people in the same locations operating the same equipment," Hydro media relations manager Elisha Moreno said when asked why there had been no fanfare. (VS90)

The question that comes to mind is why, if the new company is really so similar to the old, is it necessary to go to the trouble of creating it in the first place?[51] Media explanations are typically limited to brief statements that it is necessary to ensure "equal treatment" for private power companies. The implications of this "equal treatment" for the efficient and cost effective transmission of electricity by BC Hydro, including the ability to engage in strategic energy trading, were not addressed in the coverage. Also unstated was the role of a separate transmission company with an open access mandate in facilitating private power exports. As discussed below under the theme of *the public/private dichotomy* (pp. 74-110), trade obligations may make it extremely difficult to reverse these exports. As well, guaranteeing private producers the ability to export power significantly increases their bargaining ability with BC Hydro—a real difference that will be felt by customers in the form of higher prices.

The other justification for separating transmission is the inevitability-based claim that it is necessary "to access U.S. markets," a reference to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) requirements for reciprocity of access to transmission networks as a prerequisite to obtaining an energy trading certificate for the United States. The necessity of this is likely exaggerated. (See Cohen, 2003b.) In the U.S., FERC is establishing Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), a market-based model for the trading of electricity across states. British Columbia has been actively pursuing integration into this model, which would cede control over access to British Columbia's transmission network to a United States.-based organization. The mandate of this organization is the facilitation energy trading, not the meeting of domestic needs (Cohen, 2003b).

Once it is established that nothing is really changing, that "apart from a rate increase next year—modest by Ontario or Alberta standards—consumers are likely to notice little else" (VS67), the "hysterical critics" that accuse the government of "secretly planning" deregulation (VS63) can be smeared as partisan fear-mongers or dismissed as delusional paranoiacs:

> "I think there are a large group of people that believe what we've said, but there are always the vocal few who get space in the newspapers and television," says Neufeld, the energy minister, dismissing those people as fearmongers with a political axe to grind. (TC50)

Referring to critics of the Accenture deal, business reporter Harvey Enchin does not mince words:

> Propaganda, mainly from opponents of the highly politicized corporate restructuring, has created a tense atmosphere... [T]he union has been drawn into a campaign of disinformation being waged by critics of Liberal government policies.... The principal weapon in this effort is corporate character assassination. (VS72)

The following excerpt from an opinion-editorial by the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation is a good example of the tone of right-wing advocacy groups in the sample and their attitude toward those who question the rhetoric that nothing is really changing:

> Opponents of B.C. Hydro reform are tilting at windmills—not the alternative energy source, but the phantom threat of Hydro privatization. Reaction to the B.C. government's new energy policy still harped on "creeping" and "incremental" privatization. What part of the government's commitment to keep B.C. Hydro's core assets don't they get?...
>
> Just mention the word "privatization" or "profit" for that matter, and some protest group will form. Strange, considering there have likely been more Elvis sightings in this province than any full-Monty privatizations.... The policy shift has already raised the ire of protest groups. But they missed their target by turning their guns on a phantom privatization. Will they admit to seeing ghosts and drop their frivolous lawsuit? (TC64)

Through the above techniques, proponents attempt the balancing act of advancing the professed immediate and critical need for deep-seated changes to the electricity system (and to the attitudes of British Columbians) with the simultaneous claim that the changes are not really so fundamental and their effects on the system and consumers not particularly noticeable. It is likely that the simultaneous propagating of these two contradictory messages is benefited in part by structural features of the news media, which parcels information into distinct stories. I believe it is also testament to the hegemonic force of the deregulatory frame. During the time period under consideration, the deregulatory agenda was able to advance without large-scale public opposition, despite a cogent critical analysis from opponents of the implications for a highly effective and well-regarded public asset. This is perhaps an indication of the effectiveness of the minimization present under the *nothing is changing* theme.

iv) Crisis: opponents

Like proponents, opponents also call on the theme of crisis, but here deregulation will precipitate the crisis rather than save us from it. While opponents also adopt provocative rhetoric, the general difference that emerges between their claims and those of opponents is grounding in a broader analysis. The ability to fully explicate such an analysis is limited by the constraints of the medium, however. Opponents appear to attempt a balancing of providing enough background to make their claims credible, given the symbolic violence of the deregulatory frame, with the punchy sound-bites required to make it into the story. I first provide some examples of the serious consequences and implications of the deregulatory agenda claimed by foes of deregulation in challenging proponents' arguments for change.

The end result of the government's machinations is seen as the privatization of BC Hydro and the move to a deregulated system. Opponents, as appearing in the media, are initially apprehensive about an immediate and complete privatization. Later, concern shifts to "incremental" or de facto privatization resulting from the break up of BC Hydro and that, "we're moving towards a total reliance on private power producers for new energy sources. That is privatization.... That is a huge mistake" (VS67). Further, outsourcing to Accenture is the "thin end of the privatization wedge" (TC47).

The results, say opponents, spell disaster, once again a "huge mistake" that is "the death knell for BC Hydro" (TC52). Continuing the strong language, the public power advocacy group the BC Citizens for Public Power (CPP) describes

the *Transmission Corporation Act* as "draconian" (VS81), claiming that it will "destabilize the province's transmission system and greatly increase the possibility of blackouts and catastrophic system failure" (VS90). Jim Sinclair, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour asserts that "this is the beginning of the end of Hydro as we know it" (TC3). In the context of the Accenture deal, Jerri New, president of the OPEIU also sees the slippery slope:

> Once you start tearing pieces apart ... it's kind of like putting it in bite-sized pieces for the rest of it to be sold off.... It's kind of like we're being circled and [private companies] are examining what piece they'd like to have. It's kind of like the beginning of the end of what we see as Hydro as we know it today. (VS36)

Adrian Dix, former NDP strategist, sums his critique of the 2002 Energy Plan thusly: "In releasing its energy policy recently, the British Columbia government scored an unusual three-point play against voters: The plan is bad for business competitiveness, bad for the consumer and bad for the public interest" (TC66).

Opponents point to the inevitability of price increases, either as explicitly called for by the Task Force or as the unavoidable consequence of sourcing power from private producers:

> Mark Veerkamp, spokesman for B.C. Citizens for Public Power, said consumers should brace themselves for significant price increases. "[Repeatedly], we've seen public power be the best way and cheapest way to provide energy for B.C. This is going to mean huge rate increases. Having the private sector do this is going to cost us substantially more," he said. (VS64)

The result will be severe economic consequences. "Hydro at the crossroads: The Liberals' plan to sell parts of BC Hydro is courting financial disaster" proclaims the headline of an opinion editorial (VS24).[52] New Democratic Party Leader Joy MacPhail claims the Task Force's recommendations for 30 to 60 percent rate

increases could be "disastrous" for the economy (TC5). In a letter to Energy Minister Richard Neufeld, the Joint Industry Electricity Steering Committee (JIESC), a group representing the large industrial electricity users in British Columbia, agrees:

> The interim report by the B.C. government's task force on energy policy is a shoddy piece of work whose recommendations will have "*frightful*" and "*dangerous consequences*" for the economy, organized workers and industrial power consumers, industrial users claim.... Industrial users say rate increases of such magnitude would create "*serious economic dislocation, destroy the fundamental economic health of many [firms] and result in serious unemployment, community instability and reduced government revenues.*" (VS11, emphasis added)

In evoking the theme of crisis, opponents make comparisons with the record of electricity deregulation in other parts of the world, emphasizing the negative results. Government seems blind to the troubles elsewhere, driven instead by an ideology from which other jurisdictions are now turning away. For example CPP spokesperson, Mark Veerkamp asserts

> You'd think after everything that has gone on in Alberta, in California, and now Ontario, this is not the direction they would want to be going in.... They should put a stop to this now; otherwise we're going to see what we're seeing in Ontario—huge price increases, uncertainty, the prospect of rolling blackouts.

The document continues:

> Widely publicized blackouts in deregulated U.S. markets, the sky-high price hikes that punctuated Alberta's move to a more open market, and similar increases for homeowners facing winter in Ontario have many questioning whether turning such an essential commodity over to private control is prudent. (Ian Mulgrew, VS48)

Alberta is also a focus:

> Chamber president John Winters points to Alberta as a success story. Perhaps for the four large energy corporations that now control the market, but for thousands of small businesses, the experiment has been a disaster. Prices have climbed dramatically and are now 300 per cent higher than B.C. (VS35)

California's experience with electricity deregulation, and the market manipulate that ensued, receives particular attention:

> That deregulation and privatization have failed U.S. energy consumers and taxpayers is now an established fact. Witness the brownouts and price gouging that have hit California consumers over the last year.... Enron and newly privatized utilities made out like bandits—an apparent case of monopoly price gouging. Profits flew out of the state while Californians suffered substantial personal losses. (Adrian Dix, TC14)

One letter-writer brings in an anecdotal personal reference:

> This writer pays a hydro bill here and one to Southern California Edison in Palm Springs. The difference is: here .0577 Canadian per KWh versus .1515 U.S. per KWh there. In other words, it is over four times as expensive in California's private system. (TC11)

The call for self-sufficiency through deregulation is somewhat ironic given the California experience. An opponent points out that, although deregulation was sold to Californians as a way to reduce costs, "instead, they've had to buy billions worth of outside power, and have added 11 new generating plants in an attempt to become self- sufficient" (VS14). Even a key player in California's deregulatory efforts, David Freeman, agrees:

> We just made a terrible mistake in California.... We thought deregulation and competition were just inherently better than regulation and monopoly. It just all sounded so good. But it turned out to be a dreadful mistake. (VS42)

Thus, for opponents change is not the path to avoiding crisis. Rather, as prescribed by the government, it is the route to it.

v) Don't fix what isn't broken

Opponents' evocations of crisis and disaster are part of the broader subtheme of *don't fix what isn't broken*. This subtheme, most prevalent around the release of the Task Force's Interim Report, with its calls for a rapid shift to market prices,

points to BC Hydro's high reliability, low prices and history of revenue generation. For example: "Hydro has given excellent service at low rates and has made money for the province. It ain't broke, so don't change it!" (TC12). Jim Sinclair declares that "B.C. Hydro is not broken" (VS35). In reference to the Accenture deal, Bruce Cran, president of the Consumers Association of Canada (B.C. Branch), puts it this way:

> Is such a massive restructuring necessary? What exactly is this deal aiming to fix?... Accenture's assurances are cold comfort. B.C. Hydro provides affordable, reliable and environmentally-clean power. The old adage still rings true—"if it ain't broke, why fix it?"[53] (VS44)

David Freeman, the "architect" of deregulation in California, expresses a similar sentiment:

> The question I'm asking is: What is it that's broke with a system that's providing cheap, reliable electricity, that's paying sizeable dividends to the government, that has a rainy day fund and that has money available for new capital projects?... It is basically utility heaven. There isn't a state in the union that wouldn't give its eye teeth for a power system like B.C. Hydro. What on earth is it that your government is trying to improve? (VS42)

Initially, opposition to deregulation cut across many lines, encompassing, the political opposition, unions, consumers, environmentalists and even industry.[54] All point to the effectiveness of the public system. Adrian Dix:

> What problem is the government trying to fix? B.C. Hydro is a success story. A rate freeze has been in place for seven years. B.C. consumers benefit from some of the lowest overall energy prices in North America. The Crown corporation is making money. (TC14)

In a rare moment of unity, industrial users—deeply disturbed by the prospect of 60 percent price increases—more-or-less concur with this sentiment:

> In our review of drivers for change...we are unable to identify any crisis that requires immediate action.

> Electric power customers and the B.C. economy are being well served with reliable power at regulated, predictable rates. B.C. Hydro is returning substantial benefits to the province. Additional supplies of electric power are not required until 2010.
>
> These are core infrastructure assets that do not require provincial subsidies and in fact provide ongoing returns to the province and an important competitive advantage for industry. (JIESC, VS12)

Even one business columnist, Ian Mulgrew with the Colonist, takes up the cause:

> I think the privatization of B.C. Hydro is a dumb public policy; the company turned an $850-million operating profit last year and kicked back a $374-million dividend to Victoria. (VS40)

The notion of the success of BC Hydro as flowing on from the foresight that went into its founding and the expertise it subsequently developed appears in letters to the editor:

> We have cheap hydro-electric power because former premier W.A.C. Bennett had the foresight to unify our fragmented system, and build the megaprojects that now allow us to enjoy the third cheapest electricity rates in North America....
>
> It is the envy of public utilities across the country because of its lower levels of staffing and its efficient use of manpower and resources.
>
> Many of us who have worked here with Hydro came from some of those other utilities, and we knew what was wrong with them. We tried not to make those same mistakes. As a result, we've got one of the finest electrical utilities on this continent. Breaking it up would be grossly irresponsible and a disservice to those who built it and paid for it. (VS14)
>
> The editorial rightly applauds the big dam decisions of the past. They were the quintessential long-term energy hedges that gave our province an energy advantage that just gets better. To do more of the same makes sense with or without the support of a forecast of provincial demand. (VS133)

The message at base here is simple: BC Hydro has served us well and is not in need of fundamental change.

vi) Challenging the rhetoric of "self-sufficiency"

Whereas opponents were comparatively effective in their media efforts to point to the benefits and strong track record of BC Hydro, direct challenge to the primary justification for deregulation—the need for self-sufficiency as a prudential strategy of risk avoidance—was more limited. The counter-construction of deregulation as introducing risk of various forms to the electricity supply—rather than removing risk from it—was present, however.

Shaffer's critique receives some coverage. Through his analysis of government policy as undermining economically rational trading, Shaffer subverts the deregulatory frame's construction of "self-sufficiency" as protection against price volatility grounded in economic prudence. Ironically, this is rooted in a market-oriented economic perspective that values trade:[55]

> As economists have long argued, there are benefits to trade. We should produce those goods and services for which we have a comparative advantage, and backup up fluctuating water conditions with high cost domestic sources of power supply may not be one of them. (VS209)

Marjorie Griffin Cohen, SFU political science professor, also takes issue with the appeal to the private sector as a means of risk avoidance, pointing to the transfer of risk to the public under a deregulation:

> Relying on the private sector for future electricity injects considerable risk into a stable system for several reasons. First, the private sector is unlikely to bring new electricity into the market unless the price for electricity in B.C. rises considerably.[56]
>
> Second, with the system increasingly oriented toward exports to the U.S., any private generators of electricity will have the option of exporting power, thereby benefitting from higher prices south of the border.
>
> And third, B.C. consumers will be competing with U.S. customers for power. (TC75)

As with other themes, the mainstay of critical voices was the letters section. The following example is straightforward in putting the lie to proponents' self-sufficiency arguments:

> Late at night the fuel-burning generators in U.S. produce more power than is needed. As electricity can't be stored and these generators are designed to run at full capacity, they sell the surplus at discounted rates. B.C. Hydro buys this cheap power. This allows B.C. customers to pay less and B.C. reservoirs to retain water. Even if B.C. Hydro were to double its capacity, it would be foolish to stop buying this energy as it is much cheaper. (TC165)

Other references by opponents to the role of arbitraging in BC Hydro's power trading were surprisingly infrequent. There was but one acknowledgement by BC Hydro of the value of strategic power trading and the possible impacts to this from private power production:

> Bruyneel [BC Hydro corporate communications manager] emphasized that Hydro's main goal is to obtain power for its customers at the lowest possible price, irrespective of source. In some cases, he said, that means buying cheap imported power from Alberta and the United States to complement the province's sprawling network of hydroelectric dams and reservoirs....
>
> He said there are good economic reasons for importing power—Hydro via its Powerex electricity trading subsidiary can obtain electricity at rock bottom prices at night from coal fired generation plants in Alberta and the U.S.
>
> He said B.C. could lessen its reliance on outside sources by developing its own facilities, but that would mean higher electricity prices for consumers.
>
> "It could have cost implications if you bring on more than you need, earlier than you need it. You will pay for it.
>
> "If you think you mitigate the risks better that way, or you just want to be able to feel comfortable knowing you can rely on B.C. resources all the time, then maybe that's a good thing to do. But that's something we need to talk to our customers about through the IEP." (Scott Simpson, VS107)

A comparatively brief and technically-oriented Sun story on a report by BC Stats references BC Hydro's practice of arbitraging and reveals how

economically valuable it can be. At the same time, it makes no reference to the government's energy plans and their potential impact on this practice:

> While the value of exports were almost 90 per cent greater than the value of imports, the actual amount of electricity shipped south was only 7.8 million megawatt hours, compared to imports of 5.9 million megawatt hours, said the report's author Dan Schrier. The discrepancy between amount and value arises from the ability of B.C.'s largest producer of electricity—BC Hydro—to arbitrage, he said....
>
> In 2005, Powerex saw the value of its exports to the United States increase 152 per cent year-over-year, due to increased prices and volume, Moreno said. (Fiona Anderson, VS139)

Note that in the above document the actual dollar value of the balance of payments as a result of trading is not stated. But based on the numbers provided, the average price received for exported energy was more that two and a half times that paid for imported energy. One can only imagine the nature of the Sun's coverage if the story instead were a private company registering such a performance. In an example illustrative of how the newspaper format can unquestioningly allow the co-existence of contradictory frames, the following day the paper ran a lengthy story sounding the warning bells regarding importations. The familiar claims, such that British Columbia "could be importing as much as 45 per cent of its electricity from spot-trading markets in Alberta and the Pacific Northwest within 20 years—leaving the province's residents and industries increasingly vulnerable to price volatility and supply risk," where left completely unchallenged (VS140).

Ironically, most reported references to the economic value of arbitraging, though still small in number, were by proponents. Rather than challenge the

rhetoric of self-sufficiency, however, proponents present arbitraging (at least as currently practiced) as problematic:

> We still make money by exporting power during peak demand periods in the United States and importing it when spot rates are lower. But we are now in a slow squeeze, with the imported portion of our electricity supply costing more every year. More urgently, as we are seeing in Ontario, any dependency on external power generation can lead not only to inconvenience and expense for consumers, but also sabotage the economy. (Sun Editors, VS135)

> That buy-and-sell strategy has been effective in generating revenue for the provincial government over the longer term—but it drags down Hydro's net income when U.S. prices are high, as they were across North America particularly after hurricanes hit the Gulf of Mexico last summer. (Scott Simpson, VS137)

Wind-power IPP, Sea Breeze Power, acknowledges arbitraging in the context of promoting (private) wind power as complement to (public) hydro-electricity:

> We've been taking advantage of [the arbitraging potential of] B.C.'s integrated hydroelectricity grid for a long time. There is simply no need to build more "on demand" power in B.C.[57] But the fact remains that power consumption is only going up, our hydro reserves are at all-time lows, and we can't buy power from Alberta forever....
>
> What B.C. really needs, and soon, is both security of supply and a way to keep hydro rates reasonable. Enter wind energy, the fastest-growing energy sector in the world. (TC96)

Adding further irony, the Fraser Institute, a right-wing think-tank, recognizes the value of the practice but cites it as a reason for further integration with the continental market:

> British Columbia is a net importer of U.S. electricity but ends up in a net profit position each year due to its ability to export hydro power during peak summer consumption periods in the U.S. southwest. (TC153)

Strategic power trading aside, even if we accept the call for more supply, the dichotomy of increasing purchases of foreign power versus new private local production is an artificial one. Examining some of these alternatives conveys a

sense of the extent this neglecting of alternatives to this bifurcation and limiting of challenges to the rhetoric of self-sufficiency is the result of symbolic violence operating in the deregulatory frame. I consider some of these below.

Numerous other options are possible for achieving the goal of self-sufficiency. An obvious alternative is the utilization of downstream benefits (DSBs) under the *Columbia River Treaty*. Under the terms of this agreement, the province of British Columbia is entitled to a share of hydroelectric production on the Columbia River in Washington State resulting from dams built in British Columbia (art. 5).[58] Traditionally, British Columbia has sold these downstream benefits back to the United States. However, were the province willing to forego the revenue, 4,300 GWh of electricity would be available to British Columbia—an amount almost one and a half times greater than the "insurance power" called for under the 2007 energy plan (Calvert 2007a, 2007b, p.56; Shaffer, 2007, p.13).

Recognition of the DSB option in the Sun and Colonist was markedly limited, not only by proponents but also by opponents. I found one passing reference by columnist Vaughan Palmer: "The downstream benefits allocated to B.C. under the Columbia River Treaty? Mostly spoken for, either to maximize returns to provincial ratepayers or as a hedge against excessive reliance on imported power" (VS213). In actuality, because contract prices set with IPPs are predicted to be considerably in excess of the market rate that British Columbia will receive for this foregone power, it is hard to see how selling DSB power at considerably lower rates is a policy of maximizing returns to provincial

ratepayers. Instead, it seems an excellent illustration of the economic irrationality of the government's electricity policies.

Conservation as a response to increasing demand receives more frequent mention, likely given its linkage to reducing environmental impact (as discussed below), though only rarely as a broad-based alternative to new private production. In criticizing the government's intention to add coal power to British Columbia, a report from the Pembina Institute

> shows that BC Hydro has identified nearly 6,000 GWh/year in currently untapped potential energy efficiency that could be achieved by 2015—almost three times the energy provided by the coal plants with no increase in emissions. (VS165)

As one opponent puts it, "energy conservation is zero greenhouse gas emitting, zero pollution emitting. It's environmentally the optimum" (VS171). In response to BC Hydro's 2006 Integrated Energy Plan, a spokesperson for the BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA) "said his group was pleased to see conservation at the top of Hydro's list. In the short-term conservation is by far the cheapest way to make our energy go further, it's absolutely essential" (TC136).

A policy decision with obvious conservation implications is the enactment into law in 2003 of the "Heritage Contract,"[59] which makes available power from existing BC Hydro generation (approximately 49,000 GWh annually) to the three major categories of users (industrial, commercial and residential) in proportion to their historic usage at cost-of-production prices. Given the disparity between the low bulk rate paid by industrial users ($35 per MWh) and the cost of new private production ($87.50 per MWh in the 2006 tender call), this amounts to a massive subsidy to British Columbia's forestry and mining industries (Calvert, 2007b).[60] A

recommendation of the 2002 Energy Plan, the Heritage Contract was a response to the (well-founded) concern on the part of industrial users that a shift to private power will mean a large increase in the price they pay for electricity. The 2007 Energy Plan extended the Heritage Contract indefinitely (MEMPR, 2007, p.12). Despite the extensive green rhetoric surrounding the 2007 Energy Plan and the claimed need to send accurate price signals to encourage conservation, by actually shielding users from price signals the Heritage Contract provides a major disincentive to conservation. In this light, programs that provide incentives to industrial users to conserve, such as the Industrial Energy Efficiency Program created by the 2007 Energy Plan, represent a policy of perverse subsidization: the response to the negative effects of an existing subsidy is not to remove it, but to add a further subsidy. (See Calvert, 2007b, p.215.)

Not surprisingly, the implications of the Heritage Contract for conservation and the public purse received no acknowledgement in the media by government or other proponents. Opponents, however, also failed to pick up on the issue (or failed to get their concerns reported). The only real discussion of the Heritage Contract by any parties was as a protection for consumers (meaning residential consumers), who because of it face merely steadily increasing blended prices as opposed to bearing the full immediate increased prices from private generation, the only other option permitted for consideration. For example, "[i]n B.C., consumers will benefit from what the government calls a 'heritage contract,' which will keep electricity rates as low as possible by locking in the value of

existing low-cost generation combined with revenues from the international sale of power" (Scott Simpson, VS64).

Finally, if new generation is to be built, an alternative to private producers building and owning all new capacity is for BC Hydro to build and own it. As mentioned, having BC Hydro construct the facilities is likely to prove a cheaper alternative. One reason for this is BC Hydro's ability to obtain financing at a much lower cost than can private producers. This point is made within the counter-deregulatory frame (although only minimally):

> The chamber claims B.C. Hydro can't afford to continue to build power facilities to meet our needs. Instead, if we allow the private sector to make lots of money they will come to our rescue. Nothing could be further from the truth. Any new investment—private or public—will be supported by debt and this is most cheaply done by B.C. Hydro, which boasts a top-notch credit rating of AA. (Jim Sinclair, VS35)

The further advantage to the rate-payer, particularly evident over the life of the projects, publically owned facilities operated on a cost-of-production basis (as seen in the dramatic price differential between the price of electricity from BC Hydro's cost-of-production facilities and market rates for electricity) received only the minimal recognition within the deregulatory frame already discussed.[61]

The complete absence of engagement with any of the above policy options by proponents (and only limited engagement by opponents) in the coverage examined underscores the entrenchment of self-sufficiency rhetoric and the limitations of challenges to it. The symbolic violence of deregulatory forces here limits permissible thought, delimiting the range of possible policy options.

B. Public/Private Dichotomy

A dichotomy between the public and private sector is alluded to in both the regulatory and the deregulatory frame, though much more extensively in the former than the latter. For proponents, the public sector is monolithic, inefficient and incapable of adaptation, while the private sector is diverse, entrepreneurial and dynamic. For opponents, a move to private power undermines a valuable public asset, with negative economic and social consequences for the province.[62] It is anti-democratic, ideologically driven and destructive of public accountability. The dichotomy is largely implicit. Taken-for-granted assumptions regarding the public and the private are connoted, and, once again, appeal is made to notions of risk. Private power companies are cast as the ideal neoliberal entrepreneurial citizens, striving to create wealth in the face of a stifling and antagonistic government bureaucracy.

A rhetoric of responsibilization is also apparent. The state is seen as incapable of meeting our needs, leaving it up to citizens (or rather private power companies as corporate citizens) to step in to the breach. Little by way of actual evidence of the need for this transition is offered. IPPs are simply presented as the natural solution. That proponents feel no need to justify why this is so is testament to the power of the symbolic violence of neoliberalism, through which the inefficacy of collective action along with an ever-expanding corporate sphere come to be taken for granted, inculcated into the habitus of everyday life. Economic and social capital exercise a symbolic violence that limits consideration of possible power production models to those that are corporate

and private. Although the neoliberal construction of the dichotomy pits the individual against the collective (represented in the state), the two are in fact interdependent. The viability of private producers depends on an active policy of state subsidization, while the state comes increasingly to be organized along corporatist principles. Thus the dichotomy is a false one.

i) The time of the "little guy"

Despite that neoliberalism is premised on (and extols) globalized networks of capital, proponents often presented private power producers as the quintessential "little guy," the sole proprietor whose hard work and determination is the backbone the economy:[63]

> It's truly the game of the little guys right now....I think it has a good storyline—the little guy's growth spurt, rather than the big guy's continued domination of the sector. (IPABC president Steve Davis, VS94)

Of course, many private producers are not actually that little. Nor are they "guys" but corporations, often of considerable size. And the ones that are "little" do not intend to stay that way.[64] The great advantage of securing a water license at minimal cost on a site with a potential revenue stream in the millions is that it can be used either to secure significant amounts of capital or to flip the small-cap start up company that acquired the rights for tremendous profit. The only recognition of such was in the context of celebrating the business potential of IPPs. For example:

> With the stroke of a pen this week, Vancouver's Plutonic Power Corp. made the leap from ambitious junior company with a $20-million market cap to big-league player with government approvals for a $550-million hydroelectric project....

> [Plutonic president Donald McInnes states that] "GE's [$100 million] investment was sufficient to attract a $450-million debt facility that we have arranged to come in through a syndicate of insurance companies" (VS205).

This was possible once the company secured the rights to projects on the Toba River system, north of Powell River (Simpson, 2007). Here, however, the ability to raise such funds is taken as an indication of IPP vitality—no contrast with little guy construct is acknowledged.

Grounded in the local economy, these "mom and pop" IPPs (VS219) share the wealth, writes reporter Bruce Winfield :

> "Independent power spreads the wealth to smaller communities," he [president of an IPP] says. "We spent $1.5 million in the north Island in 2002 and employed 30 people during construction. Right now we employ three people part-time and we are still buying locally."
>
> As well, encouraging independent power reduces the need for transmission lines today and the need for major new power generating projects in the future, says Stacey. "Small and independent is beautiful.... We can take advantage of potential and that benefits all of B.C."[65] (TC69)

An explanation of why economic benefits would not flow from the same projects under a public system is not forthcoming. As it is, private power projects normally provide few long-term economic jobs to local communities. Capital intensive, they require a very small staff once running (often just one or two people), and they may have a negative economic impact on an area through the displacement of other employment or the damage to other areas of the economy such as recreation or tourism. Analogies to the "mom and pop" corner store, which is integrated into a neighbourhood economy and community, break down under scrutiny. While locals will contribute through their higher bills to the profits of the

investors and owners (who likely do not live in the area), they are unlikely to see much by way of economic return to themselves and their communities.

Despite the presentation of IPPs in terms of individualistic ideals, human interest stories on the individuals involved were rare. In the vast majority of reporting these idealized neoliberal characteristics were projected on the company itself, consistent with the idealization of the corporation as neoliberal citizen. I noted exceptions, however. In these instances the companies involved were all start up companies at the smaller end of the "diverse" range. The emphasis is on "regular guys"[66] giving their all and taking personal risk to see their vision realized:

> [A]ll the work done to date is approaching $1 million, much of it personal investment. And there is no room in the budget for salaries, Turpin noted. "The money we're spending right now is risk money," Wolrige said.
>
> Both he and Turpin have had successful careers before taking on electricity. Wolrige has done property development and management and owns Southview Property Management. Turpin, who now lives in Victoria, is an ICBC claim centre manager. (VS39)

We are told that IPPs have an "ambitious" roster of projects (VS176), which they will bring to fruition thanks to a "can do local attitude" (TC69)." Innovation is their hallmark says energy lawyer and IPP advocate, David Austin:

> Independent power producers are part of the solution to the problem.
>
> It's not to give one sector of the economy an advantage over another sector. You're including them in the restructuring so that they can do what they do best and provide creative, innovative solutions. (VS61)

Now that the government is finally letting them realize their tremendous potential, private producers are keen to loose this innovative capacity:

> Steve Davis, president of the Independent Power Association of B.C., said the government's energy policy has swollen the ranks of IPA membership over the past two years.

> "There's a lot more green to come, and there's a strong eagerness by investors that are sensing, at least in early days, that there are opportunities," Davis said.[67] (VS92)
>
> Neufeld was extolling the virtues of independent power producers and their ability to come up with projects to satisfy the increased demand, noting a recent call from Hydro for 2,500 gigawatts of power resulted in 90 IPP proposals that would have netted 13,000 gigawatts. (TC133)

That this embarrassment of riches may result from both the restricted nature of the tender call and the exceptionally good terms offered by BC Hydro was not considered.

Through the media, analogy is made to that earlier great explosion of unbridled entrepreneurial vigour, the gold rush:[68]

> Hundreds of water license applications, similar to mining claims, have been filed on streams across the province by small hydro proponents and wanna-bes in the closest thing to a gold rush that B.C. has seen in decades. (Scott Simpson, VS94)
>
> BC Hydro is proposing to slash red tape for small-scale entrepreneurs who want to participate in British Columbia's green energy *bonanza.* (Scott Simpson, VS211, emphasis added)

California Governor Schwarzenegger announced that:

> British Columbia is already one of the winners in what he expects will be the biggest explosion of economic opportunity since gold fever struck the West Coast a century and a half ago.
>
> Schwarzenegger noted that in the 1850s, the territories of what are now California and British Columbia were the site of gold rushes that "shaped our history and led to unprecedented growth." "Ladies and gentlemen we have the opportunity once again.... They call it California's new gold rush. With your willingness to be innovative in clean technology, you are poised to start British Columbia's new gold rush." (VS208)

No reporter, columnist nor editor, paused to reflect on whether this enthusiasm on the part of IPPs might suggest negative implications for the rate-payers—whose pockets are ultimately what are being mined.

Comparing the total costs to private producers of acquiring the rights to British Columbia's water, land and air resources to their revenue-generating potential reveals the ironic accuracy of the gold rush analogy. John Calvert has calculated that for run-of-the-river private producers the total cost of water rights, land occupancy fees, property taxes, and the various licensing fees combined will mean that "the province might receive optimistically only 4 to 5 percent of gross revenue from small hydro projects, and perhaps 7 to 8 percent on the few large scale projects now in place" (Calvert, 2007b, p. 130). For wind power, where even greater public subsidization is present, the public return is even lower. No rents on Crown land will be charged for ten years, after which time rents will vary from one to three percent of gross annual revenue of wind farms (Calvert, 2007b, p.145). The province is ignoring the actual economic value of these resources, treating them as nearly valueless. Nor is it considering the opportunity costs of their private development—such as alternate uses of significant land base given over to wind power. Further subsidies include access to BC Hydro's own extensive research on the viability of potential sites, breaks on sales tax on equipment, subsidized access to the transmission grid (which alone amounts to $600 million), assistance with regulatory permits and others—the most significant being the inflated prices that BC Hydro is paying through its contracts with private producers (Delaney, 2008; Calvert, 2007b, p.126, p.132 and pp.138-140). All of these are given with no guarantee of continued access to the resulting power and little by way of direct economic benefit. Put in this light, the gold rush metaphor seems particularly a propos—a great transfer of public

wealth to private individuals.[69] Claims that such wealth derives from the entrepreneurial and individualistic vigour and innovation reduce to the symbolic violence of the *little guy* construct.

ii) Government as impediment

Within the deregulatory frame, the function of government is primarily to throw up roadblocks and stifle the entrepreneurial potential of IPPs. For instance:

> [T]here's growing evidence that B.C. is falling well behind almost every other jurisdiction in the country—if not in North America—when it comes to promoting the use of alternative energy supplies such as wind or tidal power. While other provinces are installing wind turbines, B.C. is still putting roadblocks in the way. (Don Whiteley, VS134)

In its decision to issue a standing offer for hydro-electric projects under 10MW, the government has "loosened some of the regulatory shackles on so-called micro-hydro projects" (VS189):

> The price they're offering may not be attractive to people but the fact there isn't the bureaucracy or process of having to go through a tender call creates a lot of opportunity and certainty for people, and that's a really good thing," said Donald McInnes, president and director of Plutonic Power. (VS189)

As the above quote indicates, despite the espoused virtues of competition, the removal of a competitive process will usually be seen as positive by those who would otherwise have to compete—something that passed without comment.

At the same time, IPPs are reported as expecting some of the public subsidies that are a staple of more established industry. Consultant Donald O'Connor:

> In terms of the playing field not being exactly level, the Canadian government over the last 30 years has spent $40 billion in direct incentives to the fossil energy industry.

> Governments, whether you like it or not, have been huge players in the development of the Canadian energy sector and for them to stand up and say we believe that new energy technology should make it on its own without government involvement is hiding their heads in the sand. (VS210)

In this limited context, IPPs—independent individualists that they are—admit that they cannot "make it on their own" and are seeking public subsides (although this term is not used). They seek handouts from the very government bureaucracy whose function, they elsewhere claim, is to impede them. The symbolic violence of public investment as merely debt creating and private investment as the sole source of wealth generation is such that this contradiction can pass without comment. Subsidies to private producers become "incentives" to help them create wealth; and, as we will see, new development by BC Hydro (a revenue-generating asset) means only a greater debt burden for us all.

iii) BC Hydro as moribund

In contrast to the potential offered by IPPs, BC Hydro is presented in the media examined as a moribund institution that has proven incapable of meeting the needs of British Columbians. The subtheme of prudentialism and responsibilization emerge again. In a medicalized analogy, BC Hydro is seen as living in denial about the effects of what are presumably poor "lifestyle choices":

> Hydro critic David Austin noted that a chart included in the Hydro documents shows the first symptoms of Hydro's "import problem" emerged in 1994. There was brief recovery later in the decade but since 2001, the chart shows Hydro in a net import position.
>
> Austin said it was unfortunate that Hydro chose to delay action on the problem for an entire decade. "It's as if you went to the cardiologist in 1994 and he told you that you had a heart problem and should have changed your diet—but you didn't." (VS140)

Claims of BC Hydro's inefficacity appear as self-fulfilling prophecies:

> There is an electricity production deficit in B.C. and B.C. Hydro is years away from starting any major new projects to deal with it. The province's energy plan doesn't even put much faith in B.C. Hydro to restore self-sufficiency. Much of the emphasis on new generation is on private producers, who are expected to come up with a large number of small-scale projects to supply incremental increases. (Les Leyne, TC154)
>
> [T]he Independent Power Producers Association of B.C. is projecting that the province is going to become more, not less, dependent on imports over the coming decade.
>
> That's because Hydro's electricity output is expected to remain flat, given the decision of the provincial government in its energy policy to make Hydro a caretaker of its existing hydroelectric assets rather than a builder of new ones. (Scott Simpson, VS104)

By this circular reasoning, the active policy decision to prevent BC Hydro from adding more capacity in favour of IPPs is presented as an independent problem—to be remedied by IPPs. The cause of the problem thus becomes the solution.

Relating to the theme of inevitable change discussed above, BC Hydro is now seen as a relic from a bygone era: "W.A.C. Bennett's dream of using hydropower development as the key to economic development in B.C. is dead" (VS30). According to the editors of the Colonist,

> as power supply becomes an integrated, continent-wide system, with competition from many different types of energy, huge public utilities are going the way of the dinosaur—they just aren't flexible enough to keep up with the changes.[70] (TC7)

Corroborating this, BC Hydro just cannot seem to see the value of green power (meaning the value of IPPs):

> Paul Manson, Sea Breeze president, said the company is planning to go ahead with its project even though B.C. Hydro does not appear to be interested.... "There's a desperate need for this emission-free energy.... We are about to see an explosive growth in the amount of wind energy being produced in Canada and B.C. is being left behind for reasons we don't understand," he said. (TC99)

British Columbia's stagnant public system, incapable of embracing the environmental sea change, contrasts with privatized Alberta, where, as one headline puts it, "restless prairie winds power Alberta's renewable future":

> While British Columbians wait to see if their first wind farms will actually be built, tens of thousands of Albertans are already cooking dinner, drying socks, or lighting their homes and businesses with electrons generated by the restless prairie winds....
>
> Meanwhile in British Columbia, despite dire warnings about running short of electricity and endless talk about embracing environmental values, it has been a mere two months since BC Hydro accepted three wind farm proposals along with 35 other proposals to generate electricity for the provincial grid, and they're still not a done deal. They still have hurdles to clear—financial or environmental or both—before construction can start....
>
> The other two factors driving the growth of Alberta's wind industry—the regulatory climate and the tax incentives offered to companies that invest in wind power generation—are made in Alberta.
>
> And it would take changes in attitude, legislation and the way BC Hydro does business to make them work here. (Don Cayo, VS162)

A somewhat more substantial explanation offered in and by the media for BC Hydro's allegedly hobbled state is a high debt to equity ratio: "B.C. Hydro has one of the highest debt burdens of all utilities in Canada, with a debt-to-capital ratio of 80 per cent" (VS72), claims Sun business reporter, Harvey Enchin. In fact, BC Hydro's debt to equity ratio at the time was a, not unreasonable, 72:28 (BC Hydro, 2003, p.7). It has since improved to 70:30 (BC Hydro, 2008, p.53). Financial mismanagement is also blamed. "Successive governments have treated B.C. Hydro as a cash cow, siphoning off huge amounts of money that could have paid for improvements"[71] (VS98). Previous NDP governments come in for particular blame:

> B.C. Hydro is a low-cost producer of electricity, but that's not the reason power costs to consumers are low. The government has imposed a rate

> freeze since 1997 and, in fact, rates have not increased since 1993. When they do, as they must, critics will inevitably blame Accenture. (Harvey Enchin, VS72)

Despite the rate freeze, BC Hydro returned large net revenues. Arguably, some of those could have been put to paying off debt. Yet with a top-notch credit rating of AAA (Ministry of Finance, 2006) BC Hydro certainly could take up adding new production itself. The inconsistency of such arguments is exposed when proponents claim that BC Hydro's "onerous" debt burden prevents it from taking on the relatively small-scale facilities favoured by private producers, while for large—and debt-intensive—projects, such as the Site C expansion, it re-emerges as the likely actor.[72] This inconsistency was not addressed by any proponents within the media. Despite potentially self-fulfilling characterizations of BC Hydro as a moribund relic, an analysis that extends beyond the confines of the deregulatory frame suggests that the utility is entirely capable of adding new and green production.

iv) The 800 lb gorilla

In a co-representation in the deregulatory frame, BC Hydro appears not as inert and impotent, but as a big bullying monopoly, one that prevents IPPs from competing in the market. This is captured in the metaphor of *the 800 lb gorilla*. Energy Minister Neufeld describes BC Hydro as "a 'gorilla' monopoly that is scaring off private sector investment and threatening this province's participation in cross-border energy markets" (VS34). Perhaps not coincidentally, "independents have described Hydro as an '800- pound gorilla' whose monopoly over transmission, generation and distribution of electricity has made it almost

impossible for the private sector to elbow its way into the B.C. electricity market" (VS62). BC Hydro's control of the transmission networks makes it "kind of like the big gorilla. They can control a lot of things."[73] Skeptical that the gorilla can be restrained, one energy lawyer wants to see evidence that "the monopolist has been bound up so that it won't crush the private sector and the B.C. Utilities Commission" (VS62).

The 800 lb gorilla throws its weight around, intimidating IPPs in a variety of ways, as observed by the president of an Alberta transmission company interested in running a transmission line through southeastern British Columbia:

> We want to know who can we sell to, and how. Right now BC Hydro is the [monopolistic] purchaser. You have no choice, no bargaining position at all. The second thing we need is a transmission system that is not controlled for the sole interest of one entity, that again being BC Hydro....
>
> The third thing we've said to the government we'd need to be a player in B.C. is to know who we are competing against. If we are going to have to compete against a Crown agency, it's like a non-starter—not that we feel we couldn't be more efficient and more effective at it. We've told the government and the task force we're very interested in investing in your province but under rules which result in a more level playing field for an independent power producer relative to the monolithic BC Hydro. (VS30)

Thanks to this monopoly control, the little guy gets squeezed:

> B.C. Hydro can use its control of the transmission network to squeeze them out. It's as if one trucking company could decide who could use the highways, and what tolls they'd pay. Competitors wouldn't exactly be rushing forward.
>
> The problem is even more acute because producers in neighbouring jurisdictions are starting to complain about unfairness. B.C. Hydro makes billions selling power into their markets, but they can't reach customers in the province. (Sun editors, VS5)

Such is power of BC Hydro that even the government cannot control it.

Describing a report to the B.C. Progress Board (an advisory group of business

leaders appointed by the British Columbia Liberals), Business reporter/columnist, Les Leyne paints a picture of a rogue organization, beholden to no-one:

> There's a revolutionary concept embedded in the B.C. Progress Board report on energy. The 60-page outlook floats the notion that the democratically elected government of B.C. should wrest control of energy policy away from B.C. Hydro.
>
> That's the kind of coup d'etat plotting that can get you strung up in some countries. But the scheme is laid out in the Progress Board report, by the Sage Group. It's no secret that B.C. Hydro is a power unto itself in the province....
>
> The report comes dangerously close to questioning B.C. Hydro's supremacy in all things electrical....
>
> The board says Hydro has the government out-gunned at every turn when it comes to staff and resources, "which puts the government in the position of not being able to provide adequate oversight and direction to B.C. Hydro."
>
> Consequently, "B.C. Hydro is seen as setting its own policies with regard to electricity supply or responding to matters of public interest, such as the government's energy plan, in its own time and manner." (TC128)

Much of the gorilla's strength derives from this "unfair" advantage it receives from the "unlevel playing field." For example, "right now Hydro pays no municipal taxes. This would in our recommendation be a fully taxed business that would contribute to the local economy" (VS25).[74] Proponents construct BC Hydro as a business operating in a market. Under this neoliberal model, *all* economic activity should be rooted in business, so it is logical to see BC Hydro as an unfairly advantaged dominant corporation. This understanding is central to the government's reconfiguration of BC Hydro:

> Asked if Hydro's management has an image problem with British Columbians, Elton said the utility is making a transition from being a largely unregulated monopoly to one of many energy producers who will be actively regulated. (VS96)

Under such a model, the complaints of IPPs are not unreasonable. Yet any different understanding—whether, for instance, the provision of electricity is better viewed as an essential service provided by a public system—has now been excluded.

v) Unquestioning faith in markets

Market boosterism is a perennial feature of media representations in the deregulatory frame. This persists regardless of the fact that the restructuring under consideration varies over time—from the quick move to a full market system initially advocated, to the de-integrated private-public system currently taking shape. The championing of markets remains in spite of the conflicting and contradictory rationales that emerge (to avoid the high prices—of markets; to increase prices to encourage conservation and private investment; or to decrease prices via competition). When it comes to the underlying premise of the supremacy of "the market" in the deregulatory frame, factual analysis matters little. The dramatic consequences of deregulation playing out in other jurisdictions have only minimal impact. According to the editors of the Sun, such developments "reinforce the need for care and caution... [but] shouldn't deter the government from moving ahead with plans to increase competition in B.C." (VS13).

Minister Neufeld draws parallels to deregulation in other sectors. Consumer sovereignty and the desire for individual choice once again stand against the old way of the monopoly:

> Neufeld likened the situation to the old telephone companies, which used to have a monopoly over service.
>
> "But now you can buy service from almost anyone, it's just the conversations that are carried on the same wires or the same systems, you just have different suppliers. It's a matter of choice." (TC73)

Evidence that consumers actually desire choice in electricity provider was not forthcoming.[75] More to the point, Neufeld makes this statement despite the fact that the policy includes no provisions for retail or other consumer choice in electricity service. Thus, he alludes to an ideal of consumer sovereignty that is not actually present in the policy, even as a goal.[76]

The benefits of competition are also heralded in the media : "When you've got four people competing for one slot at a musical chairs game, prices will be kept low by that competition alone" (VS62). Yet IPPs can hardly be said to be competing in the traditional sense. There is a bidding process as part of the private power calls, but the process results in long-term contracts with a public utility at a guaranteed rate. Furthermore, the organization that likely would be the most competitive player—BC Hydro—is barred from proposing any projects. In fact, the amount of power sought, and consequently the resultant rates paid, has been subject to dramatic variation on the basis of far from certain demand forecasts—tripling in the case of the 2006 call, the largest to date. The kind of retail competition that is evoked by images of an ideal free market is wholly absent. I found no analysis, either by proponents or opponents, of the actual degree of competition in the bidding process.

A telling example of the symbolic violence of market superiority is found in the uncritical coverage granted to a report on the electricity sector by the TD

bank. Here we see the equating of a public system with a subsidized system, even though public electricity utilities in Canada are not subsidized. In the example below "cost" seems to equate with market price. To this mindset, selling below market price must equate with subsidization, even though the reason public utilities are able to sell at such a lower price is because their prices are based on cost-of-production and—thanks to the efficiency of their operations—their cost of production is far below the market price. If a private company were to perform at such a level it would be feted indeed, but when a public utility achieves these results it must—by definition—be the result of subsidization:

> [The report] argued governments haven't gone nearly far enough to address the key issue which is their practice of pricing electricity below cost.
>
> Historically, governments have opted to subsidize electricity prices, in part as a strategy to help their industries compete, it noted. Although the gaps between price and cost have narrowed, they remain significant in many parts of Canada.
>
> It has been estimated if Quebec consumers had paid what the province charged foreigners for electricity in 2003, their hydro bills would have been $8 billion higher.
>
> But it's not just Quebec subsidizing domestic consumers, said [TD Economist] Burleton, who added price subsidization remains the rule rather than the exception in Canada. (Eric Beauchesne, TC115)

vi) The economic benefits of private power

Not surprisingly then, the economic and employment benefits from increased production are seen by proponents as wholly one-sided. In response to a call for private power, "the Canadian Wind Energy Association estimated...that the industry's response to the offer will generate $6 billion in investment and will create more than 40,000 direct and indirect person-years of employment by 2012" (VS107). Regarding other planned IPP facilities,

> if all are successfully completed, the projects will produce enough electricity to meet the needs of more than 700,000 homes.[77] The projects will also bring between $3.6 billion and $4 billion of investment into the province as well as "an awful lot of jobs," Neufeld said. (VS205)

The Sun reports on the findings of a wind energy consulting company that the right "tax measures and financial incentives" in British Columbia could "attract $1 billion worth of investment and create 8,000 job-years of employment, including construction" (VS38). The far from disinterested nature of the source apparently is not something that warrants noting, an instructive contrast to reporting on studies that take an anti-deregulatory stance. A public purchase of private power amounts to "$800 million of private sector investment in your communities," says Premier Campbell (VS92). Under the *public/private dichotomy*, private investment is money put into communities; public investment is money taken out of your communities, via taxes.

This construction tends to be reproduced generally. The editorial board tells us that IPPs offer "$24 billion worth of investments and the creation of 8,000 new jobs over the next six years" (VS63). Consider reporter Scott Simpson's claim that deregulation "could shift as much as $1 billion worth of opportunity towards the private sector—or alternatively, confirm BC Hydro's monopolistic and intimidating grip on this crucial sector of the provincial economy" (VS30).[78] A billion dollars for private sector production is "opportunity"; a billion dollars for public production is that much bigger a club with which to intimidate. Similar statements by proponents regarding the economic benefits of IPPs are a constant feature of the sample. In no case are they accompanied by a consideration of the corresponding economic benefits that would result if the

power were produced by BC Hydro. Nor was there any recognition that all this private sector investment ultimately made on the backs of the rate-payers—who will be financing it though their monthly electricity bills.

Conversely, reductions in public expenditures are always desirable for proponents. By outsourcing processing services to Accenture, "Hydro expects to save $250 million through operational efficiencies" (VS58). The accompanying economic cost of these spending reductions is not mentioned. As well, "the agreement calls for a business that will be based in B.C., create jobs in B.C. and pay taxes in B.C. The benefits to the provincial economy and workforce are immediately apparent" (VS43). That these jobs already exist in British Columbia—at BC Hydro—does not register.

As noted, most IPP projects are typically capital intensive in nature. While the frequently-cited large investment sums sound impressive, they provide few permanent jobs, something that was not acknowledged. For example, reporting by Judith Lavoie on the (subsequently canceled) Holberg wind project highlights the employment potential of the project:

> The wind farm will mean about six permanent jobs for local residents and, during construction, there will be an estimated 100 person years of work, he said. "It's a big construction effort and then we'll be training people to operate the plant and do things like maintenance," he said. (TC99)

There is no attempt to place the reality of six permanent jobs in the context of the total investment. As Calvert (2007b) points out, this was to be a $100 million project—which amounts to around $16 million per job (p.141).

Notions of risk surface again, here not in regard to imported versus domestic (private) power, but concerning the appropriateness of locating risk in

the public versus private sector. I contend that, once again, upon closer examination this division proves illusory. Under the public/private dichotomy, risk is constructed as the natural domain of the private sector. In this neoliberal understanding, there is a degree of social value ascribed to privatized risk, the hallmark of entrepreneur who willingly takes on risk in exchange for the chance of profit. Public risk, on the other hand is seen as thrust upon us all, whether we want to take it on or not, often as a result of irresponsible politicians who do not have to bear the consequences of their own actions. Therefore, the opportunity to shift risk from the public to the private sector presents as a "natural" one. Hence, the editors of the Sun tell us that

> the restructuring makes sense. Plenty of private companies are interested in generating power for sale to B.C. Hydro, for export and for direct sales to industry. They'd like to take on the investment and the risk in return for a chance to profit. (VS5)

As well, "it's time British Columbia looked seriously at shifting investment risk away from taxpayers to shareholders" (TS33). To accomplish this redirection, the conditions need to be put in place to attract private investment. If they are not, so Task Force Chair Jack Ebbels tells us, "the government will continue to be the major investor in supplying electrical power and we believe the investment risk is best absorbed by the private sector" (VS17). The private sector takes on risk that otherwise would be public, and the public benefits economically as a result.

In fact, the central risk proponents fear from new public generation is the creation of new public debt:

> By shifting the burden and risk of investment from the taxpayer to the private sector, British Columbians are spared the burden of adding to the

> public debt, while securing low-cost power over the long term. (Richard Neufeld, TC76)
>
> Some suggest the government itself should invest more. This is neither reasonable nor prudent. The cost of servicing BC Hydro's $7- billion debt load has "maxed out" the utility's credit card. Future investments by the Crown would mean B.C. taxpayers will be on the hook for even more debt, and electricity ratepayers would face escalating debt-servicing costs. (Fauzia Lalani, VS23)

It is revealing to compare the "up-to-the-eyeballs" (VS31) debt of BC Hydro of $7 billion with the sums contracted to IPPs considered above, including $15.6 billion in the 2006 call alone—in effect a public revenue stream that will be put to paying private debt. And, unlike public debt-financed facilities, after those payments have been made to private producers and the power has all been used, rate-payers will still have nothing to show for them. Unlike the "crippling" effects of public investment, the effect of such payments to the private sector passed without (negative) comment by proponents. As observed under the subthemes of *crisis* and *self-sufficiency*, the conceptualization of risk here also only considers one side of the equation. This complete neglect of public cost of private IPP debt, allows private power to be presented as inherently economically superior. The degree to which it is successful is the degree to which the newspaper reader (and perhaps writer) misrecognizes the economic nature of public and private production.

Energy expert Mark Jaccard also sees the risks in regard to production decisions as best left to IPPs:

> Experts around the world say that there is huge uncertainty about what constitutes the best investment to meet future electricity needs—coal, natural gas, large hydro, nuclear, small renewables. Some of those investments will be colossal losers, but we don't know which. Do we want

> B.C. taxpayers to carry all of that huge financial risk...or do we want to share it with independent power producers who will lose their shirts—not ours—if they get it wrong? (VS71)

Such arguments might carry some weight in a truly free market system, where investors were willing to take significant risks in the face of real uncertainty. Yet throughout the sample a concurrent theme to that of investors taking on risk is the need to create an "environment conducive to private investment." What this amounts to (and to varying degrees is explicitly acknowledged) is a need to eliminate or externalize as much risk as possible. In fact, the ability to demonstrate low risk is essential to IPPs getting the financial backing they require, something that is occasionally acknowledged under the *public/private dichotomy*:

> Independent Power Producers Association of B.C. president Steve Davis is hoping that those signals herald accelerated growth and a stable investment climate—something that he said is lacking in the independent power sector....If [BC Hydro officials] indicate that Hydro is prepared to commit to a regular call for tenders it will improve the ability of independent project developers to attract investment cash, Davis said (VS109).

> Association president Steve Davis said the announcement [that BC Hydro will seek to purchase up to 2,000 gigawatts of power from independent producers by 2006] will make it easier for independent project developers to raise investment cash for new projects because they now have certainty that Hydro will be a willing and regular buyer. (VS110)

Further, although it is rarely directly admitted, any risk that they cannot avoid IPPs will attempt to pass on:

> Business Council of B.C. executive vice-president Jock Finlayson agreed Hydro's decision could make it more difficult for independent power proponents to raise cash—with Hydro customers eventually shouldering "risk premiums" added to capital costs of new projects. (VS122)

It should not be surprising that firms operating in a capitalist economy would seek to avoid risk or to pass it along to customers whenever possible. The removal or socialization of risk independently of return directly increases profit potential. The construction of IPPs as naturally risk-adopting, which paradoxically connects to their simultaneous construction as rationally-calculating sovereign actors, is indicative of symbolic violence. This is further realized in the belief that by shifting generation to private energy interests we are removing risk from the public. Presented as ideal neoliberal economic actors, IPPs are cast rational risk calculators, yet the short inference from this—that they are rational risk *minimizers*—is ignored. As I have attempted to show, the policies under consideration actually shift economic risk to the public sector—the financial, supply and ultimately social risk deriving from long-term above-market contracts and from the virtual giveaway of valuable natural resources.

vii) The public value of public power

On the other side of the *public/private dichotomy*, opponents challenge the neoliberal characterizations of IPPs as dynamic risk-takers who will bring about the change we need. The "need" to turn to the active agency of private producers to meet our needs is, in reality, a convenient fiction intended to further the deregulatory agenda. Further, BC Hydro's supposed ineffectuality results from the conscious choices of politicians, the need to turn to IPPs a self-fulfilling prophecy: "They've put B.C. Hydro in a box today and sealed the lid on it," says NDP Leader Joy MacPhail (VS64).

Doubts are raised whether IPPs are actually capable of meeting the needs of British Columbians. Concern is not just with production, but with the outsourcing of "non-core" operations to Accenture. Bruce Cran of the BC Consumers Union raises the track record of the company:

> In Ontario, Accenture was contracted to run the welfare system. While Accenture assures the public that the contract saved Ontario money, the provincial auditor-general concluded in 1999 the deal cost $180 million, triple the original estimates, with some Accenture management making up to $575 an hour.
>
> Most recently, Florida's joint legislative auditing committee criticized a deal to hire Accenture to provide a call centre and online licensing system. While Accenture claims Florida will save over $93 million US, the state auditor reports the deal will cost Florida $30 million more than the current system. (VS43)

In contradistinction to proponents' characterization of BC Hydro as a moribund obstacle to progress or out of control gorilla, opponents stress the economic and policy value of a publically-owned full-service utility. Trade unionists "say the [Task Force's] suggestions would rob the province of a key public policy tool for economic development and a cornerstone of prosperity" (VS11). Furthermore, "opponents of deregulation and privatization say such low-cost power is an entitlement homeowners and industry deserve because they paid for that prudent development" (VS12). The appeal to prudence present in the deregulatory frame is turned on its head. It is the "prudent development" (TC18) of BC Hydro that has created the efficient and effective system we have today.

Contrary to constructions of risk in the deregulatory frame, where a proclaimed virtue of deregulation is the transfer of risk to the private sector, in the

counter-deregulatory frame such a move is seen as illusory. As one letter-writer puts it, responding to a pro-deregulatory op-ed:

> She tells us this would "shift investment risk away from taxpayers to shareholders."... Assailed by this constant barrage of corporate propaganda, it's hard to keep in mind that as the end users, we pay all the costs of the provision of services. There are no sugar daddies. Taxpayers pay the golden handshakes and the fast ferries. We pay it all. (TC36)

For proponents, BC Hydro as a full-service public utility offers an economic and social advantage in the provision of a critical service, now and for the future. In particular, it avoids the high prices necessary to attract the private investment that comes with integration into a market system:

> [T]here is nothing to suggest that BC Hydro cannot meet future challenges. BC Hydro can finance increased generation at much lower interest rates than the private sector. Neufeld has admitted that attracting private producers would require higher, not lower, prices....
>
> BC Hydro isn't selling toasters. It is providing its citizens and communities with reliable, affordable and relatively clean electricity that is necessary for almost every aspect of life and work. Our integrated system also provides the third lowest energy rates in North America—a key economic advantage we would be foolhardy to throw away. (Murray Dobbin and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, VS24)

Similarly, "British Columbians are suffering a serious power loss—and it's not electricity. They are losing the power to determine their energy future" (TC102). It is not through privatized power that we "control our destiny" but by way of the development of strong public institutions, epitomized by BC Hydro:

> "It was a vision going back to the end of the Second World War," says Norman Ruff, a political scientist at the University of Victoria. "That cheap power was the foundation for rapid economic development of the province." It was also a sign that B.C. was setting a course for itself, adds Pierre-Olivier Pineau.... "Hydro means, historically, a sense of a province taking control over its destiny," he says. (TC50)

In an inversion of deregulatory construction of IPPs as bringing economic development to small communities,

> [e]lectricity from B.C. Hydro is the lifeblood of communities that are extracting wealth from natural resources. When power costs rise, these mines, pulp and paper mills, and electro-mechanical industries are forced to react—and the result can be job losses, if the higher rates mean the operations are no longer viable. (Colonist editors, TC19)

Whereas in the deregulatory frame expanding private power takes on normative overtones (through the need for "self-sufficiency"), here it is the preservation of BC Hydro that is cast in an emblematic role, ingrained in the provincial identity. Political scientist Norman Ruff:

> In some parts of the province Hydro is still considered the huge monster that flooded their valleys. But outside the echo of those battles, Hydro is symbolic of successful public policy intervention. It's a major symbol in terms of public policy in this province, as medicare is nationally.... I believe that every family who has been in this province for the last 20 to 40 years has an ingrained memory of this institution. (TC50)

In one example, the public/private dichotomy is directly subverted. Former premier Barrett points out that BC Hydro was the creation of the right-of-centre W.A.C. Bennett and was supported across party lines—a non-ideological vision of the benefits of public ownership that stands in direct contrast to the ideologically-driven privatization underway here and elsewhere:

> [T]hat stands as the only act of seizure of a private corporation in this province," orchestrated by "Bennett, that famous secret socialist."...
>
> The original "strange bedfellows" example came about when the legislature voted on the act to formalize the nationalization. In the provincial legislature, those days, were Liberal, Social Credit and CCF MLAs—50 members in all. Every member voted in favour of the act. There was "not one dissenter." Barrett believes the decision was good for B.C. in 1961 and remains so in 2003. (TC78)

viii) *The negative economic consequences of deregulation*

Unlike many proponents who see (or at least profess to the media) unbounded economic opportunity for IPPs and the province as whole from private power, opponents view private power as undermining the advantages of BC Hydro discussed above. The end result will be economic adversity the citizens of British Columbia. Most opponents referenced the economic downside the government's policy. For example:

> The plans by the government to privatize B.C. Hydro illustrate a lack of economic wisdom. Last year, B.C. Hydro contributed $904 million to the B.C. treasury, money we badly need for health care, child protection, education and other services. (TC40)

The importance of "small business" reappears. Whereas for proponents prosperity derives from the IPP-as-small-business (personified as the "little guy"), for opponents, BC Hydro provides an economic foundation on which small business can build:

> [Small businesses] purchased more than $800 million in electricity from B.C. Hydro in 2001. For the chamber to support the breakup of the company, the selling of the transmission lines and the introduction of more private energy will create real economic hardship for all British Columbians. (Jim Sinclair, VS35)

The advantage of public ownership of new generating facilities over private was occasionally referred to by proponents, but given minimal profile, in my estimation, relative to the importance of this issue. In an opinion editorial, Murray Dobbin notes:

> Over the past 10 years, costs of B.C. Hydro- generated electricity have increased less than one per cent. During the same period, costs for private power increased 77 per cent. If we had relied on private energy companies 30 years ago, our rates would be much higher today.....

> Given a choice, most people would be a homeowner instead of renting. Not the Liberals. They would rather pay private energy companies rent—in the form of American market prices—than build our own plants and have British Columbians own our electricity assets. (TC102)

There is some recognition by opponents that the debt servicing costs of private production are ultimately still borne by rate-payers. One writer (Craig McInnis) points out that the future obligation to IPPs for private power purchases (as of fiscal year 2007) is $28 billion. He goes on to note that "that money will have to be paid by the consumers of electricity, just as they would have to pay debt charges if the government had chosen instead to built [sic] publicly owned generating facilities" (VS214).

Government policy is seen by opponents as a public subsidization of and transfer of resources to the private sector. Jerri New, OPEIU president, contends that "[t]he public is being asked to subsidize—through higher electricity rates—the private takeover of the most valuable public asset now owned by all British Columbians" (TC28).[79] As another opponent puts it, "why transfer any of this BC Hydro success to private industry?" (TC3). Marjorie Griffin Cohen refers to plans for BC Hydro as "Three Weddings and a Funeral." The funeral is for BC Hydro's critical role in the province. The weddings are with Accenture, RTO West and private power producers:

> Unlike modern, healthy marriages between equals, these marriages are bad bargains where one partner loses most of what it brings into the marriage and its identity is wiped out. For B.C. Hydro—and the public which owns the sizable electricity assets in B.C.—these liaisons offer an extremely costly and unstable future....
>
> What remains of B.C. Hydro will be in the public sector, but the corporation itself will be near lifeless. The business of electricity in B.C. is being rapidly privatized, with a shift in focus away from meeting the needs

> of the people of this province and toward meeting the needs of private power producers. (TC75)

Adrian Dix also refers to the devaluing of a public asset for private gain, as well as the policy of public risk for private profit:

> [The premier] is shielding private power interest from fair competition and freezing out B.C. Hydro. This policy by itself, will negatively affect the value of a public asset.... If anything, this plan is even worse than the wholesale privatization of B.C. Hydro, in which the public would at least receive the proceeds of the sale. This plan represents the systematic devaluing of a public asset for short-term private gain. It keeps the risk in public hands while private interests—from Accenture to IPPs—exercise most of the control and reap the lion's share of the benefits. (TC66)

ix) The absence of consultation and the undermining of democracy

Throughout the theme of the *public/private dichotomy*, opponents protest in the media that the plans to reshape BC Hydro are proceeding in the absence of public consultation. Beyond the anti-democratic nature of the process, the end result—deeper integration into a market-based continental system—is seen as undercutting local democratic control of the electricity system. While for proponents, "self-sufficiency" through the privatization of supply is the means to control our destiny, for opponents it represents the opposite: a relinquishing of control over planning and supply decisions to unaccountable and ultimately external forces.

Policy development proceeds without public input, so it is claimed, and attempts by individuals and organizations to express their point of view fall on deaf ears. For example, Comox-Strathcona Regional District director, Jim Abram, refers to a motion at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities annual convention calling for an end to the breakup of Hydro, but complains that "there

is a complete reluctance to have any public consultation from this point on" (TC71). In 2005, the Liberal government intervened at the last minute to prevent BC Hydro from releasing its Integrated Energy Plan. Critics took the government to task for anti-democratic and anti-consultative nature of this action, as well as its hypocrisy. NDP energy critic Corky Evans "said the province's 11th-hour involvement casts a shadow across more than a year's worth of community consultation and preparatory work by BC Hydro" (VS129). Comparison is made with the sale of Terasen Gas, where the government refused to intervene, saying that the BCUC must be left to do its job independently:

> What I find really bizarre is that it flies in the face of the Liberal mantra, maintained all through the public debate about the sale of Terasen Gas and the controversy about the [CN] railroad and all kinds of stuff, that it was not their intention to manipulate public processes or commissions or Crown corporations.[80] (NDP energy critic, Corky Evans, VS129)

> The Liberals said the same thing about Hydro [as they did about Terasen Gas]. Decisions would be governed by the province's energy needs, by markets for power, and the public interest. "The days of political interference are over,"—the Liberals said it again and again. Perhaps Bob Elton and his team at BC Hydro believed them. Which must have made this week an important learning experience for all concerned. (Vaughan Palmer, VS128)

The planned changes to the system are seen as too big to happen without full consultation with the rightful owners of BC Hydro. As one letter writer puts it,

> Hydro belongs to all four million citizens of this province and its destruction with the resulting hike in electricity costs shouldn't be at the behest of a few elected representatives. If the government thinks that an incomplete interim report gives them the mandate to break up, sell off and deregulate BC Hydro, they are badly mistaken. (TC31)

In their statements to the media, opponents point to the inconsistency of the government claim that it is reinvigorating the BCUC to increase public accountability of BC Hydro, while it simultaneously exempts the BCUC from

overseeing policy changes.[81] One writer complains that "all of these changes will occur before the British Columbia Utilities Commission has the mandate and ability to review them. It will have happened and it will be a market-driven model by then. It will be too late" (VS48). With regard to the Accenture deal, "while the provincial government says it will put B.C. Hydro under stronger regulation by the B.C. Utilities Commission, the commission has refused to review [the Accenture] deal, the largest of its kind in Canadian history" (VS44). Proponents also complain that:

> The Liberals have issued several 'special directions' to the B.C. Utilities Commission that limits their mandate. BCUC is not allowed to determine if a separate transmission company [BCTC] was a good idea, they can only determine if the costs are correct. (Murray Dobbin, TC102)

Finally, the cabinet directive to make self-sufficiency the primary goal, even ahead of price, means "The commission won't be allowed to ask Hydro, 'Why are you buying that? What value do you think it will provide? At what price do you think you are going to be able to sell the surplus?'" (VS212)

As the above example indicates, in addition to the absence of consultation in the process of itself, opponents point to the removal of public oversight as an outcome of the process. A strong case can be made that deregulation reduces the ability of the public to oversee the electricity system and have input into the decisions that shape it. I believe that deregulation advocates in fact admit as much when they contend that the common weal is best served by individual producers independently pursuing their own self-interest. As a public company, BC Hydro is subject to public oversight, private companies are just that—private. In the provision of public services by the private sector, "commercial

confidentiality" concerns invariably impede the public's ability to ascertain the details of how its money is spent. As one writer puts it, "private companies are not regulated the same way as B.C. Hydro. While B.C. Hydro must justify every paperclip, private companies sign deals without full public hearings" (TC102). In an opinion-editorial, Andy Ross, president of a CUPE local 378 notes that "we learned in the legislature under opposition questioning that Accenture has paid a $250,000 penalty for not meeting the terms of its contract with B.C. Hydro—but we do not know any of the details, either when or why." He continues:

> And the Accenture contract remains a secret deal, with key parts of the agreement never disclosed for "commercial confidentiality" reasons.
>
> Nor do we know why the B.C. Transmission Corp., a new Crown corporation recently spun off from B.C. Hydro, has cancelled its own service contract with Accenture. (TC132)

The implications of transforming BC Hydro—from a full-service utility serving local needs on a cost-of-production basis to just one actor in an integrated continental market—lie at the heart of opponents' expressed fears of loss of control and the consequent undermining of democracy. No longer can supply be planned and directed under a policy of meeting local needs. The logical end point is a system where the market dictates where electricity goes and for what price, where we compete with California for electricity produced in British Columbia:

> Whereas B.C. Hydro's first priority is to provide energy to the domestic B.C. market, private power producers will seek the highest price for the power in the U.S. market. Suppliers will therefore only provide power to B.C. Hydro customers at U.S. rates. B.C. consumers will slowly lose their price advantage and control of the cost of energy in B.C. will be determined in Washington state and California. (Adrian Dix, TC66)

The inevitable result is not only harmonization of prices to the (much higher) regional market price, but a loss of ability to control local supply and plan for future development, whether that be to ensure energy security, further environmental protection, or any other policy objective. Here we again see the government's energy policy as undercutting—rather than advancing—democratic control of our destiny, as prices now come to be set by market forces beyond our borders.

Concerns over integration into North American markets are amplified by international trade agreements, such as the *North American Free Trade Agreement* (NAFTA). Chapter 11 of NAFTA sets out a range of protections for corporations from the U.S. and Mexico investing in Canada. For instance, Article 1110 prohibits direct or indirect "expropriation" or "measures tantamount to nationalization or expropriation of an investment." Once U.S.-based private power interests establish themselves in British Columbia, the effect of such provisions may be to lock in a deregulated system. Regulatory changes that attempt to move back in favour of public production could be challenged on the basis of their negative impact on the business interests of these corporations.[82] Reference in the sample to the effects of international trade agreements was infrequent and, with a few exceptions, far from extensive. Critiques were limited to opinion editorials:

> The driving force behind deregulation is the promotion of energy exports. But to attract private players into in the export market, the current regulated low price, based on production cost, would have to be replaced with "market" prices. Our prices would be harmonized with California and the rest of the North American market. Under North America Free Trade Agreement and World Trade Organization rules, we could not have a

> differential price for B.C. consumers. (Murray Dobbin and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, VS24)

One example links the significance of the policy implications under NAFTA with the lack of public consultation leading up to them:

> These changes are radical, and under international trade agreements they will be binding—yet they're occurring without debate and without a clear mandate from the public. Because they are so serious and irreversible, they deserve much more public scrutiny. (Marjorie Griffin Cohen, TC75)

The above concerns coalesce in opponents' comments to the media indicating that they see a *hidden agenda* on the part of government to illegitimately expand its power and avoid public scrutiny, all while surreptitiously entrenching a privatized model that is removed from public oversight. They are highly suspicious that the government is not being honest and open about its true plans for BC Hydro. The radical recommendations of the Interim Report, the lack of public consultation, the close alignment between the calls of private producers and government policy, the absence of compelling reasons offered for the changes—all fuel suspicion. The permanency of these changes increases the need for secrecy on the part of the government. As discussed NAFTA is one obstacle to a subsequent reversal of policy. Moreover, many of the measures implemented, such as the break-up and de-integration of BC Hydro, are logical preliminary steps to an eventual complete privatization. And, as we have seen, opponents point to deregulatory measures as devaluing BC Hydro and as transferring that value to the private sector. Supporters of public power inevitably become less able to counter further pressure to privatize BC Hydro as IPPs come to occupy an ever-greater role in the system.

Thus, the public is "kept in the dark" when it comes to BC Hydro's long-term plans and strategies (TC107). Preventing more of the public investments that has served us so well is "a gradual, back-door process of privatization" (VS216), a process of "insidious privatization" (TC66) that will see BC Hydro "butchered" (TC48). Other examples include:

> Nettleton accuses them of having a secret privatization plan for Hydro that looks "benign" and can be denied, but will spell disaster. (TC51)
>
> "It's is [sic] incremental privatization," Veerkamp said. "If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck."
>
> NDP Leader Joy MacPhail accused the government of "creeping privatization" and surreptitiously opening up transmission to the private sector. (TS58)

One letter challenges the "scare tactics" found in the crisis theme of the deregulatory frame:

> The [Vancouver Sun] editorial makes use of the *extortion strategy* to win the argument for building more generation. A careful review of previous electricity demand forecasts for our province would show a consistent pattern of exaggeration. (VS133, my emphasis)

Other proponents wonder whether the *nothing is changing* rhetoric is a means to disguise the very significant planned changes:

> Some, like [University of Victoria political scientist] Ruff, suggest the very fact the government is going out of its way to say at every turn "we're not privatizing B.C. Hydro" is reason for concern. "Me-thinks they do protest too much," he says, though he gives them the benefit of the doubt for the moment.
>
> But Ruff says the concern is reasonable, as the new policy has set the stage for privatization. (TC50)

Opponents see this hidden agenda as grounded in ideology and thus unconcerned with the opinions of and desires of the general public. Government policies reflect a "private-enterprise" (TC7), "open-for-business philosophy of

'private is good' and 'public is bad'" (TC104). "This is really an ideological battle for the future of this province," says Jim Sinclair (VS69):

> By needlessly making our transmission system subservient to U.S. interests, the government is, once again, making an enormous public policy mistake as a result of blind ideology (Citizens for Public Power, VS90)
>
> [T]he Liberal government is committed to an ideological plan of change. Premier Gordon Campbell is, if nothing else, a master of misdirection, and he has clearly outdone himself with energy policy. (Adrian Dix, TC66)

At the same time, opponents see the government's policy agenda as not purely ideological but driven by IPPs, powerful private interests who wield considerable influence over the government and make up its real constituency. CPP contends that "the government's energy policy is being driven by private energy companies, not the needs of consumers" (TC49), and Nettleton "believes a great deal of pressure has been put on cabinet by private power producers looking for a piece of the action" (TC52). Jim Sinclair sees claims to be "establishing a business model for competitive services" and "streamlining commercial enterprises" as "buzzwords for dismantling the Crown utility into three parts....This is a payback to the energy industry and their donations to the Liberal government and it's unacceptable." (TC8)

The media claims of opponents link government ideology and public loss of control to the power of American interests—more specifically, those of American-based private producers, who spy investment opportunities, and the U.S. government, which seeks to implement a continental energy policy. Rather than answering to the democratic wishes of the citizens of British Columbia, the government is (covertly) responsive to foreign organizations. For example the

push to conform to continental electricity rates is driven by the "promoters of mostly foreign-owned power [who] see the opportunity to take over existing systems and, being unregulated, make big bucks," asserts one letter writer (TC12). More interesting, perhaps, is the acknowledgement of the same point by proponents. Whereas proponents are usually chary of seeming to be beholden to U.S. interests, they at times put forth the claim that breaking up BC Hydro is a prerequisite to joining the RTO, itself necessary if we wish to continue selling electricity to the United States:

> The transmission capacity will be hived off both to make it easier to sell into the lucrative U.S. market and to make it easier for independent producers to operate in B.C., Neufeld said.[83]
>
> [T]here will be some changes to the face of B.C. Hydro to accommodate the energy world that we live in today," he said. (VS49)
>
> Such a move [separating transmission] is also urged by U.S. federal regulators, who...is [sic] urging utilities that control both generation and transmission to unbundle the functions. B.C. makes about $150 million a year from power exports, Neufeld said. Leaving Hydro in charge of transmission could endanger that revenue, he said. (TC73)

As mentioned, whether such changes are actually required to ensure access to the U.S. market is contested. Undoubtedly, such moves are seen as favourable by private power companies on this side of the border and by large private utilities in the U.S., who see any restriction on access to British Columbia's transmission network as an impediment to business and BC Hydro as an unfairly advantaged market player. As we have seen, private power companies and, at times, government officials have taken an active interest in advancing such changes.

In summary, the media theme of the *public/private dichotomy* as propagated by proponents casts IPPs as the naturally superior economic actors; opponents, on the other hand, see public power as a valuable economic and social asset, the maintenance of which is essential to retaining control over electricity policy in British Columbia. Breaking up BC Hydro and shifting production to the private sector will not only lead to negative economic impacts, but is part of an anti-democratic process that redirects electricity policy from the interests of British Columbians to those of private, and often foreign, concerns. Like proponents, opponents appeal to themes they hope will resonate with their audience, particularly to fears regarding the role of ideology, the influence of external forces or the desire of government to transfer public value to private (and perhaps well-connected) interests.

My perspective is that a thorough analysis of the claims of opponents reveals they generally have a much stronger grounding than those of proponents. Perhaps partly as a result of the newspaper format and the need for concision, this broader analysis is only partly evidenced in the reporting. Letters and opinion editorials provide greater opportunity in this regard, and I have reproduced some of these examples above. Yet it should be noted that in an effort to convey an accurate sense of this discourse such critiques are over-represented here compared to the arguments of proponents. They occupy a considerably smaller portion of the sample as a whole than they do of this text—a fact I would once again tie to the hegemonic force and symbolic violence of the deregulatory frame.

C. Deregulation and Environmental Benefits/Harm

A third theme that emerged is a linkage of deregulation to environmental benefits or harm. Here there is a notable temporal difference in coverage. Reporting is most critical in regard to earlier policy statements and documents, particularly the Task Force reports and 2002 Energy Plan. In contrast, the 2007 Energy Plan (and the lead up to it, which included a speech from the throne with a significant environmental theme) received a much warmer reception on the environmental front. As will be seen, notions of progress appear once more. As well, there is an equating of private power and individualization with greenness and environmental responsibility.

Given the paucity of comprehensive environmental critique within the counter-deregulatory frame, I have structured this section somewhat differently from the previous two. I first discuss the couching of government electricity policy in environmental language within the deregulatory frame (*At last we can be green*). I then consider the depoliticization and responsibilization that result from this rhetorical approach. Finally, I look more specifically at the rhetoric of environmentalists in regard to the government's policies, a discourse that strides both the deregulatory and counter-deregulatory frame.

i) At last we can be green

As represented in the media considered, proponents of deregulation tie the development of sustainable power to the private sector—the "green and small" sector. If the private sector is green, then by default, the public sector is non-green. The reality that, by emissions criteria at least, BC Hydro's hydroelectric

system is quintessentially green was almost never mentioned.[84] It is worth noting that several certification processes do not consider environmentally friendly the type of river diversion facilities that make up the bulk of private projects in British Columbia. Cohen (2006) notes a study by the Pace University Center for Environmental Legal Studies that found that large-scale hydro dams and run-of-the-river projects can be low impact but usually only when they are publically owned and highly regulated (p.82).

Thus, the presentation of BC Hydro as resisting the necessary involvement of the private sector seen in the *public/private dichotomy* (pp. 74-110) extends to include an undermining of the development of our green energy potential. Prior to the 2007 Energy Plan, BC Hydro was generally presented as stymieing the private sector in its efforts to green the province. I reproduce excerpts from a representative case below:

> In an interview, Dauncey [representing BCSEA, a prominent environmental group on this issue] said no jurisdiction in North America is better situated for the advancement of "green" technologies: "We are the most favourably placed jurisdiction in the whole of North American [sic] for having 100 per cent green power."
>
> But while Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are in the forefront of developing wind power, B.C. has yet to build its first commercial projects. (Don Whiteley, VS134)

BC Hydro's claimed anti-environmentalism connects to the inefficacity described above (*BC Hydro as moribund* obstacle). The great potential of tidal power also remains undeveloped, another indication of how we are falling behind the rest of the world:

> "[Tidal power] is our Niagara Falls," says Michael Maser, communications director at Blue Energy Canada Ltd. "But we're not pumping a single kilowatt of tidal energy in this province. That's staggering."

> Dauncey concurs, pointing out that the United Kingdom is pouring millions of pounds into the development of tidal energy in recognition of its value as an emerging technology....
>
> "At the moment, we're losing the race. Britain is jumping ahead and throwing money at tidal energy." (VS134)

Thus, once IPPs are given a fair shake, we can begin the transition to sustainable power. In addition to the manifest economic benefits deriving from deregulation, the private sector now offers a solution to our environmental problems.

ii) Depoliticization and responsiblization

At one level, equating private power with green power depoliticizes fundamental decisions concerning our energy system. Other things being equal, only the most partisan would favour an environmentally harmful option when an environmentally friendly one is available. Without exception, documents touting the benefits of new green (IPP) projects ignore or elide the distinction between the sustainability of production method and ownership of the project. I reproduce an excerpt from a typical example below (by Scott Simpson). Note how in this context a proponent (Minister Neufeld) points to the positive features of BC Hydro's system. Yet the organization's efficiency, and resulting low rates, also appear as a discouraging element, a de facto admission that the private sector cannot compete directly in the quest to develop new sources. The question of why, given the utility's past success, such green generation should not be developed by BC Hydro receives no consideration. I found no instances under this theme where it did.

> B.C. Sustainable Energy Association president Guy Dauncey said six new proposals to build to build [sic] wind farms in northern B.C. suggest that one of the world's greenest energy sources will finally arrive in this province....
>
> B.C. Energy Minister Richard Neufeld said the absence of wind power from B.C.'s energy grid is due in large part to an historic abundance of cheap, clean hydro power. Other provinces such as Alberta, he noted, use wind to offset the environmental impacts of their overwhelming reliance on coal- and natural gas-fired generation....
>
> Hydro announced earlier this week that three wind power proponents, presenting a total of six projects, answered the crown corporation's open call for new electricity sources. (Scott Simpson, VS148)

In a particularly illustrative example of this reduction of *green* to *private*, the Liberals justify the removal of private power projects from local zoning requirements (Bill 30, *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment* Act) on environmental grounds:

> Benign, clean, renewable power is a provincial priority that trumps whatever worries people living near the projects might have, in the Liberals' view. So they removed the potential zoning hurdles earlier this year, which is what brought the [Union of B.C. Municipalities'] delegates to the barricades yesterday.[85] (Les Leyne, TC154)

While not sufficient in itself to neutralize resistance by local government, the invocation of environmental concerns to occlude this anti-democratic intervention on behalf of private interests clearly serves to increase its political acceptability.[86]

As in much of the broader discourse surrounding environmental issues, proposed solutions place an onus on the individual to take responsibility for the problem and become part of the solution. On the demand side, consumers must take responsibility for their environmental footprint, making the necessary lifestyle and consumption adjustments to reach the 2007 Energy Plan goal of meeting 50 percent of projected increases in demand via conservation. The exemplar below touches on the key issues in this subtheme:

> In a news release, Energy Minister Richard Neufeld said the study shows that by incorporating new energy-efficient technologies and changing personal electricity consumption habits, "we can meet much of our future need for electricity through conservation."
>
> "Energy efficiency and conservation must become a way of life and a way of doing business in our communities," he said in the release.
>
> Many of the savings come from simple, straightforward tactics such as replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents, turning thermostats down, 'wearing sweaters,' turning off computers and monitors when they're not being used, and using fans in lieu of air conditioners. (Scott Simpson, VS232)

This responsibilization evident in regard to environmental protection, however, extends beyond the consumer, connecting to and reinforcing representations of the IPP as the ideal of neoliberal citizenry. Now the IPP-as-pioneering-entrepreneur, described under the subtheme of the *public/private dichotomy* (pp. 74-110) presents as not only a solution to the (alleged) economic risks we face, but also as a panacea for the even greater (and likely genuine) environmental risk. The example below, in which IPP company officials discuss the Anyox private power project, illustrates well this neoliberal construction of entrepreneur as environmentalist, taking responsibility for the planet:

> "We can't keep up with runaway consumption," Wolrige said, noting that outside of B.C. much of the electricity consumed is produced by burning non-renewable fossil fuels....
>
> Ebnet said the Anyox project addressed a lot of things they look for. It would be clean energy, using existing resources and support jobs and economic stimulus in an area that is in need of it....
>
> "Green power, we feel, is vital to the planet," said Colleen Anderson, CEO of Carroll's company. She added that the company's involvement is a statement that people have to make deliberate, sustainable, choices for the way they operate in the world.
>
> Carroll said if people don't do so, "we'll be up a creek without a creek. To participate in this project sets an example that we want to make a difference and we're putting our own resources behind it." (Derrick Penner, VS39)

I do not mean to detract from the importance of personal responsibility when it comes to addressing environmental challenges. However, making it the central policy tenet at both the demand and supply level neglects the reality that environmental issues are also *political* issues, requiring political, and not just personal, solutions. Hence, while private power corporations are applauded for choosing run-of-the-river over coal production, analysis of the environmental implications of turning all new generation over to the private sector is completely absent. Even if this new generation is comparatively green (and, as discussed below, it is not universally environmentally benign), the question arises whether turning to a system premised on maximal growth is really in accord with the goal of sustainability. As well, the environmental implications of lessening public control over the system by requiring "non-discriminatory" access to the transmission network in order to facilitate energy exports and integration with a continental market must be considered. The most environmentally-friendly energy policy is conservation. And a publicly owned utility serving a defined area is subject to a considerable conservation imperative. Given the large costs of adding new generation, the cheapest alternative is invariably demand side management (DSM)—providing consumers with incentives, either financial or ethical, to reduce energy usage. (An example is BC Hydro's PowerSmart program, which encourages consumers to make conscious choices to reduce their electricity consumption.) In a system of privatized production and open energy markets, the raison d'etre of producers is to generate and sell as much power as possible. Now localized DSM efforts function only to increase the

amount of power available for export to foreign markets. (See Calvert, 2007b; Cohen, 2001 and 2006; and Simmons et al., 2002.) Under the environmental rubric, however, such questions received no consideration.

Depoliticization also affected conceptualizations of consumer responsibility. Conservation messages were aimed exclusively at residential consumers. They are the ones who must take responsibility and make sacrifices. Media messages targeting large industrial users who consume the bulk of electricity production were absent. In fact, while the government was urging restraint for the ordinary user, it enacted the Heritage Contract, described above, which primarily benefits large industrial users, protecting the substantially lower rate bulk usage rate paid by this group. If the symbolic violence of neoliberal ideology renders the corporation both visible and invisible, here we see an example of the invisible side. Given that IPPs are immanently present as environmental saviours, one might think that large-scale industrial users would appear as hyper-consumptive devils. But instead they are completely absent from consideration.

As mentioned, this responsibilization and depoliticization of environmental response cuts across a wide range of claims-makers, encompassing not only the opponents of deregulation already described but also many environmentalists, who on many policy issues have stood in opposition to the provincial government. The resulting synergy gives the deregulatory frame here a particularly hegemonic characteristic. As such, it is worth examining in greater detail support from environmentalists for the discourse of electricity deregulation.

iii) Environmentalists and deregulation

Prior to the lead up to the 2007 Energy Plan, there was considerable criticism from environmentalists in the media examined of the government's energy planning and policy decisions. This was primarily focused on the narrow issue of type of generation and, in particular, the green-lighting of fossil fuel-powered generation. Of the projects granted approval under 2006 Energy Purchase Agreement process, environmental criticism focused on the planned development of coal-fired plants and their implications for greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Lisa Matthaus makes an effective comparison to the government's response to the Sumas II project:

> While the B.C. government successfully fought the proposed Sumas II gas-fired power plant in Washington State on the basis of air pollution impacts on the Fraser Valley, it has paradoxically approved standards for coal-fired power plants in B.C. that would allow 70 times more nitrogen oxide, 260 times more sulphur dioxide and seven times more particulate matter than Sumas II.
>
> Together, these dangerous pollutants cause asthma-inducing smog, forest-damaging acid rain and methyl mercury accumulation in the fish we eat. It is unclear why the communities of Similkameen Valley and the Peace region deserve to have lower air pollution standards than the Fraser Valley.
>
> These B.C. government guidelines also do not address greenhouse gas emissions. In a province facing escalating damage from mountain pine beetles and forest fires and flooding from rising sea levels, the decision to choose greenhouse gas-emitting coal technology when there are plenty of low-impact, renewable options available is simply irresponsible. (VS159)

Ideals of progress and the clean energy future to which we should be headed are contrasted with an atavistic government policy. The plan is "a giant leap backwards.... Coal-fired power plants are not a stepping stone to a greener future—rather, they represent a giant step backwards for the environment and for

our health" (VS159). We are moving in a direction "counter to world opinion" (VS71) with an energy plan that "simply allows B.C. to expand conventional sources of energy at a time we should be going in the opposite direction" (VS67). We are headed back to the nineteenth century. Dermot Foley of the David Suzuki Foundation complains that

> this energy report should be moving us into the 21st century with a focus on clean, renewable energy.... Instead the report is dragging us back to the 19th century and the days of coal.[87] This kind of energy plan means more greenhouse gas emissions, more air pollution and increased health impacts. (VS4)

In contrast to earlier policy documents and decisions, the 2007 Energy Plan was given a much warmer reception on the environmental front. This is no doubt in large part due to it genuinely being greener, helping to bring environmentalists on side. Nonetheless, I found no instances of environmentalists addressing the fact that the fundamentals of the 2007 plan—a shift to the private sector as the source of new power and the move to electricity "self-sufficiency"—derive from the much-derided 2002 plan. The only significant objection was to its continued support for oil and gas development, e.g., "It is inconsistent to promote energy conservation measures if, at the same time, we are busy increasing our emissions from the heavily-subsidized oil and gas sector," said the Sierra Club's Kathryn Molloy" (VS188).

The general absence of critique by environmentalists of "green" production as defined by the 2007 Energy Plan is notable given the considerable impacts, both from particular projects and from the net effect of the large-scale expansion of the production system. While the term *run-of-the-river* implies that the flow of

the river will be left unimpeded and on its natural course, this is not actually the case. Such projects involve the diversion of water, usually a significant amount, from the watercourse to a generation facility, after which it is returned. Ledcor's project on the Ashlu River involves a seven kilometer diversion (Richardson, 2004). The Chekamus project run takes a flow out of the river and runs it through an 11 km tunnel (Caldicott, 2007, p.3) As well, all run-of-the-river projects involve a headpond of some type to pool the water before it is diverted. This invariably leads to increased water temperatures, with negative impacts to fish in the water course. The dams creating these ponds can be of considerable size. The proposed McGregor/Herrick project includes a dam that is 77m high, a serious impediment to the "run" of the McGregor River (Caldicott, 2007, p.2).

To properly appreciate the environmental impact of these projects, however, it is necessary to move beyond the individual project to the macro-perspective of the policy as a whole. The government's thrust is the maximal development of all possible projects, and their cumulative impact—of the projects themselves and of secondary impacts from logging, access roads and transmission lines—remains unassessed. One project alone, Plutonic Power's project on the East Toba and Montrose rivers, requires almost 100 km of transmission lines (through an old growth management area) (Gillis, 2007). Yet there is no provincial planning process to assess the cumulative impacts of the potentially hundreds of new projects. The environmental impact of the resulting "spaghetti junction" of uncoordinated transmission lines could be severe in itself. Further, the provincial government has enacted legislation to override municipal

governments attempts to control private power development through their own planning processes (*Significant Projects Streamlining Act*) or to exempt private power projects from them altogether (Bill 30).

Critique by environmentalists of the impacts of "green" power was absent despite proponents' almost uniform presentation of such projects as "about as benign a way of meeting B.C.'s energy crunch as you can imagine" (TC139). Of course, I apply the usual caveat that it cannot be determined from documentary analysis alone whether this was the case because it was not offered or was not reported. But it does contrast with the readily reported critique of fossil-fuel based production. The following is from the sole story on the environmental effects of a run-of-the-river project. Even here, comment from environmental organizations is absent.

> A provincial decision is imminent on a proposed run-of-the-river independent power project that stands to change the face of an inlet north of Powell River that is one of the region's last refuges for species such as grizzly bears and threatened marbled murrelets.
>
> Plutonic Power Corp. describes its project at remote and unpopulated Toba Inlet near Desolation Sound as "green" and "environmentally benign" despite plans for development of 60 kilometres of roads, two power houses, and 145 kilometres of transmission lines.
>
> A guide-outfitter and ecotourism operator who has built a lodge at Homfray Channel, just southeast of Toba Inlet, fears his business and the area will be seriously harmed if the project proceeds.... This project could destroy a complete ecosystem along hundreds of miles of shoreline and hundreds of hectares of wilderness," warns Alan Rebane, owner of Pure Outdoor Lodges. (Larry Pynn, VS181)

In regard to generation from biomass, the following is a rare instance where proponent puffery is countered, here in regard to a plan to build a plant in Gold River to burn garbage trucked in from the United States:

> But [Gold River Mayor] Lewis said the company approached council earlier this year and showed a sample of the material that would be burned.
>
> "It looks like lint out of your dryer—it's not like big garbage bags coming from New Jersey with seagulls pecking at it," he said....
>
> However, groups such as the Conservation Voters of B.C. and Citizens for Public Power say burning garbage from the U.S. is a regressive step that goes against the B.C. energy plan, which says 50 per cent of new power should come from clean sources....
>
> Mark Veerkamp of Citizens for Public Power said independent power producers are exploiting massive loopholes in the province's clean-energy guidelines by developing proposals to burn dirty fuels such as garbage and coal.
>
> "If this is the government's idea of a new era for clean energy, we're in big trouble," he said. (TC100)

The claims of proponents in the sample regarding biomass proposals for the burning of waste wood (or beetle-killed pine), were not challenged, however. Government and industry present these as "greenhouse gas neutral," on the basis that if the wood were left in situ it would eventually decay and release its stored carbon. A difficulty with this reasoning is that it fails to consider that the carbon cycle is a dynamic process and that measuring the effect of greenhouse gases means accounting for release and reabsorption times. Left alone this wood would take decades to release its carbon, as opposed to the near-instantaneous release from incineration, leading to a much greater impact on GHG concentrations. (See Levey, 2004.)

In fact, some of the discourse from environmentalists directly furthers the deregulatory agenda, either by directly calling for private development or by making a depoliticized call for green power irrespective of ownership, which in a context of the dominant deregulatory agenda reduces to a call for private power. For example:

> Greenpeace campaigner Catherine Stewart said the province should include the creation of jobs in small communities and greenhouse gas reductions when it's calculating the value of wind energy and the price it is willing to pay for it.... She added that the report points out that economic opportunities for B.C. could expand to include manufacturing jobs in the sector. (VS38)

The awarding of energy purchase agreements to private wind power developers is met with an enthusiastic response on the part of some environmentalists:

> [Guy Dauncey of the BCSEA opines:] "Personally I think we need to move away from the fixation that the only thing the public is concerned about is cheap power."
>
> "When we buy shoes do we always buy just the cheapest shoes, or do we always just buy the cheapest food when we shop for groceries?"...
>
> Arthur Caldicott, president of GSX Concerned Citizens Coalition, said his energy watchdog group is pleased to find that the great majority of proposals are for green power....
>
> Overall, however, Caldicott said the group is encouraged by the preponderance of projects that don't burn fossil fuels or accelerate global climate change.
>
> "It's an interesting situation to find ourselves in, because we've been so critical of everything BC Hydro has done for so long," he said. "In this list of projects there isn't a lot, on the face of it, to criticize. Overall the picture is pretty good. They are mostly green." (VS148)

At another juncture, BCSEA claims that the 2007 Energy Plan

> presents British Columbia with a huge opportunity for sustainable energy.... [G]overnment should follow Ontario's recent example and implement a Standard Offer Contract to kick-start a renewable energy industry in B.C. (VS140)

In regards to the 2006 call for private power, the following exemplifies the limitation of the extant environmental critique, which takes each project in isolation, and neglects the implications of the underlying model:[88]

> Caldicott [of the GSX Coalition] said his group is concerned about the Gold River project and two coal-fired projects that have been proposed. "But of the 53 [other IPP proposals accepted by BC Hydro], that's only three of them that cause us some concern," he said. (TC137)

It is difficult to speculate on the motivations of environmental groups for not offering a broader critique. The outright call for deregulation that some environmental organizations have made in other contexts was not found in the sample. Endorsement here tended to be implicit and indirect. For some it may be part of a deliberate communications strategy—a concern that moving beyond analysis of production type would overly dilute and complicate the message. It is further possible that, faced with the reality of the prevailing neoliberal zeitgeist, many see a public solution as a political non-starter. (See Cohen, 2006, p.94.)

As well, much of the responsibilization that characterizes the environmental discourse originates with environmentalists, grounded in an ideal of individual responsibility as a path to sustainability. Proposed environmental solutions frequently involve a focusing down of social scale to a level considered compatible with the natural processes that sustain us—to the bioregional, the local, the individual—as epitomized in the slogan to "think global, act local." In the specific context of electricity, getting "off the grid"—producing your own power on site—is an ideal that traces from back-to-the-landers to contemporary urban environmentalists challenging municipal regulations. Sourcing electricity locally from "sustainable" production may be seen as a kind of electrical "hundred mile diet"—which would seem to represent a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the policy framework being put in place.

Further, speaking from my own experience, I can attest to a strong individualistic streak in much of the modern environmental movement, with a sometimes romanticized self-identity that is frequently linked to the heroic acts of

principled and often-maverick individuals. This connects to a deeply-held suspicion of state and bureaucratic power—a suspicion often borne out through bitter experience. There is perhaps, then, a propensity for the individualization and responsibilization present in the deregulatory frame to align with or appropriate this environmental narrative—a connection that appears to increase its rhetorical force.[89]

NOTES

[1] The names of some sections vary over time. For these I use generic terms rather than the title of sections.

[2] Three of these stories were in West Coast News (1.3%); one in West Coast Homes (0.4%); and three in Weekend Review (1.3%).

[3] When analysis is restricted to those stories classified as news, the percentage rises to 38.6% and 33.8% respectively.

[4] While the effects of upward pressure on price, for instance, will be felt across the board by businesses and consumers, they will be most severely felt by the poorest sectors of the population.

[5] The division between reporting and commentary, for instance, serves to create the impression that "opinion" can be wholly partitioned from "fact." (See Fowler, 1991.)

[6] These seemed to function as a means to present a highly opinionated "news" item with the gloss of a column, thereby sidestepping conventions around balance, such as providing voices on both sides of the issue. Arguably, the converse also applied. Following conventional parameters, some of the items the paper classified as news stories could more accurately be described as opinion pieces, given the absence of countervailing voices to the deregulatory frame.

[7] As the focus of this study is a qualitative assessment of media coverage further quantitative analysis, such as examination of column inches devoted to pro- and anti- deregulation voices, is outside of its scope. I will note, however, that the preference given to deregulatory voices evidenced in Table 1 extends to the space they are accorded compared to anti-deregulatory voices. They are quoted not only more frequently, but much more extensively. Hence, it is clear that were such an analysis to be undertaken it would reveal an even greater skewing of representation toward pro-deregulation voices than that indicated above.

[8] The one exception was an opinion expressed by the Environment Minister that measures to promote the burning of beetle-killed wood as bio-fuel might amount to subsidies to IPPs that could disadvantage the forestry sector. This was the only acknowledgement by the provincial government of the subsidization of private projects recorded in the sample. A cynic might note this sole reference was in the context of the potential negative impact to even bigger and more established—and also heavily subsidized—economic interests.

[9] While for the purposes of this study, I have considered the letters as a proxy for the views of readers, I realize that they are likely not a representative sample the general readership.

[10] Percentages that do not sum to exactly 100 are the result of rounding.

[11] This category includes individuals who are living in the vicinity of power projects and who may be impacted by them. It does not include First Nations.

[12] For my purposes here, I consider *theme* and *frame* each to be forms of schematic interpretation, with the somewhat general distinction that frames are broader or more general in scope than themes.

[13] My general approach is to consider under each theme first the subthemes pertaining to the deregulatory frame and then those that emerge from the counter-deregulatory frame.

[14] In using the terms *proponents* and *opponents*, I do not want to imply that there is a fixed and absolute division between two camps. The terms refer directly to voices present in the texts examined. Particular individuals may cross from one frame to the other or draw on elements of each. The use of such terms creates something of a loaded dichotomy—one who stands for something versus one who stands against—but for the sake of simplicity, I employ the terms and hope the reader can avoid any biasing influence.

[15] For Garland, under the penal-welfare model of criminal justice, "the individual victim featured hardly at all. For the most part, he or she remained a silent abstraction: a background figure whose individuality hardly registered, whose personal wishes and concerns had no place in the process" (2001, p.179). In contrast, under more recent strategies of control, "the victim is now, in a certain sense, a much more representative character, whose experience is taken to be common and collective, rather than individual and atypical" (2000, p.351). Consequently, "the centre of contemporary penal discourse is (a political projection of) the individual and his or her feelings" (2000, p.352). The centre of deregulatory electricity discourse becomes a political projection of an idealized private producer and (to a lesser extent) of an idealized consumer.

[16] As will be seen, under the deregulatory frame this crisis has only one solution: the development of private power. But before considering the constructed solution, it is worth spending some time on the constructed problem, our looming electricity shortfall and its attendant effects.

[17] Throughout this thesis, I identify exemplars on the basis of the assigned identificationary code. Each code consists of two parts, two letters followed by one to three numbers. The letters identify the paper: codes for documents from the Sun begin with *VS*; those from the Colonist begin with *TC*. The numbers are assigned chronologically from to documents from each paper. Thus *VC1* is the first document by date from the Sun; *TC77* is the 77th from the Colonist. For the complete listing of documents see Appendix A.

[18] The descriptor *volatile* is repeatedly applied to the electricity markets—those whose mercy we shall soon be seeking.

[19] I am reminded of the neoliberal discourse surrounding deficit reduction in the 1990s, which was replete with admonitions about how we have been "living beyond our means" and calls for "belt-tightening." It is perhaps not a coincidence that the electricity "crisis" also is framed in terms of deficits. Here we are told that "B.C. has been in an electricity deficit position for five years and projects that deficit to increase as the province grows—unless strong measures are taken to avert it" (VS143). And once again, the solution is the contraction of government services that benefit the public, in this case B.C.'s highly effective public electricity system.

[20] I identify significant claims-makers in parentheses when they are not evident from the relevant quote or context.

[21] While the focus of this analysis is on the discourse of deregulatory opponents as mediated through newspaper coverage, I would point out that this absence of cost-benefit analysis extends to much of the literature produced directly by proponents. This would include the reports of the Energy Task Force and the government's 2002 and 2007 energy plans.

[22] For a detailed analysis of the costs to BC Hydro (and to ratepayers) of pursuing private power when compared to public and other options see Calvert, 2007b, pp. 74-98.

[23] The other tender calls were the 2001/02 call, a relatively small call that resulted in the signing of 15 projects adding 172 MW capacity, and the 2002/03 call a more significant but still relatively small call, which added 501 MW of capacity. BC Hydro has since moved to a request for proposal process intending to add significant amounts of new power—up to 5,000 GWh annually on an ongoing basis (BC Hydro, 2008b).

[24] This figure includes a projected 30 percent "attrition rate" and thus may actually be a considerable underestimate of actual costs.

[25] The Sun had one story on the 2006 energy call. While it goes into some detail regarding the successful projects and the amount of power each produces, remarkably the cost is completely unmentioned, as is the fact that the size of the call was expanded three-fold beyond its initial parameters. It is left to the careful reader to tease this information out from between the lines.

[26] This disparity in prices holds true going back through the sample period. For instance, Calvert indicates that by 2003 BC Hydro was spending more to buy the roughly 10 percent of electricity it was then buying from private producers than on generating the other 90 percent and that costs have increased steadily year-over-year since (Calvert, 2007b, p.79).

[27] For detailed comparison of the costs new private power see Calvert 2007b, pp. 74-98.

[28] As will be discussed, Shaffer's analysis did receive some limited coverage, most notably a story by Scott Simpson in the Sun (VS209).

[29] The problem is compounded by the fact that power requirements are calculated on the basis of low reservoir years, thereby increasing the amount of unneeded power that BC Hydro will be required to buy on an average basis. In such instances, it either spills water (in effect, dumping cheap power) from its own reservoirs or sells the excess into the energy market—likely at a much lower price than the energy it is required to buy). As Calvert points out, as most private producers are hydro-electric facilities, they will produce most of their energy during the freshet, when energy prices are low because of a glut. The risk from selling this energy at this time is entirely on BC Hydro (Calvert, 2006).

[30] Another example of economically driven strategic importing by BC Hydro is the choice at times to purchase electricity in wholesale markets rather than operate the Burrard thermal plant when it is cheaper to do so.

[31] Of course, a full analysis of all policy options would cost out options beyond the government's false dichotomy of IPPs versus imports, such as having BC Hydro construct new production. Some of these options are discussed below.

[32] Examples of this categorization were coded in 101 documents (24.2%) in almost equal proportions across papers (24% of the Sun stories and 24.4% of the Colonist stories).

[33] The possible exception to this is the contemplated large-scale hydroelectric development on the Peace River, known as Site C. The arbitrary ban on BC Hydro constructing new projects, does not apply when the project is likely too capital intensive for the private sector to be interested.

[34] Thus, in advocating for private power business reporter, Scott Simpson, can report that spot markets "regularly see winter price spikes that push the price of electricity to levels six times what it costs Hydro to produce from its crown-owned network of hydroelectric reservoirs" (VS104), without addressing any inconsistency. No need to address new production from BC Hydro as a possible option is apparent. In fact, this very variability in spot market prices makes possible BC Hydro's highly successful practice of arbitraging.

[35] Section 8 of the *Utilities Commission Amendment Act* repealed ss.14-20.

[36] An extreme case is presented by David Black, media mogul and chair of the BC Progress Board, who does not feel the need to even pay lip service to the rhetoric of self-sufficiency, arguing that we should be investing in private capacity with the direct goal of selling to California:

> We're looking for ways to get the province going again, so here's a chance to spend $2 billion to $3 billion priming the pump as hard as you can in B.C. We need the investment, so why not? If we don't do it, the power for California is just going to be supplied out of Alberta. (VS101)

[37] The context of this study is one of action on the part of the state of California to require utilities to meet specified percentages of green power (California Senate Bill No. 1078). Such legislation may mean that IPPs are able to sell at above market rates—rates that once the EPAs expire BC

Hydro will have to better in order to keep electricity produced in British Columbia in British Columbia.

[38] See Public Utilities Commission of the State of California, 2007.

[39] Thus, the content analysis undertaken here in effect confirms Shaffer's (2007) economic analysis of government policy.

[40] This neglects, of course, that access to energy markets only necessitates deintegration of utilities when taken in the context of a deregulatory framework, where the issue becomes tautological.

[41] Some reporting is more critical of the public system, some less so, but much can be said to be similar to the exemplar.

[42] Furthering the inevitability of de-integration and the shift to private power through the restriction of public utilities to the now-passed realm of megaprojects was a repeated technique. For example:

> But even as the Bennett government put through that final increment 23 years ago, it was acknowledging the end of the era. The Revelstoke dam, last in the series of major projects on the Columbia and Peace river systems, was coming on stream. Hydro was already shutting down its construction arm and laying off a generation of dam builders. And there'll be no returning to that earlier scale of activity, even if the Liberals approve everything in the BC Hydro and B.C. Transmission plans. (Vaughan Palmer, VS186)

[43] A further indication of Sun editors' opinion of the public is seen in the headline to this story: "Vision need to deal with some dim bulbs" (VS135). I found one instance where public attitudes are seen as going beyond indifference to outright NIMBYism:

> B.C. is short of generating capacity. The rather significant shortfall is currently being met by electricity purchased from Alberta, essentially a fossil-fuelled system, and from systems south of the border where hydro, fossil-fired and nuclear sources are relatively commonplace.... We in B.C. have developed NIMBYism as an art form. We don't care what form of fuel is used to produce electricity so long as it is outside the province. (Letter, TC166)

[44] The only time I found mention of such issues permissible within the deregulatory frame was in the context of large projects, in which the private sector may not be interested, e.g., "Big projects such as Burrard and Site C are cheaper to build using B.C. Hydro itself because borrowing costs are much lower for it than for private companies that don't have access to government-backed loans at favourable rates" (TC138).

[45] Calvert in fact makes a case that this payment stream should be included as part of the government's long-term debt obligations (2007b, p.96).

[46] In one interesting example, the president of the Independent Power Producers Association tacitly acknowledges that public ownership is the reason current generation costs are so low, but fails to draw any distinction with private ownership: "Davis said higher prices for new power sources are a matter of economics—Hydro has retired the debt on its older assets so they are comparatively cheap, and rising construction costs mean new power sources will cost more" (VS213).

[47] Acknowledgement by the provincial government that B.C.'s low electricity rates create a competitive advantage for British Columbia occurred only in the nothing is changing subtheme.

[48] There is considerable work on the experience of states that have followed a deregulatory path in their electricity sector. See, for example, Beder 2003; Hampton, 2003; Jewell, 2003; Swift & Stewart, 2004; Timney, 2004, Thomas, 2004; and Wallace, 2001. Looking across jurisdictions the experience is remarkably consistent. We often see a near-religious faith in markets which subsumes empirical analysis to ideology. Deregulation is promoted as the path to lower prices, better service and increased consumer choice (even though a desire for choice in electricity is rarely a significant issue for the public). Despite the absence of public demand for deregulation, the support of industrial users, the financial sector, energy traders, and think tanks and front

groups ensures the agenda is realized. The results, contrary to the rosy promises, are market failures leading to price increases that are often explosive. Panicked governments then respond with price caps and interventions that amount to a public subsidization of the very organizations that both helped create the situation and proceeded to profiteer from it. Post-deregulation, prices are invariably higher than before and the promise of consumer choice fails to materialize or is actually reduced. Despite a partial retrenchment in some cases, states find themselves in a situation where the claimed benefits of deregulation have failed to materialize yet the ability to determine energy policy in the public interest is greatly reduced.

[49] For instance, polling done for CPP in 2002 showed a majority opposed the transfer of services to Accenture (Hoekstra, 2002).

[50] Proponents include the editors of the Sun, who are so keen to go to bat for Gordon Campbell that they build a case for him based on his submissions to their newspaper:

> In fact Gordon Campbell promised during the campaign that the Liberals wouldn't sell Hydro. "A B.C. Liberal government will not sell or privatize B.C. Hydro's dams, transmission lines, water resources or other core assets," he pledged in a letter to The Sun....
>
> Again, here is Mr. Campbell in that letter to The Sun. "As we have said for years, we will restore a regulatory structure that guarantees ratepayers receive the lowest rates possible." Hydro would return to regulation by the utilities commission, and rates might even go down, he said. That's a far cry from market-based prices for power that costs almost nothing to produce, even with an extended phase-in program as proposed by the task force. (VS5)

[51] Interestingly, for a time following the release of the Interim Report the government denied that it was planning the break-up of BC Hydro into separate companies, insisting that they instead were contemplating separate business units within the corporation:

> A spokeswoman for Hydro said Tuesday that document...was talking about internal business units, not separate companies.... "It just means that internally there will be more efficiency and clarity. So Hydro customers won't notice a thing, no changes whatsoever," said Elisha Odowichuk. (VS49)

Also:

> said separate business plans are being put together as part of the corporation's budget, but that does not mean sections are about to be broken off. (TC49)

[52] Both proponents and opponents at times place B.C. at a "crossroads," one that is often "critical" or "historic." Such metaphors themselves constrain and direct discourse, here to two divergent options.

[53] In fact, this specific phrase or some close variation was often used (I coded 16 examples, 7.6% of opponents). A variation, drawing on another cliché (but one that also arguably makes a concise point):

> Perhaps Premier Gordon Campbell has forgotten a line from an old fairy tale: "Killing the goose that lays the golden eggs," because that is what he is planning.... Hydro provides excellent service, very low rates, and makes a profit! (Letter, TC29)

[54] Industry opposition falls away following the 2002 energy plan, perhaps because it is then clear that the government will be enacting a "Heritage Contract" to guarantee large industrial users access to power at low rates (discussed further below). Opposition from environmentalists is considerably reduced in the lead up to and following the 2007 Energy Plan.

[55] Note that proponents never refer to arbitraging as "trading," which would have positive market associations. Rather, it is always described using the more negative "importing."

[56] The disparity in prices between B.C.'s electricity rates and the price paid for private power subsequently acquired through the EPA process in effect bears out this prediction.

[57] Given the "energy crisis" one might think that building more "on-demand" power is *exactly* what is required. The claim (made immediately after this assertion) that hydro reserves are at all time

lows would suggest a heightened need for the addition of firm power, rather than non-firm sources, such as wind.

[58] By regulating water levels downstream, the dams allow for the utilization of water that otherwise would be spilled from reservoirs.

[59] See *BC Hydro Public Power Legacy and Heritage Contract Act.*

[60] In actual dollars, prices will rise during the term of the longest contracts to $124 by 2051 (BC Hydro, 2006b).

[61] For discussion of the above options and still further alternatives to the government's energy polices, see Calvert, 2007a, pp. 16-20; 2007b, p.70 and pp. 94-96.

[62] I have to confess an uneasiness in my unquestioning of the equation throughout this study of the public with the state, that "coldest of all cold monsters" out of whose mouth crawls the lie: "I, the state, am the people"—to paraphrase Nietzsche (2003, p.36). Side-stepping anarchist arguments, I will say that while I admit that this conflation is problematic, the state does offer a degree of public accountability, limited though it may be. The private sector, on the other hand is just that: private. I believe the greater democratic grounding of "public" over private power is clear.

[63] See Glasbeek, 2002 for discussion of how the construction of the "small entrepreneur" as the driving force of the economy (in the face of economic evidence to the contrary) is used to undermine progressive political action.

[64] A simultaneous presentation, only partially congruent with the "little guy" construct, is IPPs as a picture of diversity—of size, type and background:

> Would-be providers run the gamut from small, local companies promoting untested environmentally friendly technologies to Alberta-based fossil fuel-burning specialists and international companies that want to expand into the North American energy market.
>
> Boldt said the proposed projects range in size from a half-megawatt to 120 megawatts—the former enough to light up a few dozen homes, the latter enough to power a small town. (Scott Simpson, VS77)
>
> For some projects, the pipes are big enough to accommodate two lanes of automobile traffic. For others, your arm would get stuck if you reached inside past your elbow.... Talk to a handful of project proponents and you quickly find the only common thread is an interest in striking a partnership with Hydro. (Scott Simpson, VS94)

This diversity stands in opposition to the uniform monopoly of BC Hydro:

> Nobody sees BC Hydro as cornering the market or having a monopoly here....I think everybody understands that there are a lot of players. That's the important part because diversity is better than a monopoly. (British Columbia Columbia Chamber of Commerce president and CEO, John Winter, VS138)

Note how elision is made from extolling the value of a diversity of projects generally conceived (by number, type, location) to the political statement of implicitly advocating private ownership. There was no explanation offered as to why the same diverse array of projects could not be publicly built and owned and if so why it would prove inferior.

[65] When the private player is a big fish, however, proponents believe that big is also beautiful:

> So, why should British Columbians take Accenture's word that this plan is such a good thing? Well, Accenture has impeccable credentials as a global leader in consulting and technology in 18 industry sectors, including utilities....Accenture has implemented more than 100 customer management systems for utilities. These systems support more than 170 million customer relationships around the world. (Accenture president, Dave Seibel, VS43)

[66] And the individuals speaking for private power companies were overwhelmingly guys. I found only one instance where any of the principal individuals were women.

[67] Note the conflation of "green" with "IPP."

[68] The gold rush metaphor is initially adopted by proponents. Later (mostly outside of the sample timeframe), it is taken up by opponents, also. It is instructive to compare how those on opposite sides of the issue draw comparison to the same event. Proponents cast it in a positive light, presumably envisioning the "opening up" of the west and the resulting generation of wealth. Opponents, on the other hand, connote a time of unrestricted exploitation, a frenzied charge for riches available to whoever could stake his claim first.

[69] Of course the comparison only goes so far. The minimal expense required of private producers in "staking a claim" to the great potential wealth from water and wind resources is analogous to staking a prospecting claim for gold. But the uncertainty when staking a mineral claim of whether it will ever lead to pay-dirt is not analogous to applying for a water license, where the revenue stream can be calculated with considerable precision in advance. In fact, BC Hydro has already conducted this research and provided considerable detail on available sites, including power capacity, annual generation, and estimated capital cost and cost of production (BC Hydro 2002 and 2000).

[70] At various points both proponents and opponents make prehistoric references. While for proponents, it is BC Hydro as vertically-integrated full service utility that is the dinosaur, for opponents it is the government's plans for fossil-fuel powered generation. (See *Deregulation and environmental benefits/harm*, pp. 111-133.)

[71] The reference to BC Hydro not as a valuable revenue-generating asset but a "cash cow" is another ubiquitous metaphor, e.g., "governments have turned the giant utility into a cash cow, through cabinet directives, policies and regulations aimed at ensuring a steady flow of dollars into central government" (VS186).

[72] In this context, (very limited) intimations of the inadequacy of IPPs are admissible even within the deregulatory frame:

> [Bob Elton] said Hydro does not believe that an accumulation of small, independent power projects can provide the stability or flexibility of a large scale hydroelectric project.... He said independent power projects will make an increasing contribution to Hydro's electricity grid, but added that the corporation believes that "fairly big lumps of capacity" are crucial to a secure electricity supply. (VS105)

[73] In the context of the Business pages, it is in fact possible to implicitly admit the great advantages of BC Hydro's vertically integrated system (and of arbitraging) while simultaneously presenting those same advantages as an obstacle to be overcome:

> It's an asset that gives B.C. an enormous and lucrative competitive advantage when it trades into the U.S. market because hydro is the only form of electricity that can be turned on or off instantly in order to satisfy fluctuations in demand....
>
> "What our major U.S. buyers are saying in that trading area, that hub, is that you have to separate generation from transmission. The generator can't be the same company that runs transmission," Neufeld said.
>
> "What's happening now in B.C. is that Hydro owns it all. They're kind of like the big gorilla. They can control a lot of things." (Scott Simpson, VS34)

[74] In fact, BC Hydro pays taxes in lieu to municipalities and regional districts to compensate for its tax exempt status.

[75] This is not surprising given consumers have no real way to distinguish electricity from one company from that of another.

[76] A full consideration of the actually-existing retail competition in electricity delivery is beyond the scope of this project. I would argue that evidence from around the globe indicates that it has been a wholesale failure. (See, for example, Beder, 2003, Jewell, 2003, Timney, 2004.)

[77] Reference to the number of homes that will be powered or lit up by IPPs was commonplace, another example of the nexus between private power and positive action. While in part this serves as a way to give meaning to technical figures (part of the habitus of appearing to lay-population), when referring to BC Hydro, the reference was usually made to explicate the extent

of the B.C.'s energy *deficit*, power that was missing versus the power that IPPs are now providing.

[78] This figure of $1 billion recurs frequently in the reporting around the release of the Task Force's Interim Report. It is taken directly from the IPABC submission to the Task Force, where it is offered without any explanation as to how it was derived (IPABC, 2001, p.9). As in the present case, it was reproduced by reporters without acknowledgement of the source.

[79] A commensurate issue is suspicions that revenue is deliberately underestimated in order to increase returns to the province (and reduce funds available to BC Hydro):

> Here we have a profitable company asking for a rate increase and we have to wonder why.... What I have seen recently is Hydro consistently under-budgeting their returns and that money is transferred to the province. (Mark Veerkamp, executive director of CPP, TC90).

[80] On several occasions, opponents made comparison to the history of natural gas in British Columbia. BC Hydro's natural gas distribution subsidiary, B.C. Gas, was privatized by the Social Credit government in the 1980s. After the Liberal government removed restrictions on ownership in 2002, the company was taken over by the American company Kinder Morgan and became Terasen Gas. The person who oversaw the privatization was Larry Bell, Chair of BC Hydro under the Social Credit government. Soon after its election in 2001, the provincial Liberal government appointed Mr. Bell Chair and CEO of BC Hydro. The deregulation of natural gas and the move to a continental market has led to a situation in which British Columbians pay the same market rates for natural gas produced in B.C. as do Californians. Opponents see a similar transition underway with electricity.

[81] There was no direct engagement with the broader issue of whether a public utility, already subject to democratic oversight, should be subject to a body initially created to oversee private involvement in energy production.

[82] For analysis of the effect of trade agreements on B.C.'s electricity supply under a private production model, see Cohen, 2001 and 2003b.

[83] In this context, reference is made to BC Hydro's "lucrative" power trading business. Reconciliation with the ostensible supply crisis and the perils of importing addressed above is not forthcoming, however.

[84] For a comparison of the environmental impacts of hydro-electric production to other methods see Simmons et al., 2002. An exception to the representation of BC Hydro as non-green was the presentation of new non-firm generation as complementary to BC Hydro's firm system, e.g., wind and large dam hydro generation in a green partnership.

[85] Note the equating of objection by municipal representatives to the blatantly anti-democratic over-riding of their authority with militancy, as they rush "to the barricades."

[86] It also is at odds with the construction of IPPs as rooted in the local, seen under the theme of *public private dichotomy* (pp. 74-110).

[87] Or we may be headed further back still, to the "Dark Ages" (TC87) or even the Stone Age: "The coal announcement was lauded by the mining industry, but denounced by B.C. Green Party leader Adrian Carr as "Neolithic" (VS71).

[88] There is a certain irony in this, given the long-standing critique by environmentalists of the failure of the environmental assessment process to consider the cumulative impacts of the projects it assesses.

[89] For further discussion of environmentalists and electricity deregulation see Calvert, 2007b, pp. 207-211 and Cohen, 2006.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Summary of findings

Within the sample of documents examined, pro-deregulation voices dominate the discourse of electricity deregulation in British Columbia, both in terms of the number of claims-makers (where proponents' voices outnumbered opponents' voices by more than two to one) and the ability of those claims-makers to advance their point of view. Regarding my ethnographic content analysis, I present first a summary of the themes that emerged from the Times Colonist and Vancouver Sun media coverage. In the final section, I return to a theoretical analysis of these themes, drawing on the concepts of symbolic violence and a Foucauldian understanding of power, and consider some implications for those seeking to resist or promote alternatives to deregulation.

We (Do Not) Need Change—A pervasive theme on the part of advocates of deregulation is the need for change. Proponents argue that the status quo is untenable and that change is both necessary and inevitable. Opponents counter that the current system serves us well and that adaptations to changing needs and conditions are best met within it. Subthemes here include:

Crisis: proponents—Proponents employ a construction of absolute risk to portray the current system as in or approaching a crisis that threatens to undermine the affordability, security and reliability of supply. Analysis reveals that the provincial Liberals' energy policy of "self-sufficiency" (and crisis-aversion) involves mandating excessive purchases of private power at excessive prices, a

process which facilitates the indirect selling of subsidized private power into U.S. markets.

Change as inevitability—In a supplementary pro-deregulation discursive strategy, proponents portray change as unavoidable. At the same time, normative admonitions to the population in order to realize the transformation to a deregulated system persist.

Nothing is changing—A further parallel deregulatory subtheme to the subtheme of crisis is that *nothing is changing*, which somewhat paradoxically reassures that, despite the critical need to change course, the fundamentals of the system will remain unchanged.

Crisis: opponents—Opponents of electricity deregulation also call on the theme of crisis, but here deregulation will precipitate the crisis rather than save us from it.

Don't fix what isn't broken—Opponents media representations present BC Hydro as working well, providing high reliability, low prices and history of revenue generation. It is not in need of fixing.

Challenging the rhetoric of self-sufficiency—Opponents directly challenge the claimed need for self-sufficiency as a prudential strategy of risk avoidance. The counter-construction sees deregulation as introducing risk of various forms to the electricity supply—rather than removing risk from it. This subtheme only has a limited presence.

The second major theme I observed centres on the *Public/Private Dichotomy*. For proponents, the public sector is monolithic, inefficient and

incapable of adaptation, while the private sector is diverse, entrepreneurial and dynamic. For opponents, a move to private power undermines a valuable public asset, with negative economic and social consequences for the province. It is anti-democratic, ideologically driven and destructive of public accountability. Subthemes here include:

The time of the "little guy"—Proponents present private power producers as the quintessential "little guy," the sole proprietor whose hard work and determination is the backbone the economy. I offer an analysis that shows the precepts of this construct are at odds with the reality of IPPs as highly subsidized corporate entities.

Government as impediment—Within the deregulatory frame, the function of government is primarily to throw up roadblocks and stifle the entrepreneurial potential of IPPs.

BC Hydro as moribund—In contrast to the potential offered by IPPs, BC Hydro is presented in the media examined as a moribund institution that is incapable of meeting the growing electricity needs of British Columbians. I argue that, in fact, BC Hydro is well-positioned to add new supply and manage future demand.

The 800 lb gorilla—In a co-representation in the deregulatory frame, BC Hydro appears not as inert and impotent, but as a bullying monopoly, one that prevents IPPs from competing in the market. Proponents exclude any non-market-based understanding of the role of BC Hydro from the frame.

Unquestioning faith in markets—Market boosterism is a perennial feature of the deregulatory frame under the *public/private dichotomy*. Factual analysis verifying proponents' media claims to the inherent superiority of the market in all things is completely absent.

The economic benefits of private power—Proponents see economic and employment benefits from increased electricity production as wholly restricted to private production. IPPs are presented as natural risk-adopters and hence a means to avoid public risk. I assert that they are in fact risk averse and that government policy actually shifts risk to the public.

The public value of public power—In contrast to proponents' characterization of BC Hydro as a moribund obstacle to progress or out of control gorilla, opponents' media representations stress the economic and social value of a publically-owned full-service utility.

The negative economic consequences of deregulation—Opponents see a move to private power as undercutting the advantages of BC Hydro and as a subsidization of and transfer of public resources to the private sector.

The absence of consultation and the undermining of democracy—Opponents decry both the absence of public consultation in the deregulatory process and the removal of public oversight of the electricity system that will result from a shift to private power. Deeper integration into a market-based continental system is seen as attenuating democratic control of the electricity system in order to meet social and economic goals.

The final theme considered connects deregulation to *environmental benefits or harm*. Under the subtheme of *at last we can be green*, proponents of deregulation tie the development of sustainable power to the private sector—the "green and small" sector. I contend that equating of private power with green power *depoliticizes and responsibilizes* fundamental decisions concerning our energy system. Proposed environmental solutions in both the deregulatory and counter-deregulatory frame place an onus on the individual to take responsibility for the problem and become part of the solution. This responsibilization extends to the construction of IPP-as-pioneering-entrepreneur, who now not only represents a solution not only to economic risk, but also to the serious environmental risks we face.

I extend this analysis to probe more specifically the *role of environmentalists and environmental groups* in the process, high-lighting the general paucity of a green critique of green projects and the depoliticization of much environmental analysis of the deregulatory policy, an analysis that mostly failed to account for the systemic and cumulative effects of the government's energy policy.

Strategies for resistance[1]

In the balance between deregulatory and counter-deregulatory frames, opponents were able to advance a cogent critique (usually in the form of opinion editorials or letters), yet in general, the counter-deregulatory frame was not as well-represented as the deregulatory frame or as well-integrated. Perhaps this is most strongly evidenced by the ability of the government to fundamentally

undermine a public utility that offers the second lowest rates in North America, returns three quarters of a billion dollars in revenue to the public purse and is 90 percent green—all with only limited challenge within the media discourse. The dorninance of the assumption that, whatever the issue or need to be addressed, the answer lies with the private sector is testament to this. Often it was not the case that the public option is judged against the private and found wanting—rather, the public option is not even considered. That the newspapers from which the documents are drawn are themselves part of a large corporate conglomerate embedded in the political economy and with links to both government and IPPs is further relevant to this analysis.

It is also important to note that some of this discrepancy likely results from aspects of the medium itself, which include the dynamics of news production and the difficulty advancing elaborate arguments in a typical news story, as well as the lack of immediate impact from deregulatory changes, making warnings of the dangers of policy changes less concrete and hence less "newsworthy." In fact, the structural issues of the newspaper conspire with the force of the dominant ideology to the inherent advantage of the deregulatory frame. Because part of the backcloth of assumptions is that a "market system" is a naturally desirable means for delivering and distributing all goods and services, proponents advocating such a system are in effect excused from much of the need to justify why their position is superior. Challenging such claims requires substantiation of a much broader set of tenets, ones that are not taken for granted. Achieving this

within the limited available column inches of a newspaper story is considerably more difficult.

Despite such challenges, opponents were comparatively effective in pointing to the benefits and strong track record of BC Hydro and the value of preserving it as an integrated utility. Direct challenge to the primary justification for deregulation—the need for self-sufficiency through private production as a prudential strategy of risk avoidance—was more limited. Alternatives, such as conservation or utilization of down-stream benefits received only limited recognition. Proponents of deregulation were particularly successful in equating new production with private production, such that the public alternative need not even be considered. By my lights, this lies at the heart of the deregulatory narrative. Upon close examination, the various pieces of the policy agenda—the ban on new production by BC Hydro in favour of above-market long-term contracts, the transfer of public resources for a fraction of their actual value, the lifting of export restrictions to increase the value of private power—all can be seen as different parts of one whole, the aim of which is to transfer value from the public to private producers. Given what I believe to be the strength of the case against these policies, I contend that they can only be advocated on the foundation of the taken-for-granted "natural" superiority of private production.

I believe that this illustrates the power of the symbolic violence of deregulation to silence opposing voices, a power that limits conceptions of economic activity and wealth generation to the private sector, while the public sector is confined to at most a redistributive function. Such silencing is never

complete, of course. As strategizing agents, oppositional voices can—and did—endeavour to resist and reconstitute this symbolic violence from within the social order. Opponents can attempt to subvert the deregulatory agenda by adopting the rhetorical constructions of proponents.[2] Using this Foucauldian "reverse discourse," those resisting deregulation were able to appropriate the discourse of proponents—invoking risk, prudence, and control of our collective destiny, for example. Some of the more blatant contradictions and inconsistencies that should be further addressed include:

- The claimed need to deregulate to avoid higher prices combined with simultaneous planning for price increases as part of deregulation. This is further confounded by the fact that a market system is the very cause of the high prices that are to be avoided and that the prices BC Hydro is paying for new power are actually considerably in excess of market rates.[3]
- The fact that, despite the above, the government is not actually implementing a competitive market environment and that private power projects themselves would not be viable in a competitive market environment, but require considerable public subsidization.
- The construction of IPPs as individualistic risk-taking entrepreneurs, contrasted with the extent of their actual subsidization and their desire to transfer risk to the public, a rational, but largely unacknowledged, desire on their part.

- The inconsistency between the stated objective of energy self-sufficiency and security of supply paired with the lifting of energy export restrictions, especially significant given the operation of NAFTA, which makes repatriating electricity produced in British Columbia almost impossible. The habitus of presenting business opportunities as an unconditional good means that reporters can champion power export opportunities while simultaneously reproducing the rhetoric of self-sufficiency.

Another opportunity to turn the language of deregulation against itself and reverse the flow of power through the discourse could involve appropriating the change versus status quo dichotomy. In a society where everyone is "moving forward," change is considered a virtue in itself. One possible oppositional narrative: It is time for change, time to turn from the well-trodden path of deregulation to an alternative, one where people actually have a say in the fundamental policies affecting their lives.

While anti-deregulation claims-makers utilized the language of crisis, they did so less effectively than pro-deregulation claims-makers. This may in part have been due to the different constructions of *crisis* each employed. Proponents construed the danger of deficiencies in electricity supply as an "absolute" risk, sufficient to demand change without further analysis. Opponents, while also predicting severe consequences (this time resulting *from* deregulation), rooted their claims in a more rationalistic analysis that attempted to demonstrate causal connections between policy actions and predicted negative consequences. I am not suggesting that opponents adopt the techniques of proponents here, but it

may be that a call for change to prevent a perceived immediate crisis has greater motivating force than the appeal by opponents to the defence of the status quo to prevent a hypothetical future one. Hence, a narrative depicting the crisis *already* created by deregulation that necessitates a change of direction, rather than inertia, may have greater traction.

The benefits of trade are often touted in a neoliberal context, but only when that trade is between private actors. Hence in the context of reporting on opportunities for IPPs exporting power, trade in electricity appears (in the business pages) in a positive light. But strategic trading by BC Hydro is portrayed negatively, i.e., as the danger posed by being "dependent on imports." There is some presentation in the counter-deregulatory frame of this policy in the language of economics and comparative advantage. It may be worth attempting a more consolidated effort on the part of opponents to present not only the advantages of trade generally, but as an area where, through BC Hydro, we have a particular comparative advantage that benefits the whole province. This is in contradistinction to the blatant irrationality of the policy of "buy high, sell low" that requires BC Hydro to buy excess power at above market prices while it sells its own power at a loss. Messaging in regard to such a clear public subsidy of the development of private power may be straightforward enough to insert into the media discourse and avoid being screened out because of the complexity of the general issue.

Other neoliberal rhetoric could also be subverted: the "business case" for deregulation—or, rather, the lack thereof: the absence of a cost benefit analysis

for the deregulatory policy, which economic analysis reveals makes little sense; or the failure by the government to undertake any valuation of the resources being handed over to private interests or to look at the opportunity costs of power development on those sites (something that received no direct consideration within the sample).

The public/private dichotomy in deregulatory discourse presents another opportunity for subversion, by demonstrating how the rhetoric of wealth creation applies to the public as well as private sector. The large returns to the province's coffers provided by BC Hydro debunk the conflation by proponents of *public* with *subsidized*, something that can be thrown back upon IPPs—many of whom would qualify as "corporate welfare bums" of the first order. It is also indicative of the efficiency of BC Hydro, which stands at odds with the dichotomy of the bloated and inert public sector versus the lean and efficient private firm. The latter derives from the unquestioning linking of private production with competitive markets, a connection that can be broken by pointing to the lack of meaningful competition in the process underway. And rather than the public sector, the private sector could appear as the 800 lb gorilla—as powerful players bully their way into the British Columbia market.

Further contrast can be made with the construction of the innovative and dynamic IPP who takes on risk in search of reward. The decision to build British Columbia's hydro-electric system demonstrated considerable innovation and forethought—as well as a willingness to take on considerable risk. Under the present policy, the public still ultimately takes the risk—but, by no longer legally

owning the facilities it is funding, foregoes the possibility of reward. This further creation of wealth—collective wealth—in the form of valuable public assets marks a significant distinction from the privatized model, in which facilities are privately owned, one that over time can have a dramatic impact on rates. While this division received some attention from some opponents it did not, in my opinion, receive the stress that it should have.

The appropriation of environmental discourse within the deregulatory frame and the reduction of *green* generation to *private* generation received little challenge from environmentalists or other opponents. Critique was primarily focused on the narrow issue of production method, while the larger issues of the impacts from the electricity system itself were ignored. Risk presents itself again, but consideration was limited to the environmental risk of fossil-fuel based generation; little recognition was given to the impacts of "green" IPP production, either individually or cumulatively. The latter is particularly important in a deregulated system in which the ability to plan development is attenuated and where the ultimate aim of producers is to maximize production.

Some of the indifference—or even excitement—on the part of many environmentalists over purchases from "green" IPPs likely derives from the conceptualization of increased private production as indicating a transition to a more decentralized system where generation is more locally-based. I would argue, however, that this fundamentally misconstrues of the developments underway. The Energy Purchase Agreement process has nothing to do with fostering off-the-grid production serving small-scale local needs. Rather it is

based on putting excess power into the transmission network as a whole, much of which may end up exported as surplus to local needs. I would urge those environmentalists that have not already done so to adopt a political analysis that goes beyond examination of the generation method of individual projects. Here again individuals and organizations engaged in actively resisting deregulation could adopt proponents' rhetoric of self-sufficiency and its links to the desire to control our destiny. Over the long-term the public will inevitably lose control over the system, as private producers sell power to the highest bidder. No longer can we direct local production to local usage. Demand side management efforts to conserve power then function only to free up all the more power for export.

By identifying the themes that emerge within the overall discourse of electricity deregulation and their relation to power and culture under neoliberalism, I have attempted to outline some initial strategies to increase awareness of the potential implications of this policy direction. My aim has been to shed light on contradictions and uncover the interstices in the network of power in order that the effectiveness of efforts to advance a counter-discourse can be improved. In this way, it represents a preliminary effort. I believe that continuation of this approach—to the discourse as manifest in other forums, the examination of the subjective interpretation of deregulatory messages by the public, or to a more narrowly focused case study evaluation of specific projects for example—will yield further insight into strategies to destabilize and reconfigure the deregulatory discourse.

NOTES

[1] A useful question when considering the validity of qualitative research is to contemplate how the subjects of the study might react to it. It is possible that many would not approve. I contend there is a justifiable difference in approach when "studying up" or "studying down." To the extent that this project is concerned with critiquing the words of those who already possess a powerful voice, I make no apologies about having a generative agenda. Nonetheless, I have endeavoured to be honest and fair in my representations and not to distort the words of claims-makers but to place them in the context in which they were given (keeping in mind that this context, newspaper reporting, is itself a mediated one). As well, I suspect that some of the voices represented in the study who oppose deregulation may also be irritated by my findings. I consider this a test for "balance."

[2] In advocating this approach I am quick to add that it be undertaken mindfully. Counter-deregulatory narratives no doubt reflect a distinct understanding that is in many ways at odds with dominant constructions. Instrumental considerations should not undermine this.

[3] As discussed, the inevitable endpoint of deregulation and integrated markets is the harmonization of prices, which for B.C. means dramatic increases. Proponents cannot triumph over this logic, but thanks to the symbolic violence of the "natural" superiority of market models, they are able to avoid it.

APPENDIX A: DOCUMENTS EXAMINED

1. *Vancouver Sun*

Code	Date	Author(s)	Title	Location
VS1	October 6, 2001	Editors	Maybe we should sell Hydro	Editorials - A22
VS2	October 15, 2001	Warren Fox	Selling Crown corporation jewels	Editorial - A15
VS3	December 8, 2001	Stephen Hume	The power is the people's: When B.C. Hydro and a U.S. power company wanted to plunk a plant in downtown Port Alberni, they didn't reckon that, in a democracy, a fired-up populace can make a difference	Editorial - A19
VS4	December 18, 2001	Ian Mulgrew	Energy report recommends breaking up B.C. Hydro: Consumers could face 30-per-cent electricity rate hike	B1 - Front
VS5	December 20, 2001	Editors	Hydro report may be a shocker, but it has a spark of good sense	Bus - A14
VS6	December 21, 2001	Dick L. Schaeffer	B.C. Liberals under fire: The novice government is being damned if it does...	Editorial - A15
VS7	December 26, 2001	Ian Mulgrew	Signs point to Hydro sale: What Mike Harris has done in Ontario will likely be copied by B.C.'s debt-saddled Liberal government	Bus - C3
VS8	December 29, 2001	Gabrielle Fay	Don't sacrifice electricity	Editorial - A17
VS9	January 1, 2002	No Byline	Shaw increases stake in Canadian Hydro Developers	Bus - In Brief - C2
VS10	January 3, 2002	Mark Jaccard	Gas pipeline a project deserving real public debate	Editorial - A15

VS11	January 14, 2002	Ian Mulgrew	Energy task force report 'a dangerous piece of work': A diverse group of opponents say the recommendations would create serious economic and ecological problems in B.C.	News - B3
VS12	February 18, 2002	Ian Mulgrew	Don't break up Hydro, industry warns Liberals: Deregulation would mean 'economic disaster' and thousands of layoffs, 30 major B.C. companies say	A1 – Fro
VS13	February 19, 2002	Editors	Striking a balance on power policy: B.C. must encourage investment while protecting consumers	Editorial - A14
VS14	February 19, 2002	Ray Sutton	Stay power smart: B.C. Hydro benefits all British Columbians, including the government. So consumers want to know why anyone is considering breaking it up	Editorial - A15
VS15	February 19, 2002	Archie Boyd	Stay power smart: B.C. Hydro benefits all British Columbians, including the government. So consumers want to know why anyone is considering breaking it up	Editorial - A15
VS16	February 20, 2002	Wane King	Selling Hydro unmerited	Editorial - A21
VS17	February 21, 2002	Gerry Bellett	Competition still best for Hydro, Ebbels says	Bus - D1 Fro
VS18	March 18, 2002	Allen Tagseth	Without B.C. Hydro, we'll be the losers	Editorial - A11
VS19	April 20, 2002	Harvey Enchin	Delta debates cogeneration proposal: The municipality isn't sure it wants a transfer of methane from Vancouver's trash	Business - E3
VS20	April 20, 2002	Jim Beatty	B.C. Hydro's privatization plan double first estimate: Public utility is close to signing deal leading to a private firm assuming many of its services	Bus - E1 Front

VS21	May 4, 2002	Harvey Enchin	Gas line not best power choice for Island, study says: Academics push smaller hydro projects and expanded cable link to mainland	Bus BC - C6
VS22	May 16, 2002	Harvey Enchin	Rating B.C.'s year of change: Interview: Finance Minister Gary Collins looks back on a year of surprises for a government determined to change the economic status quo in B.C.	BC Bus - C1 Fro
VS23	May 21, 2002	Fauzia Lalani	Hydro at the crossroads: Scare stories about electricity industry deregulation are more myth than fact	A15 - Opinion Editorial – Bus
VS24	May 21, 2002	Murray Dobbin and Marjorie Griffin Cohen	Hydro at the crossroads: The Liberals' plan to sell parts of BC Hydro is courting financial disaster	Editorial - A15
VS25	May 29, 2002	Scott Simpson	B.C. risks an electricity crunch: Chamber of Commerce warns of B.C. being at the mercy of volatile outside markets in five years, Scott Simpson writes	D1 – Front
VS26	May 31, 2002	Scott Simpson	Hydro looks to buy private power: Public utility wants to buy electricity from corporations in a bid to satisfy a growing demand for power, and it's willing to pay 40 per cent above industrial rates, Scott Simpson writes	Bus BC - D1 – Front
VS27	June 7, 2002	Scott Simpson	Hydro faces lower power prices: That's both good news and bad news to the B.C. Crown corporation	Bus BC - D5
VS28	June 12, 2002	Scott Simpson	Energy deregulation 'unstoppable': B.C.'s going nowhere, Sun reporter Scott Simpson hears at the Canadian Gas Association meeting	Bus BC - C3
VS29	June 22, 2002	Jim Beatty	We'll drink to booze privatization, but not Hydro: More than half of those polled would agree to privatization of B.C. liquor outlets, says Jim Beatty	Bus BC - E1 – Fro

VS30	June 22, 2002	Scott Simpson	Marked recently by inaction and indecision, British Columbia's energy policy is nearing a historic crossroads, although no one knows where it will lead, writes Scott Simpson Series: A new era for power in B.C.	E1 - Front - Bus BC
VS31	June 25, 2002	Fazil Mihlar	Province's crown jewel losing its luster	Editorial - A8
VS32	June 26, 2002	No Byline	Answer to growing Hydro demand not blowing in the wind at Alert Bay	Bus BC - D2
VS33	June 29, 2002	No Byline	From turbine to toaster... Journey of an electron	Bus BC - C2
VS34	June 29, 2002	Scott Simpson	Hydro must break up: Neufeld: The Crown corporation's monopoly is hurting B.C., the energy minister tells The Sun's Scott Simpson Series: Hydro 'gorilla' scares investors	C1 – Front
VS35	February 7, 2002	Jim Sinclair	B.C. Hydro breakup would be a mistake: B.C. Chamber of Commerce's stand should be a warning bell	Bus BC - C3
VS36	July 22, 2002	Derrick Penner	Hydro unloads non-core activities: Accenture to run customer service and office support, Derrick Penner reports	Bus BC - D5
VS37	August 6, 2002	Werner Antweiller	The power of e-business: The energy sector is just one area in which Canada can lead the world in the age of the Internet Series: Canadian Competitiveness	Bus BC - C7
VS38	July 31, 2002	Scott Simpson	Wind could ease energy crunch: Lack of tax incentives is hampering wind-power development in B.C., Scott Simpson reports	Bus - D3

VS39	August 29, 2002	Derrick Penner	Pop singer Jewel gives star power to energy project: Firm enlists singer to help bring a northern ghost town's dormant hydro dam back to life, Derrick Penner writes Series: Enterprise	Bus BC - C1 Fro
VS40	September 5, 2002	Ian Mulgrew	Class-action suit doesn't fit Hydro privatization debate: Court of public opinion should rule on Liberals' plan to split public utility	News - B5
VS41	September 9, 2002	Scott Simpson	Association fired up about coal's future: Coal producers attending a conference in Whistler hope they will have a major part to play in future energy projects, the Sun's Scott Simpson writes	Business BC - C1
VS42	September 26, 2002	Ian Mulgrew	Hydro ain't broke, so don't fix it, expert says: California expert says he can't believe anyone would mess with success, Ian Mulgrew writes	C3 - Bus BC
VS43	October 4, 2002	Dave Seibel	Hydro plan not a sell-off	Bus BC - F5
VS44	September 14, 2002	Bruce Cran	Hydro transfer is a cause for concern for consumers: Transfer of the utility's customer-service office could result in rate hikes	Business BC - C3
VS45	October 28, 2002	Dave Seibel	Accenture set straight	Bus Letter - C2
VS46	November 6, 2002	Scott Simpson	Massive potential for green power: Electricity supply could be increased by 40%, reports Scott Simpson	Bus BC - D1 Fro
VS47	November 13, 2002	Paul Ramsey	Natural gas deregulation proved disastrous: B.C. Hydro's benefit to British Columbia is far too great to subject the corporation to 'dumbsizing,' writes former NDP finance minister Paul Ramsey	Bus BC - D5

VS48	November 12, 2002	Ian Mulgrew	Hydro papers envision split into 7 firms: Critics fear 'market- based model,' utility cites 'contingency' plan	Bus - A1 Fro
VS49	November 13, 2002	Craig Mcinnes	No market rates, energy minister says: Neufeld denies that B.C. Hydro will be broken up into separate companies	News - A3
VS50	November 13, 2002	Larry Bell	CEO says there's no secret plan to divvy up Hydro	Editorial - A21
VS51	November 14, 2002	Derrick Penner	Sale of power 'requires split': B.C. Hydro prompted by U.S. to ensure dams are separate from transmission lines to avoid appearance of conflict, reports Derrick Penner	News - D1
VS52	November 14, 2002	Vaughan Palmer	Loose Liberal cannon rolls over Hydro issue	Editorial - A18
VS53	November 14, 2002	Craig Mcinnes	Liberal MLA breaks ranks, warns of Hydro sell-off: Premier dismisses accusation of secret privatization agenda	News - A1 Fro
VS54	November 14, 2002	Derrick Penner	High-profile team leads fight to keep system public	Bus BC - D5
VS55	November 16, 2002	Dave Yau	Hydro is power for the people, not cash for politicians	Editorial - A27
VS56	November 18, 2002	Sperrill Chambers	Liberals are upfront about Hydro policy	Editorial - A15
VS57	November 19, 2002	Scott Simpson	More voices join call for Hydro rates, policies to be regulated by commission: Industry, environmental groups back move to relieve Victoria of tasks	Bus BC - D3
VS58	November 21, 2002	Scott Simpson and Craig Mcinnes	Hydro fate revealed Monday: Generation, distribution, transmission assets stay public rates up to utilities commission, energy minister says	C1 Front (Bus)
VS59	November 21, 2002	No Byline	Let's face reality: Power costs will go up	Editorial - A22

VS60	November 21, 2002	Vaughan Palmer	Hydro reorganization, higher rates coming	Editorial - A22
VS61	November 23, 2002	Scott Simpson	Government ready to take scalpel to B.C. Hydro: ANALYSIS: Liberals will pledge to maintain Hydro's legacy of cheap power - but rates will go up	Bus BC - F1
VS62	November 26, 2002	Scott Simpson	New power goes private: Policy opens door to electricity projects ranging from coal to 'clean' sources	A5 – News
VS63	November 26, 2002	Editors	Implementing energy policy now the critical task	A22- Editorial
VS64	November 26, 2002	Scott Simpson	Expect rate hike, hydro users told: Provincial government claims it has learned from failures of deregulation and will limit increases to consumers with plan to return to utilities commission setting rates	A5 – News
VS65	November 26, 2002	Vaughan Palmer	Liberals wary about the politics of power	Editorial - A22
VS66	November 26, 2002	Esther K. Park.	Hydro's in good hands -- in B.C. at least	A23 - letter
VS67	November 26, 2002	Jim Beatty And Craig Mcinnes	Expect rate hike, hydro users told: Provincial government claims it has learned from failures of deregulation and will limit increases to consumers with plan to return to utilities commission setting rates	News - A4
VS68	November 26, 2002	Scott Simpson	Commission back in power: Liberals restore B.C. Utilities Commission's mandate to oversee hydro rate hikes	Bus - A5
VS69	November 27, 2002	Kevin Griffin	Unions to take up fight against Hydro privatization	E16 - Business BC
VS70	November 27, 2002	Robert Larson	BC Hydro won't be shining so brightly	A23 - Letter (Editorial)
VS71	December 9, 2002	Scott Simpson	Coal advocate comes clean	C4 - Bus
VS72	January 2, 2003	Harvey Enchin.	The other side of the B.C. Hydro story	Bus BC - C3

VS73	January 16, 2003	Scott Simpson	Island plant held up for private-sector input	Bus BC - C5
VS74	January 24, 2003	Scott Simpson	Powerex chief to face U.S. investigators	News - D3
VS75	February 25, 2003	Derrick Penner	Squamish First Nation to be partner in power plant	D9
VS76	March 20, 2003	Scott Simpson	B.C. Hydro partner on brink of bankruptcy:	C3 - Bus BC
VS77	April 1, 2003	Scott Simpson	B.C. creeks, waste wood eyed as sources of power:	Bus BC - D5
VS78	April 11, 2003	Derrick Penner	Kitimat prepares to defy its maker:	Bus BC - H1 Front
VS79	April 23, 2005	Scott Simpson	Norske Canada challenges B.C. Hydro	Bus BC - D5
VS80	May 2, 2003	Scott Simpson	Execs see dim future for energy:	Bus BC - H1 Fro
VS81	May 9, 2003	Scott Simpson	Hydro split will cost B.C. users, critic says:	H4 - Bus BC
VS82	May 17, 2003	No Byline	Saponja on Hydro board	F2
VS83	June 1, 2003	Dave Reevely	Vander Zalm, Barrett join fight against Liberals' Hydro plan	B1
VS84	June 10, 2003	Sandy Bauer	Better for shareholders, worse for hydro customers	A13
VS85	June 17, 2003	Scott Simpson	Generation plan risky, hearing told: B.C. Hydro accused of ignoring coal-fired generation	Bus BC - D3
VS86	June 23, 2003	Scott Simpson	Powerex accused of price-fixing	Bus BC - F1 - Fro
VS87	July 17, 2003	Elisha Moreno	No merit to allegations	E2
VS88	July 21, 2003	Scott Simpson	California 'started out bad and got worse'	Bus BC - D4
VS89	July 25, 2003	No Byline	New generator helps GVRD turn trash into power	News - B2

VS90	August 18, 2003	William Boei and Greg Mercer.	Can it happen here?	News - A4
VS91	August 13, 2003	Joyce Murray	B.C. government refutes columnist's criticisms of its environmental record	A15 - Opinion Editorial
VS92	September 27, 2003	Scott Simpson	Campbell proposes B.C.'s first wind farm for North Island	Bus BC - G1 – Fro
VS93	October 3, 2003	Scott Simpson	Powerex files U.S. defence today	Bus BC - G1 – Fro
VS94	October 6, 2003	Scott Simpson	B.C. described as the 'Saudi Arabia of green energy':	Bus BC - D1 Fro
VS95	October 25, 2003	Maurice Bridge	New guy has to prove he can deliver power	Bus BC - D3
VS96	October 30, 2003	Michael Kane	New Hydro boss backs defence of Powerex trading	F3 - Bus BC
VS97	November 7, 2003	Scott Simpson	Small power projects 'blackmailed' by local districts	G3 - Bus BC
VS98	December 18, 2003	Editors	Increase in Hydro rates a small, necessary price:	Editorial - A16
VS99	January 17, 2004	No Byline	Council calls for repeal of Hydro privatization	West Coast News - B2
VS100	March 31, 2004	Yvonne Zacharias.	BC Hydro changes its tune on rate increase:	D1 - Fro - Bus BC
VS101	April 9, 2003	Maurice Bridge	Power seen as a tool to build jobs	Bus BC - F3
VS102	April 22, 2004	Ruth-Ann Darnall	Environmental and financial consequences of Site C dam	Editorial - A13
VS103	May 8, 2004	Randy Ray	Cheap sustainable energy is yours for the taking	West Coast Homes - D13
VS104	March 24, 2004	Scott Simpson	Importing electricity 'leaves B.C. vulnerable'	D4 - Bus BC
VS105	April 2, 2004	Scott Simpson	BC Hydro resurrects Site C dam proposal	A1 -Front – Bus
VS106	July 7, 2004	Scott Simpson	Fighting back the flood: Series: Trouble On The Peace	Bus BC - D3

VS107	October 19, 2004	Scott Simpson	BC Hydro gives wind-power option the cold shoulder advocates say	A3 - Bus BC
VS108	October 22, 2004	Scott Simpson	B.C. calls for open electricity market:	H1 - Bus BC
VS109	October 24, 2004	Scott Simpson	Independent power producers hopeful	Bus BC - D4
VS110	October 29, 2004	Scott Simpson	Independent producers gear up as BC Hydro opens doors	H3 - Bus BC
VS111	November 4, 2004	Scott Simpson	Island deal leaves Hydro on the hook for $70m	Bus BC - D1
VS112	November 29, 2004	Derrick Penner	B.C.'s wind power potential minimal	Bus BC - D9
VS113	December 12, 2004	Scott Simpson	Hydro silent on payments to Island power producer:	Bus BC - D4
VS114	January 11, 2005	Mark Jaccard	A 'BC Hydra' project that just won't die	Editorial - A11
VS115	January 17, 2005	Scott Simpson	Hydro customers could pay $4.5b for new plant	A1
VS116	February 1, 2005	Scott Simpson	Talks set over plans for 60 small hydro projects:	Bus BC - F1
VS117	February 5, 2005	Scott Simpson	Hydro tied to power scheme	Bus BC - H5 Fro
VS118	February 17, 2005	Editors	Island power project is coming together just in time	Editorial - A12
VS119	February 18, 2005	Scott Simpson	Gas-fired electrical plant gets go-ahead	News - A1 Fro
VS120	April 27, 2005	Glenn Bohn	Carr criticizes Liberals for backing gas-fired power plant	Bus - A5
VS121	May 11, 2005	Janet Steffenhagen	NDP's James promises to stop Alcan's hydro power sales to U.S.	B5
VS122	July 13, 2005	Scott Simpson	BC Hydro moves to calm private power producers:	Bus BC - D5
VS123	August 30, 2005	Joel Rosenblatt.	California's suit against Powerex dismissed	Business BC - D2

VS124	October 6, 2005	Scott Simpson	Hydro to reveal plans for upgrade: Every concept except nuclear energy examined	Business BC - C1 Fro
VS125	November 8, 2005	Derrick Penner	New life for dead wood	Business BC - D5
VS126	November 22, 2005	Scott Simpson	Alternative energy sources potentially rich in jobs:	D1 - Bus BC
VS127	December 8, 2005	Don Potts	Power for the people: But we must ask where the new electricity will come from	Editorial - A21
VS128	December 8, 2005	Vaughan Palmer	Political squeamishness sinks Hydro's plans to talk about electricity	News - A3
VS129	December 8, 2005	Scott Simpson	Government concern about Site C dam stalls power plan	Business BC - C1 Fro
VS130	December 9, 2005	Mark Jaccard	Limiting the debate to fossil fuels won't save the planet	Editorial - A22
VS131	December 9, 2005	Scott Simpson	Cabinet says it needs time to review Hydro energy plan:	Bus BC - H3
VS132	December 10, 2005	Editors	We need bright lights to develop hydro projects	Editorial - C6
VS133	December 14, 2005	Erik Andersen	Hydro has a good case for more dams and better dams	Editorial - A14
VS134	December 14, 2005	Don Whiteley	Victoria, Hydro drag heels on alternative energy	Business BC - D4
VS135	December 27, 2005	Editorial Board	Vision needed to deal with some dim bulbs:	A10 – Editorial
VS136	February 18, 2006	Barbara Yaffe	Renewable ocean energy an idea whose time has come	Editorial - C7
VS137	February 22, 2006	Scott Simpson	B.C.'s low electricity rates threatened:	Business BC - D4
VS138	February 23, 2005	Scott Simpson	Do-it-ourselves energy gets strong support: 82% back small generating plants	Business BC - E5
VS139	March 29, 2006	Fiona Anderson	Value of B.C.'s electricity exports to U.S. jumped 128% last year	Bus BC - H2

VS140	March 30, 2006	Scott Simpson	Electricity gap threat to B.C. energy future:	Bus BC - E1 Fro
VS141	March 4, 2006	Scott Simpson	Hydro 'ambushed' rival at hearing on link, documents say	Bus BC - H5
VS142	March 21, 2006	Scott Simpson	Coal-fired power plant proposed for B.C.	Bus BC - D1 Fr0
VS143	March 25, 2006	Editors	Fossil fuels opponents caught in a time warp:	Editorial - C6
VS144	March 30, 2006	Vaughan Palmer	Is a power shortage looming? Let's talk about it for a while	News - A3
VS145	March 30, 2006	Scott Simpson	B.C.'s power 'running short'	News - A1 Fro
VS146	April 10, 2008	Roy Summerhayes	B.C.'s electrical future is blowing in the wind	Editorial - A8
VS147	April 12, 2006	Scott Simpson	Green power bids top list of proposals	Bus BC - D1 Fr0
VS148	April 13, 2006	Scott Simpson	Wind power'll be blowin' in, group predicts	Bus BC - C1 Fro
VS149	June 17, 2006	Wency Leung	Anti-privatization group drops BC Hydro lawsuit	Bus BC - H2
VS150	July 18, 2006	Fiona Anderson	Independents win contracts:	Bus BC - F1 Fro
VS151	July 19, 2006	Fiona Anderson	Coal plant contracts shock eco groups	Bus BC - G4
VS152	August 18, 2006	Vaughan Palmer	Premier interrupts vacation for Alcan's expansion announcement	News - A3
VS153	August 15, 2006	Bruce Constantineau	Massive upgrade set for Alcan's Kitimat plant	Bus BC - F1 Fro
VS154	August 16, 2006	Editors	Alcan's plans are a reason for celebration in Kitimat	Editorial - A12
VS155	August 15, 2006	Derrick Penner	Alcan's excess-electricity sales spark discord	Bus BC - F1 Fro
VS156	August 18, 2006	Vaughan Palmer	So far, tough love has failed to deliver on B.C.'s aluminum dreams	A3

VS157	August 15, 2006	Harvey Enchin	Electrifying facts:	Editorial - A15
VS158	August 31, 2006	Michael Kane	GE backs Plutonic hydro scheme: U.S. company to invest $100 million in run-of-river project	Business BC - C3
VS159	September 11, 2006	Lisa Matthaus	Taking a giant leap backwards:	Editorial - A11
VS160	September 19, 2006	Scott Simpson	Hydro foresees annual net income of $395 million in coming year:	Bus BC - D3
VS161	September 23, 2006	Scott Simpson	Staking a future on fossil fuels Series: Energy: Tough Choices Ahead	Weekend Review - C1 Fro
VS162	September 27, 2006	Don Cayo	Restless prairie winds power Alberta's renewable future: Series: Energy: Tough Choices Ahead: Day 4 of a seven-day series	News - A4
VS163	September 30, 2006	Don Cayo	End of the era of cheap energy	Weekend Review - C8
VS164	September 30, 2006	Miro Cernetig	B.C. lacks energy vision:	Weekend Review - C9
VS165	October 26, 2006	Scott Simpson	Coal-fired energy condemned	Bus BC - D4
VS166	October 11, 2006	Richard Neufeld	How we're going to get the power we need	Editorial - A17
VS167	November 3, 2006	Scott Simpson	Power supply plan comes under fire	Bus BC - H2
VS168	November 22, 2006	Scott Simpson	BC Hydro in secret Alcan pact:	Bus BC - F1 Fro
VS169	November 27, 2006	Paul Henning	BC Hydro, Alcan have no 'secret pact'	A8
VS170	December 26, 2006	Dreyer Berg.	Province rolls the dice with our energy future	Editorial - A22
VS171	December 12, 2006	Scott Simpson	Coal-fired power plants stir up controversy	Bus BC - C12 Fro

VS172	January 5, 2007	Don Cayo	Nub of helter-smelter power sales deal unresolved	Bus BC - D2
VS173	January 10, 2006	Richard Mclaren.	The power sales poker game	Editorial - A11
VS174	January 12, 2007	Brian Pearson	So where is the power supposed to come from?	Editorial - A8
VS175	January 20, 2007	Scott Simpson	Climate change is real: B.C. minister	News - A1 Fro
VS176	January 31, 2007	Scott Simpson	New power projects to break ground in weeks	Bus BC - D3
VS177	February 10, 2007	Miro Cernetig	California model for Campbell's green plan	A1
VS178	February 12, 2007	Editors	BC Hydro lets its customers down	Editorial - A10
VS179	February 14, 2007	Miro Cernetig	Green changes sweep the province: Liberals vow to fight global warming	News - A1
VS180	February 14, 2007	Scott Simpson	Coal-fired electricity dumped	Bus BC - D3
VS181	February 15, 2007	Larry Pynn	Decision imminent on Toba power: Project could change face of inlet north of Powell River	West Coast News - B1
VS182	February 14, 2007	Editorial	Premier's green plan will be the acid test for environmental concerns	A12 – Editorial
VS183	February 14, 2007	Frances Bula	The man mapping out B.C.'s new energy plan	L4 Bus - Going Green
VS184	February 15, 2007	Derrick Penner	Energy-rich' B.C. could be self-sufficient in 20 years	Bus BC - D1 Fro
VS185	February 21, 2007	Scott Simpson	Hydro hike of 6% projected	News - A4
VS186	February 27, 2007	Vaughan Palmer	Liberals about to roll out the Trojan Horse of Hydro borrowing	A3 - Business
VS187	February 27, 2007	Scott Simpson	Business looks for leadership in energy plan	D3 - Bus BC
VS188	February 28,	Miro Cernetig	Victoria demands big energy cuts	A1 - Front -

	2007			News
VS189	February 28, 2007	Scott Simpson	B.C. utility green levy to total $25 million annually	D1 – Front
VS190	February 28, 2007	Editorial	B.C.'s new energy plan is green and ambitious and it won't be cheap	A-16 - Editorial
VS191	March 1, 2007	Vaughan Palmer	Might the energy plan give Hydro another shot at the Alcan deal?	A2- News
VS192	March 10, 2007	Dreyer Berg	An inconvenient ice age will eventually happen again in the meantime, let's raise the tax on fuel	Editorial - A10
VS193	March 12, 2007	Richard Neufeld	Energy plan opens new field of debate: Aggressive yet realistic targets put B.C. out front	A7 - Editorial
VS194	March 6, 2007	Scott Simpson	Rejection of Alcan deal will be costly, BC Hydro says	Bus BC - D2
VS195	March 7, 2007	Scott Simpson	Wind power company wants to export to U.S.	Bus BC - D1 Fro
VS196	March 10, 2007	Scott Simpson	B.C. eyes self-sufficiency with 'bioenergy' creation	Bus BC - D3
VS197	March 17, 2007	Michael Kane	Homeowners to pay more, businesses less under Hydro plan	Bus BC - Stats - D3
VS198	April 4, 2007	Editors	Now that Alcan has the power Kitimat should back off	Editorial - A14
VS199	April 6, 2007	Marvin Shaffer	Alcan should pay top rate for water resource	Ed
VS200	April 11, 2007	Bob Elton	B.C.'s emerging electricity gap For security and self-sufficiency in our power supply, we'll need conservation, clean producers and more dams	Editorial - A11
VS201	April 16, 2007	Doug Morrison	Hydro CEO ignores obvious solutions	Editorial - A1o
VS202	April 16, 2007	Roger G. Napier.	Hydro CEO ignores obvious solutions	Editorial - A10

VS203	April 19, 2007	Leanne Ritchie.	Offshore wind farm looking for direction NaiKun Wind Energy Group proposes project in shallow waters of Hecate Strait	Bus BC - C5
VS204	April 25, 2007	No Byline	BC Hydro receives 80 bioenergy proposals Interest in wood waste potential highest from area plagued by pine beetle	D2
VS205	April 27, 2007	Scott Simpson	Plutonic joins the big players in electricity production The company has received green light for two Toba River projects	Bus BC - H5
VS206	May 15, 2007	Scott Simpson	B.C.'s waste wood to generate electricity Two firms want to spend $500 million to build small generating stations	Bus BC - D4
VS207	May 13, 2007	Ray Castelli	Ecological treasure leaves large carbon footprint	A13
VS208	June 1, 2007	Scott Simpson	B.C. ready for gold rush, Schwarzenegger says California eager to strike relationships with green companies	Bus BC - C1
VS209	June 16, 2007	Scott Simpson	Customers pay more for B.C. energy plan	Bs BC - D1 Fro
VS210	June 21, 2007	Gordon Hamilton	Waste-wood energy attacked Bioenergy plants pose pricing threat to pulp industry, official warns	C1 - Bus BC
VS211	June 21, 2007	Scott Simpson	Cutting through red tape to reach green energy bonanza B.C. Hydro offers smaller-scale projects minimal hassle to link to grid	Bus BC - C2
VS212	July 10, 2007	Scott Simpson	Pursuit of self-sufficiency 'means higher energy prices' Critics warn BC Hydro consumers should be prepared to pay more for electricity	D3
VS213	July 18, 2003	Vaughan Palmer	B.C. needs more power and Revelstoke Five is the only way to go	News - A3

VS214	July 19, 2007	Craig Mcinnes	P3s just put the bill in another pocket They're called contractual obligations, but they're still piling up debt for our children and grandchildren to pay	Editorial - A15
VS215	August 17, 2007	Michael Kane	Alcan, Hydro sign new power deal Hydro will pay lower prices, expects energy self-sufficiency by 2016	F3 - Bus BC
VS216	August 31, 2007	Michael Kane	BC Hydro second best, customer satisfaction survey finds Its prices are low, too, but that may change	Bus BC - F3
VS217	September 12, 2007	Michael Kane	Deep snow, late spring keep Hydro reservoir levels high Utility finds itself in flexible position for electricity buying and selling	Bus BC - D3
VS218	September 18, 2007	Scott Simpson	BC Hydro to boost spending on dams Older facilities need upgrades and increased capacity, company says	D3 - Bus BC
VS219	September 21, 2007	Scott Simpson	196-megawatt independent power project among biggest Vancouver-based Plutonic Power signs $500-million construction contract	Bus BC - C3
VS220	September 29, 2007	Scott Simpson	Smart' meters coming to B.C. Campbell hopes incentives will lower energy use with measure-by-moment technology	News - A2
VS221	September 29, 2007	Frances Bula	Premier unveils laws to sharply reduce emissions	News - A1
VS222	September 29, 2007	Scott Simpson	Campbell sets public sights on Site C Once left to private sector, premier puts dam in Hydro's hands	Bus BC - D1
VS223	October 2, 2007	Scott Simpson	Electricity grid to be extended to B.C.'s northwest Galore Creek to pay some of $400-million installation costs	Bus BC - D1
VS224	October 4, 2007	Scott Simpson	Wind farms get a boost as BC Hydro pays more for power Wind power is finally viable and will attract new financing, Finavera VP says	Bus BC - C5

VS225	October 19, 2007	Marvin Shaffer	Subsidizing new mines not the way to save power	Editorial - A15
VS226	November 16, 2007	Scott Simpson	Residential hydro rates to jump by 11 per cent	News - A1
VS227	November 20, 2007	Doug Morrison	Hydro rates encourage industrial users	A12
VS228	November 21, 2007	Scott Simpson	The estimated cost of hydro self-sufficiency: annual 7.5% rate hike for a decade	News - A1
VS229	November 16, 2007	Dreyer Berg	Without big projects, BC Hydro can't keep up to demand	Editorial - A10
VS230	November 24, 2007	Scott Simpson	New Alcan-Hydro deal questioned Kitimat's future uncertain after disclosure firm is no longer bound to modernizing smelter	D1
VS231	December 4, 2007	Michael Kane	Weak dollar cuts into BC Hydro profits	Bus BC - D1
VS232	December 13, 2007	Scott Simpson	BC Hydro counts on conservation	Bus BC - C3
VS233	December 15, 2007	Scott Simpson	Xantrex chairman to head Hydro board	Bus BC - G2
VS234	December 22, 2007	Fiona Anderson	Hydro's challenge -- be clean and efficient 'I think we can be world leaders,' says BC Hydro's new chairman Mossadiq Umedaly	Bus BC - D1
VS235	December 31, 2007	Bob Elton	'Tis the season of conspicuous conservation	Editorial - A15

2. Times Colonist

Code	Date	Author(s)	Title	Location
TC1	October 1, 2001	Malcom Curtis	Hydro looking to waves and wind	B1 - Fro
TC2	October 1, 2001	Malcom Curtis	Hydro chief ready to spend to save power	B1 - Fro
TC3	October 5, 2001	No Byline	Hydro to splinter operations	B7 - Bus
TC4	October 22, 2001	Malcolm Curtis	Power Struggle: Debate rages over Island's energy future	A1 - Fro
TC5	December 18, 2001	No Byline	Province to consider B.C. Hydro rate shock	A1
TC6	December 18, 2001	James Campbell	B.C. Hydro amazing bargain	Voices - A11
TC7	December 18, 2001	Editors	Fix only if it's broken	A10
TC8	December 19, 2001	No Byline	Hydro deregulation already underway, labour head insists	Bus - C3
TC9	December 22, 2001	Neil Gregory	Power for U.S., not us	A15
TC10	December 22, 2001	No Byline	Hydro workers file suit to block asset liquidation	B3
TC11	December 26, 2001	Bob Cameron	Crown corporations serve us well	A19
TC12	December 28, 2001	George Eckenfelder	Utility doesn't need fixing	A17
TC13	December 28, 2001	Gs Alliance	No self-sufficiency in pipeline	A17 - Voices
TC14	January 2, 2002	Adrian Dix (Former Ndp Strategist)	Bc Hydo belongs to us all	A10
TC15	January 10, 2002	G.W. Clayton	Dix conjures bugaboos	A13
TC16	January 19, 2002	Norm Ringuette	Government for the rich	A11

TC17	February 8, 2002	Andrew A. Duffy	Monopoly fears unfounded, says Calpine Canada	Bus - C4
TC18	February 18, 2002	Ian Mulgrew	Economic disaster feared in province unplugs hydro: 30 major companies predict thousands of layoffs	A1
TC19	February 19, 2002	Editors	Don't rush to sell B.C. Hydro	A10
TC20	February 19, 2002	Malcolm Curtis	B.C. Hydro announces independent suppliers	Bus - B2
TC21	February 22, 2002	R.L. (Dusty) Miller	Hike would hurt	A13
TC22	February 22, 2002	Andrew A. Duffy	Hydro goes for green power	Bus - B4
TC23	February 27, 2002	Andrew A. Duffy	BC Hydro to tap into wave power	Bus - C1
TC24	March 13, 2002	Les Leyne	Crunch coming in electricity, too: B.C. Hydro warns us to expect rotating brownouts by 2007	Bus - A12
TC25	March 25, 2002	Pierre Olivier Pineau	Why is the province hiding the Energy Task Force final report?	A9
TC26	March 20, 2002	Vic Villeneuve	Hydro power, not gas, best for Island	A11
TC27	April 3, 2002	Mary Gay Brooks	Wind beats gas for job creation	A11
TC28	April 20, 2002	No Byline	Union balks at plan to shed Hydro operations	Bus - A4
TC29	April 27, 2002	No Byline	BC hydro prices to jump minister warns	A7
TC30	April 26, 2002	No Byline	B.C. Gas considers Hydro arm	Bus - B12
TC31	May 2, 2002	Barry R. Lowe	Let's vote on B.C. Hydro	Comment - A11
TC32	May 10, 2002	Derrick Penner	Hydro targeted in US probe	Bus - C10 - Fr
TC33	May 15, 2002	Fauzia Lalani	B.C.'s electricity industry at a crossroads	A13

TC34	May 18, 2002	Dave Read	Market prices a real shocker	A11
TC35	May 19, 2002	Joe Easingwood	B.C. Hydro is at a critical crossroads	A11
TC36	May 23, 2002	Carole Forrester	Privatization means higher costs	A13
TC37	May 29, 2002	No Byline	Content on his chosen path	A9 - Comment
TC38	June 1, 2002	Andrew A Duffy	Ruling may delay Nanaimo plant: National Energy Board links pipeline, plant to environmental review	Bus - E1 Fr
TC39	June 1, 2002	Veman Dean	Private industry is not the answer	Letter - A11
TC40	June 1, 2002	Betty Gidlof	Please don't privatize B.C. Hydro	Letter - A11
TC41	June 19, 2002	Les Leyne	Brownouts loom, power plants don't: Despite years of effort, B.C. Hydro can't get the Island behind its plans	Comment - A10
TC42	June 21, 2002	John Winter	Electricity: B.C.'s new economic frontier	Comment - A13
TC43	July 3, 2002	Les Leyne	Island Hydro project on the fast track?: Minister could break election promise and bypass utilities commission	Comment - A8
TC44	July 3, 2002	Ian Cass	B.C. Hydro's problems could be a disaster for Island	Comment - A9
TC45	July 8, 2002	Yves Bajard	Breakup of B.C. Hydro coming: Starting today, Liberals are expected to inform investors about fire sale of public assets	Bus - A9
TC46	July 30, 2002	Judith Lavoie	Hydro's service partner embroiled in tax dispute: Bermuda-based firm faces censure in U.S.	A1 - Fro
TC47	September 1, 2002	Judith Lavoie	Accent on controversy: The new behemoth behind B.C. Hydro battles for a better image	D1

TC48	November 12, 2008	No Byline	B.C. Hydro break-up awaits Liberals' OK	Bus - A6
TC49	November 13, 2002	Judith Lavoie	Minister throws cold water on B.C. Hydro privatization	Bus - A4
TC50	December 8, 2002	Andrew Duffy	Power to the people: As energy policies shift, B.C. is forever plugged into Hydro	Bus - D1
TC51	November 14, 2002	Les Leyne	Shocking letter puts Hydro fears in the spotlight	A12
TC52	November 14, 2002	Judith Lavoie	Liberal MLA blows fuse over Hydro: B.C. has secret scheme to dismantle utility, says low key backbencher	Bus - A1
TC53	November 18, 2002	Richard Dewey	Let's have a vote on Hydro plans	A7
TC54	November 20, 2002	Judith Lavoie	Liberals bounce Hydro renegade from caucus	Bus- A1
TC55	November 21, 2002	Judith Lavoie	Revamped Hydro likely to be at centre of new energy policy	Cap Region - B2
TC56	November 21, 2002	Saul Arbess	Hydro dalliance doomed from start	Comments - A12
TC57	November 21, 2002	Paul Ramsey	Dismantling Hydro is totally mindless	A13
TC58	November 26, 2002	Judith Lavoie	B.C. shifts energy priorities: Private investors gain Hydro access, Island project on hold, costs go up	Bus-A1
TC59	November 26, 2002	Editors	B.C. Hydro stays with private help: Provincial government's energy plan calls for the use of a wide variety of new sources	Comment - A12
TC60	November 27, 2002	Pierre-Olivier Pineau	The new B.C. energy policy: No more dams, many flaws	Op - A13
TC61	November 25, 2002	Editors	Electricity costs are sure to rise: Even if it remains a Crown corporation, B.C. Hydro will face some big expenses	Comment - A6
TC62	December 2, 2002	Dave Siebel	Accenture deal makes good sense	Comment - A9

TC63	December 5, 2002	Les Leyne	Caucus rebel says he's lost friends	A12 - Column
TC64	December 6, 2002	Victor Vrsnik	Hydro privatization protest fails to recognize a phantom	Comment - A15
TC65	December 10, 2002	Marjorie Griffin Cohen	Professor says hydro study was volunteer job	Comment - A11
TC66	December 16, 2002	Adrian Dix	Hydro policy is a return to 19th-century ideology	Column - A6
TC67	December 27, 2002	L.R. Crosby	Past sins behind the debt at Hydro	A15
TC68	December 27, 2002	Minister Neufeld	Minister defends new energy policy	Comment - A15
TC69	January 26, 2003	Brue Winfield	Raging power	C12
TC70	January 30, 2003	Les Leyne	Still no clear path as our power crunch approaches	A10
TC71	February 27, 2003	Judith Lavoie	Splitting Hydro doesn't impress municipal politicians	Cap Region - C4
TC72	April 20, 2003	Judith Lavoie	Classic battle	News - A1
TC73	May 7, 2003	No Byline	Government introduces power line deregulation	Bus - C3
TC74	May 10, 2003	Coun. Maurine Karagianis	Province ignores local government	Comment - A11
TC75	May 23, 2003	Marjorie Griffin Cohen	Decline and fall of Hydro	Comment - A13
TC76	May 23, 2003	Richard Neufeld	Energy plan aims to keep B.C.'s rates low	A7
TC77	May 30, 2003	R.A. Carr	Energy minister has lost track	A11
TC78	June 3, 2003	Joe Easingwood	Motley crew fights B.C. Hydro sell-off	Monitor/Comment - D3
TC79	August 17, 2003	Joyce Murray	Environmental management world class	D3
TC80	August 22, 2003	Stuart Hertzog	Day of the grid is gone: Forget the finger-pointing -- an obsolete system simply did its job	Comment - A13

TC81	September 9, 2003	Scott Simpson And Andrew A. Duffy	Power plant project blocked	Bus - A1
TC82	September 27, 2003	Judith Lavoie	Power projects get green light	Bus - E1
TC83	November 3, 2003	Peter Justo	Private sector wants bigger profits	A7
TC84	November 4, 2003	Judith Lavoie	Hydro assets secure: Neufeld: New legislation flawed, critics say	Bus - A1
TC85	les leyne	Les Leyne	MLA calls public-power group's bluff	Comment - A14
TC86	December 16, 2003	Andrew A. Duffy and Jeff Rud	Hydro pushes rate hike: Utility applies for nine-per-cent increase over the next two years	Bus - A1
TC87	March 10, 2004	Judith Lavoie	Quinsam gets OK to join Campbell River	C3
TC88	February 16, 2004	Judith Lavoie	Coal-power company shops for land deal	B2 - Business
TC89	February 20, 2004	Bruce Winfield	Wind power proposal garners wide support	Bus - C2
TC90	June 15, 2004	Michael Kane	Hydro still wants rate hike	Bus - C1 Fro
TC91	June 15, 2004	Scott Simpson	B.C. Hydro wins again in battle against Alcan	Bus - C1
TC92	July 11, 2004	Bob Ritchie	Rising prices causing a lot of grief	Comment - C3
TC93	September 29, 2004	Gerard Young	$700 million in the wind	A1 Fr News
TC94	April 2, 2004	Scott Simpson	Hydro eyes new Peace dam	Bus - A1
TC95	April 3, 2004	No Byline	Province needs a new hydro dam	A10
TC96	October 18, 2004	Eugene Hodgson	Power of wind a complement to Hydro	A7
TC97	October 31, 2004	Judith Lavoie	A spirit rising in Port Alberni	Monitor - C1

TC98	November 1, 2004	Lawrence Pitt	Low-capacity wind farms are becoming the norm	Comment - A7
TC99	November 2, 2004	Judith Lavoie	Wind farm will sell power to B.C. Hydro	Bus - A3
TC100	November 3, 2004	Judith Lavoie	Gold River hoping Hydro has good news	Cap And Van Island - C1
TC101	November 24, 2004	Andrew A. Duffy and Judith Lavoie	Duke Point project to power Island	Cap & Van Isl - B1 Fro
TC102	November 11, 2004	Murray Dobbin	Lost cause: A new era for electricity	Comment - A11
TC103	November 22, 2004	Bob Elton	Power bid process fair and competitive	Comment - A7
TC104	November 23, 2004	Steve Anderosov	Hydro keeps Islanders in the dark	A9
TC105	December 3, 2004	Andrew A. Duffy.	Gold River holds faint hope	Bus - B6 Fro
TC106	January 13, 2005	Andrew A. Duffy.	Hydro happy with hearings	Bus - D1
TC107	January 15, 2005	Les Leyne	Finally, progress in the energy crunch	Comment - A10
TC108	January 17, 2005	Russell Burke	Duke Point power project makes sense	Comment - A7
TC109	January 25, 2005	Andrew A. Duffy.	Utilities panel accused of bias	Bus - A3
TC110	February 5, 2005	Jason Markusoff	Evidence suggests Enron price rigging started in Alberta	Bus - B2
TC111	February 13, 2005	No Byline	Cable connections make for strange bedfellows	News - D8
TC112	February 21, 2005	Jeff Myers	Scrutiny attests to power project's value	Comment - A7
TC113	February 19, 2005	No Byline	Island needs more power	Comment - A18
TC114	February 24, 2005	Thomas Hackney	Duke Point power, still the wrong solution	Comment - A13

TC115	March 8, 2005	Eric Beauchesne	TD Bank wants higher electric bills: Governments should charge more to promote conservation	B4 Fro
TC116	April 15, 2005	Dodie Miller	Pull the plug on Duke Point power	Comment - A15
TC117	April 17, 2005	No Byline	Billions wasted, and foul air too	D3
TC118	June 18, 2005	No Byline	From Dream to Abandonment	A3
TC119	June 18, 2005	Andrew A. Duffy	Did gas rates play a role in decision?	A3
TC120	June 25, 2005	Richard Berg	Hydro vision gives way to hallucinations	Comment - A11
TC121	June 25, 2005	Thomas Hackney	Death of project won't bring chaos	Comment - A11
TC122	July 9, 2005	Les Leyne	Jilted power producers give Hydro a strong jolt	Comment - A9
TC123	July 17, 2005	Bev Van Ruyven	Independent producers vital to the grid	D3
TC124	July 26, 2005	Paul Luke	Tide turning on B.C. renewable energy	Bus - A3
TC125	July 27, 2005	Les Leyne	Green power idea has blown away	Bus - A12
TC126	November 10, 2005	Scott Simpson	Peak-power jolt for homeowners urged	Bus - A3
TC127	November 12, 2005	Les Leyne	Tough choices on power generation	Comment - A14
TC128	November 25, 2005	Les Leyne	Who's got the power with our power?	A16
TC129	December 4, 2005	No Byline	B.C. will need more electricity	Opinion - D2
TC130	December 13, 2005	Les Leyne	Hydro needed to have its plug pulled	Comment - A10
TC131	December 9, 2005	Paul Wilcocks	Hydro's a political animal once again	Comment - A16

TC132	December 26, 2005	Andy Ross	Our energy future: B.C. Liberals playing politics with power needs	Comment - A13
TC133	February 24, 2006	Andrew A. Duffy	Province lagging on energy self sufficiency	Bus - D3
TC134	March 3, 2006	Scott Simpson	Hydro thinks coal as power runs short	Bus - A1
TC135	March 30, 2006	Scott Simpson	Electricity rates may rise 7 per cent	Bus - A2
TC136	March 31, 2006	Andrews A. Duffy	Critics urge Hydro to rethink plan	A18 - Fr
TC137	April 13, 2006	Andrew A. Duffy	Thermal plant back on front burner	Bus - C1
TC138	April 16, 2006	R. Dreyer Berg	Create more power or seek it elsewhere	D3
TC139	June 10, 2006	Les Leyne	Shakedowns end for power producers	Comment - A18
TC140	July 12, 2006	Richard Neufeld	B.C.'s electricity security starts with you	Comment - A13
TC141	July 28, 2006	No Byline	Island firms awarded contracts	News - A2
TC142	July 29, 2006	Jeff Rudd	Gold River hails happy days again	Capital & Van. Isl. - B1 (Bus)
TC143	August 3, 2006	No Byline	Coal burning a go despite environmental outcry	C1
TC144	August 3, 2006	Matt Price	B.C.'s approach to cutting emissions isn't working	Comment - A13
TC145	August 6, 2006	Roy Summerhayes	Island can take lead in wind, alternate energy	D3
TC146	August 11, 2006	Rick Williams	What about greenhouses gases?	A15
TC147	August 11, 2006	Harvey A. Buckmaster	It still fouls our air	A15
TC148	August 11, 2006	Pierre-Olivier Pineau	B.C. power subsidy hurts us all	A9
TC149	August 19, 2006	Andrew A. Duffy	Pioneers set sights on B.C. expansion	Bus - B14

TC150	August 21, 2006	David Kidd	Low power prices reflect prudence	A9
TC151	September 7, 2006	Helmut Giesbrecht	Alcan gets cheap power, B.C. gets the shaft	Comment - A13
TC152	October 18, 2006	Roy Summerhayes	Wind, tide, solar offer Island energy solutions	Comment - A13
TC153	October 24, 2006	Scott Simpson	Report urges energy integration with U.S.	Bus - D4
TC154	October 26, 2006	Les Leyne	A power struggle over power supply	A14
TC155	October 30, 2006	Christine and Melville Johnston	Give power back to the people	Comment - A11
TC156	December 14, 2006	Lindsay Kines	Plan for coal-fired power plants draws Opposition leader's wrath	Cap and Island - B4
TC157	December 30, 2006	Scott Simpson	Utilities commission quashes B.C. Hydro-Alcan deal	News - A3
TC158	January 17, 2007	Phil Lyons	Reduced demand best power path	Letters - A11
TC159	February 6, 2007	Les Leyne	NDP's climate plan will test Campbell	Comment - A10
TC160	February 12, 2007	Editors	Alcan's very sweet deal	Comment - A6
TC161	February 22, 2007	Jeff Rud And Lindsay Kines	Hydro clients face 'green' surcharge	Bus - A3
TC162	February 24, 2007	Les Leyne	Hydro faces a new storm over generating power	Comment - A13
TC163	February 28, 2007	Jeff Rudd	B.C. to consider building third dam on Peace River	Bus - A3
TC164	March 1, 2007	Les Leyne	Suddenly, big dams are popular again	Comment - A10
TC165	March 22, 2007	A.W. Robinson	Electricity imports save us money	Letters - A13
TC166	March 23, 2007	George W. Clayton	B.C. needs to give up energy nimbyism	Comment - A17
TC167	April 24, 2007	Lindsay Kines	Green levy' to bankroll energy fund	News - A2

TC168	May 11, 2007	Gordon Hamilton	Forest industry faces transformation Pulp and lumber 'will give way' to bio-energy output	Bus - B5 Fro
TC169	May 15, 2007	No Byline	Infested B.C. wood to fuel power plants	News - A8
TC170	May 16, 2007	Editors	Saving power for a day	Comment - A13
TC171	May 22, 2007	Fre Langford	Make more power, don't just conserve	Comment - A11
TC172	July 10, 2007	Scott Simpson	Energy plan will hike prices, critics say Government order to make B.C. self-sufficient will raise Hydro's costs, customers' rates	News - A2
TC173	July 14, 2007	No Byline	B.C. Hydro reports $407-million profit 29,000 new customers, higher rates help pad utility's bottom line	Bus - A14
TC174	August 17, 2007	No Byline	Alcan and B.C. Hydro sign new power agreement	Bus - B4
TC175	November 16, 2007	Scott Simpson	Energy plan will hike prices, critics say Government order to make B.C. self-sufficient will raise Hydro's costs, customers' rates	Business - B2
TC176	December 5, 2007	Scott Simpson	Site C dam expected to cost $6.6 billion	Bus C1
TC177	December 15, 2007	No Byline	Xantrex chairman picked as new B.C. Hydro boss	Business - B12

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