



Ontario's Public Power;
The Self-Interest of Adam Beck

The first practical employment of electrical energy in Ontario came during the 1880s, when the city of Hamilton was the first Canadian city to install extensive street lighting, and when Toronto became one of the world's first cities to receive an electric street railway. By the end of the 1880s very few Ontario communities with populations in excess of three thousand people did not have some kind of electrical generating station.¹ In these early days of Ontario's electrical development, however, the generation and supply of electricity, either for street lighting or industrial purposes, was controlled by private companies. The first electrical system to be used in London, Ontario, for example, was a privately installed operation used by the London jeweller F. T. Treblecock.² And Treblecock's installation of an electrical system in 1883 was followed later that year by a lighting system installed by James A. Thomas in a local skating rink.³ The private use of electrical systems was accompanied in London, as it was elsewhere, by the public use of privately generated electricity. In 1889 London was faced with a decision on whether to continue gas lighting its streets or to switch to electric street lighting. The city typically did not undertake electrifying its own street lights, but contracted the task out initially to two privately owned companies,--the Royal Electric Company and the Ball Electric Company.³ Cities such as London did not develop their electrical generating capabilities as a means to better the lot of the general public ,

but only to replace existing public supply systems with the latest in available technology. In the case of privately operated electrical systems, the introduction of electricity depended more on the potential benefits to business and to industry than upon any concern for workers or consumers as such.

The early history of electrical development in Ontario is important to an understanding of subsequent developments in the field of electrical energy. It is widely known that the development of electricity as a power source in the province came to depend largely upon the actions of one man, the much honoured Sir Adam Beck. Beck was the man who forced the establishment of a publicly owned electrical power generating and distribution system which came to be known as the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario.⁴ In chronicling the life of Adam Beck in his book Adam Beck and the Ontario Hydro, W. R. Plewman gives an account of the origins of the Beck crusade for a public power system. By 1900 the possibility of very large scale electrical distribution was more than a dream, and some companies and individuals appeared to be moving in on the power distribution market. Plewman tells us that

In 1902, the Ross Government granted development rights at Niagara Falls to a syndicate of Canadians headed by Sir William Mackenzie, Sir Henry Pellatt and Frederick Nicholls, all of Toronto. These men controlled various public utilities and had friends in high places. The public feared that these utilities

and certain favoured industries in Toronto would obtain cheap power and that the small business man and the householder would be charged high rates. Urban centres outside Toronto feared that the provincial capital would receive favours at the expense of smaller manufacturing centres.⁵

Plewman derives his analysis on the origins of the public power movement from a series of observations, one of which is that there were concerned individuals within the Toronto area who were "fearful that private companies would be more interested in the making of profits than in giving service at low rates."⁶ Thus Plewman's argument is that the demand for the public ownership of power generation and distribution sprang from a general concern on the part of the "public" that the consumers of electrical energy were about to be subject to economic exploitation by the distributors of such power. The question that has to be answered in connection with the accuracy of Plewman's claim that the people of Ontario as a general electorate were behind the establishment of Ontario's public electrical system is a simple one: who were the people behind the opposition to the private utilities? Mostly they were members of the business community, as Plewman himself indicates;⁷ and we have already seen that business was, in the early days of functional electrical useage, the main employer of electrical systems.⁸

Plewman's praise-laden biography of Adam Beck seems to assume that Beck will be respected because of his business leadership and personal clout as a manufacturer, but the juxta-

position of his status as a manufacturer alongside his support for a publicly owned power system suggests that Beck, in supporting public electrical distribution, was looking out for his own interests as a manufacturer. Admittedly it is perhaps unfair to suspect Adam Beck of advancing his own interests without some solid evidence to support such a contention. Beck never said outright anything like "I am supporting the public ownership of electric power generation and distribution because I wish to ensure that my business interests will not suffer from high energy costs." But then who would make such a statement? Clearly not someone who really was out for himself, and we must look to circumstantial evidence to see if Beck did in fact have some vested interest in public power.

Whatever the motivation of the public power proponents may have been, it definitely is true that those proponents of that public power have never found praise of their actions in short supply. E. B. Biggar's Hydro-Electric Development in Ontario asks whether

this authority of a private person over the means of transport and other public services such as power and light [is] a natural and ancient right or is it a modern trespass? The question can be answered with absolute certainty. The necessity of means of travel and the common right to those means is set forth clearly at the very beginning of the history of our race. To Adam and his descendants the command was given: "Replenish the earth and subdue it." The public right to the means of traffic is not merely implied but is imperatively required by the proclamation of the Creator.⁹

For E. B. Biggar the first Adam is almost at one with Sir Adam,¹⁰

and one is left to wonder just how Biggar could arrive at such an overwritten and frankly embarrassing evaluative excess. Biggar's descriptive excess is understandable, however, if it is considered that Hydro-Electric Development in Ontario was written in 1920, in the wake of the new Adam's public success. It is Adam Beck's efforts to establish public power in Ontario which give us an indication of what Beck's motives may have been in seeking a public power organization in Ontario. Beck's first involvement with the public power movement came in 1903 at a meeting of Ontario municipalities held in Berlin (now Kitchener). Plewman points out that Beck attended the 1903 meeting in a three-fold capacity: he was the current mayor of London, a provincial member of Parliament, and a leading manufacturer.¹¹ It was as a "rising and aggressive Conservative manufacturer of London" that Beck combined with two other representatives at the meeting to add the following clause to the committee report of the organization of Western Ontario municipalities:

Therefore, Be [sic] it resolved that we respectfully suggest to and urge upon the Ontario Government the advisability of the government building and operating as a government work, a line for the transmission of electricity from Niagara Falls to the towns and cities; and that the municipalities here represented call upon their representatives in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge upon the government to carry out this resolution.¹²

Adam Beck operated a cigar box manufacturing plant in London, Ontario, and like most businessmen in London and elsewhere, Beck

recognized the need for an effective and cheap electrical distribution system.¹³ Plewman's point that there were worries that the Toronto power group would monopolize power distribution was undoubtedly a factor in motivating Beck's support for public power in Ontario. Beck had to confront the fact that he was not a member of the Toronto clique that seemed to be heading towards domination of Ontario's electrical distribution systems.

Any reader of the published accounts of the life of Adam Beck will be aware of the large body of complimentary writings--both long published texts and brief personal accounts--which surround the personality of Beck. A curious point that comes across in a variety of sources is the essentially nasty character that Beck as a man possessed. What is especially odd is that accounts of Beck's personality often rationalize the worst part of Beck's character as a man. Plewman's description of how Adam treated his younger brother, Jacob "Fritz" Beck, is an astonishing talking away of such bad character:

[Fritz] was Adam's youngest brother and of a very different temperament. He was a plain man, easy-going, tolerant and careless. He lacked ambition and cared little about society, or what most people call success. . . . Adam was fond of him, but not so fond but that he could be rough with him. Indeed, it has been said that he treated Fritz as "dirt;" partly, no doubt, in the hope of inducing him to develop some of the virile qualities that Adam Beck admired.¹⁴

If treating his own brother so badly does not earn Adam Beck the reputation of a man of strong will and personality, a consideration of what Beck was like among his working associates will

give some indication of whether Beck was capable of advocating the public control of power distribution in Ontario solely for his own benefit. Edward V. Buchanan tells of how he first met Adam Beck and of his years as a personal friend of Hydro's founder:

. . . I asked the superintendent on the job--an old London citizen, "Why is Adam Beck a crook?" He asked who had given me this information. When I gave the name he laughed heartily. He then told me that criminal charges of corrupt practices in a federal election had been brought against [the man who had accused Beck of being a crook] This personage blamed Beck for instituting the action, and, until the end of his days, this man hated Beck most violently.¹⁵

And as a personal friend of Beck's, Buchanan would often have Sunday breakfast with Adam:

. . . these . . . breakfasts did not endear me to the Hydro staff. In conversation I would rashly make some suggestions to which Beck would say "Nonsense, you don't know what you are talking about." Then after his return to Toronto, Fred Gaby (Ontario Hydro's Chief Engineer for several years) would call me up and ask me to tell him more about what I had proposed to Sir Adam.¹⁶

And some very brief observations of Buchanan's are instructive. He says, for example, that "Beck was called an autocrat, and perhaps he was"¹⁷ and that "I like to think of Beck as a benevolent dictator."¹⁸ Beck may never have been a crook in the criminal sense of the word, but he was obviously a stern and often cruel man, a man who, on the whole, set goals for himself

and achieved those goals at the expense of those around him.

To characterize Adam Beck as a stern authoritarian does not establish him as a man devoted entirely to his own interests. It might be argued, and probably quite forcefully, that precisely the kind of man that Beck was made possible his achievements. None the less, it remains true that Beck's authoritarian firmness of character is indeed the kind of character which, through sheer force, is able to establish itself as dominant. Adam Beck's acknowledged supremacy of personality perhaps explains why those around him tended to explain away his bad points as merely antecedents to the greatness of the man. It is perhaps more realistic to assume that Beck was simply so dominant of his contemporaries that they tended to defer any bad feelings that they might have had about him. This would help to explain the favourable light in which Buchanan sets an obvious dislike of Beck on the part of the man alleged to have committed election improprieties. And the force of Beck's character also explains how this one individual could have managed to become so prominent in the development of public power in Ontario.

That Beck may have been motivated by his own need to protect his manufacturing interest from exceedingly or unnecessarily costly electrical power is no mark against Beck as such. If the strength of Beck's character (specifically the force of that character) is seen alongside his need to protect his own interests, one can arrive at an understanding of why Beck was to go as far as he finally did in the public

power movement.

If Adam Beck seems at times to have been over-enthusiastic about the need for a publicly owned power distribution system, one must take into account the nature of the "private" interests which he was fighting against. It has already been pointed out that the earliest uses of electricity in Ontario were related to manufacturing or street lighting, often on a contract basis with some private company supplying the power and machinery to private individuals or to municipalities. Companies such as the Hamilton Electric Light Company, the Ottawa Electric Company, and the St. Catherine's Light and Power Company supplied municipalities with thousands of arc and incandescent street lights by the 1890s;¹⁹ and by 1906 there were four companies working independently to obtain hydro-electric power from the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. These companies consisted of two American firms, the Canadian Niagara Power Company and the Ontario Power Company, along with two Canadian groups, the Niagara Power, Light and Traction Company and the Electrical Development Company of Ontario.²⁰ It was the Electrical Development Company which was the real threat; and we shall see why this was the case:

A company which was to prove to be the forerunner of what later came to be known as "the Toronto Syndicate"²¹ was founded in 1883.²² The Toronto Electric Light Company, as the young firm was called, had as its Secretary Mr. Henry M. Pellatt. Pellatt was a successful member of the business community who had made his reputation as a speculative investor, often of other

people's funds. In 1889, a rival company was established in Toronto under the name of the Toronto Incandescent Light Company; but Pellatt's company, in which he had, as we shall see, considerable influence, took over this firm about seven years later.²³ As Pellatt became even more successful, he entered into an alliance with two other men, Mr. William Mackenzie and Mr. Frederick Nicholls. This trio of investors made an agreement with the "Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Commissioners" giving them the right to exploit the water resources of Niagara as required to produce 125,000 horsepower of electrical energy. As Carl A. S. Hall has written in his thesis entitled Electrical Utilities in Ontario Under Private Ownership, the principle source of funding for the early development of hydro-electric power was bond financing. This was true for the other three hydro-electric companies, but the Pellatt trio's own firm, which was the Electrical Development Company of Ontario, proved to be closely controlled by the business clique of which Pellatt, Mackenzie and Nicholls were members.²⁴

Some idea of the potential power of the Toronto syndicate can be obtained by looking at the 1903 bond issue of the Electrical Development Company of Ontario (EDCO); Table I shows the names of those individuals and businesses involved in the issue itself; On looking at Table I the reader might assume that in EDCO a wide variety of interests are represented; but there are links between the companies and the individuals listed which greatly reduce the spread of interests involved in the bond issue. Senator George Cox exercised great influence in the Central Canada Loan

TABLE 1²⁵

THE 1903 EDCO BOND ISSUE

NAME	SUBSCRIPTION (PAR VALUES)
William Mackenzie	\$400,000
H. M. Pellatt	400,000
Frederick Nicholls	400,000
James Ross	400,000
The Toronto Electric Light Company	300,000
Senator George Cox	200,000
D. D. Mann	200,000
B. E. Walker	100,000
Bank of Commerce	100,000
E. R. Wood	100,000
Central Canada Loan and Saving Company	100,000
Canada Life Assurance Company	100,000
National Trust Company	100,000
Norman Macrae	100,000
Pellatt and Nicholls (in trust)	72,500
Imperial Life Assurance Company Limited	50,000
TOTAL	\$3,122,500

and Saving Company, the Canada Life Assurance Company, the National Trust Company, and Imperial Life Assurance Company.

Cox's involvement with these four companies effectively increases his subscription to \$550,000 while reducing the number of real participants from sixteen to just twelve. If we also assume that the "in trust" investment of Pellatt and Nicholls is for practical purposes attributable to those men, we are left with eleven parties. But we must also deduct the Toronto Electric Light Company, as it was founded by Pellatt. The remaining ten interests shrink further because Cox by this time was also involved with the Toronto Syndicate.²⁶ And since the Syndicate itself acted as a group, Mackenzie, Pellatt, Nicholls and Cox must be represented as a single interest. Hence the number of participants shrinks to just seven.²⁷ And one can add as a final point that eighty percent of the bonds issued in 1900 were held by insurance companies in which Senator George Cox had a controlling influence.²⁸

If the closed system approach employed by the Toronto group does not give a forceful indication of what motivated Adam Beck to oppose privately owned power in Ontario, a consideration of the lives of the individuals who headed up the syndicate will: Sir William Mackenzie made his early money in finance and steam railways. He moved on to electric street lighting and electric street railways. By 1914 Mackenzie's operations included the Toronto Railway Company, the Toronto Suburban Railway Company, the Toronto and York Radial Railway Company, the Niagara, St. Catherines and Toronto Railway, the Toronto Electric Light Company, the Toronto and Niagara Power Company, the Electric Development Company of Ontario (EDCO), and

the Toronto Power Company.²⁹ Frederick Nicholls was a manufacturer associated with the Dominion Iron and Steel Company of Nova Scotia, the Canada Car Company, and the Canadian General Electric Company (he was manager of a General Electric subsidiary firm called the Canada Foundry Company).³⁰ Henry M. Pellatt was the man who gave Toronto its first arc lamps. Pellatt was really a speculator in the power business and was in it for the money. As chairman of the Finance Committee of the Manufacturers' Life Assurance Company, Pellatt often made securities purchases for the company portfolio without consulting the Finance Committee. His own firm of Pellatt and Pellatt (brokers) was found to have done much of the brokerage work for Manufacturers' Life while Pellatt was chairman of the Finance Committee. This perhaps serves as an early indication of the close-knit business ties Pellatt would keep as a member, in later years, of the Toronto Syndicate.³¹

It is significant that the Toronto group was tightly knit; and the manufacturing and business backgrounds of its leadership, coupled with its extensive holdings, as exemplified in those of Mackenzie alone, would surely have been enough to worry an independent manufacturer such as Adam Beck. Any group with a monopoly or near-monopoly on the distribution of power could also control the businesses to which that power would be supplied through manipulation of service fees. At the very least the controlling group or groups would be entitled to profits on their investment, and this to any manufacturer would mean needlessly inflated rates for hydro-electric power. It is true that the

Ontario public did come to support public power. But it is also true that the early advocacy of public power was carried on largely by manufacturing interests. Among the first groups to take an interest in a publicly owned generation and distribution system was the Toronto Board of Trade, which in 1901 established a committee to study the question of public ownership.³² In 1902 the Canadian Manufacturers' Association informed the Toronto City Council that it approved of Council's efforts to obtain cheap electrical power.³³ One of the members of that association was Mr. W. K. McNaught, himself a jewellery manufacturer. In 1910 McNaught was to write that

The future of Ontario as a manufacturing Province is largely bound up with the power question. If we are to maintain our present position as the manufacturing centre of the Dominion, let alone improve our lead on the other Provinces in this respect, we must not only utilize our splendid water powers to their utmost capacity, but we must also take full advantage of the Governments' policy of publicly-owned power; power owned by the people and distributed amongst them at as near its actual cost as possible.³⁴

Clearly Adam Beck was not alone in his advocacy of public power; indeed, Beck was not even among those who first advocated public ownership of the power industry. It was a "meeting of manufacturers and businessmen from Toronto, Guelph, Preston, Waterloo, Hespeler and Berlin [which] was held in the Council Chamber, Berlin, on June 9, 1902,"³⁵ and which, as W. R. Flewman points out, was to lead in time to the public hydro system.³⁶ Mr. Adam Beck (who was yet to be knighted for his achievements)

was not at that meeting, and neither were any members of the Ontario public. We have already seen that when Beck did attend a gathering of Ontario municipalities it was partly in his capacity as a leading London manufacturer as well as a municipal representative. Thus, the public power movement in Ontario was created by and carried on by the manufacturing community, primarily as a means of obtaining cheap electrical power and of ensuring that various power groups did not monopolize the power industry.

Adam Beck's own dislike of private ownership was obviously motivated in part by his worries as a manufacturer. One point which the supporters of public ownership seem to have stressed is that the proposed public power system must provide power at cost or nearly at cost to its subscribers. The following quotation from a foreward to a pamphlet contains some commentary written by Adam Beck, and it can be compared to the quotation from W. K. McNaught above:

No citizen of Ontario is or has been taxed in connection with the hydro-electrical municipal undertaking. With the exception of Provincial grants toward the construction of rural distribution systems,--and such grants, like those for good roads, agricultural schools, etc. [sic] are made in order to promote agriculture--every portion of the cost is fully met in bills paid by the consumers of the electrical energy, and by them alone. Those who receive the service are the only ones who pay for it, and such payment is made in conformity with a system of charging that permits an annual adjustment with consumers on the basis of power at cost.³⁷ [Emphasis added]

Beck's words are closely linked to McNaught's phrase "power . . . at as near its actual cost as possible."³⁸ The question must be raised as to why two leading manufacturers--both of whom are presumably proponents of free enterprise and the profit ethos--would deny the need for profits in the generation of electrical energy and its distribution. Superficially one could say that public services do not need to earn profits, but perhaps men like Beck and McNaught had other reasons for stressing the absence of profit in the public power industry. The reason is quite simple: private companies need profits to continue with any business enterprise; by explicitly denying profits as a component of the public power system, manufacturers in the position of Beck and McNaught could effectively ensure the failure of any privately owned power enterprise.. McNaught's comments as recorded above were made in 1910, Beck's in 1925. Both men were defending public power against its critics--McNaught at a time before the Hydro-electric Power Commission had begun producing its power (which it did not do until 1914),³⁹ Adam Beck in 1925 when the hydro commission was established but under strong attack from a body known as the Gregory Commission⁴⁰ --and both men were looking to ensure that no basis could be established for a privately owned power generation and supply system in Ontario. That Beck was defending himself and his Power Commission from attacks is obvious from his direct attack on the Gregory Commission:

When the truth inherent in a set of circumstances cannot satisfactorily be discredited by those who wish to nullify its influence, the common procedure is to direct

special assault against the administration of the undertaking which is the object of attack. . . . I refer to this aspect of the subject because the procedure employed in the attempts to discredit achievements such as those of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission usually follow the well-beaten trail of first, avowed antagonism to the application of the principle of public ownership; second, a discounting or even a denial of the results obtained under successful public ownership, and third, attack upon those responsible for the administration of publicly owned utilities.⁴¹

E. B. Biggar has suggested that the profit issue may well have played a role in the break-up of the Toronto power monopoly. Biggar points out that the publicly owned municipal system in Toronto saved the municipal customers \$17,000,000 in eight years due to the elimination of profits as part of the system, and he goes on to make the point that this saving was in reality much greater because the private service also reduced its rate in order to remain competitive.⁴² But, Biggar continues that the profit issue put private enterprise at a disadvantage in Toronto because the cheaper municipal power--offered in a community where the private service had all the advantages of "previous experience" and of having wired all of Toronto's major buildings--made it hard to argue against the need for a publicly owned power generation and distribution system.⁴³ Perhaps there is a certain irony in Beck's observations about the nature of the attacks brought against himself and his Commission in that he himself in effect created the situation which prevented criticism of his actions and the actions of the Power Commission.

Another point which must be made in connection with the actual

cost of publicly supplied power is the basis upon which cost projections were arrived at. The Official Report of the Ontario Power Commission as published in 1906 comments upon the viability of a publicly owned hydro-electric power system. The 1906 report claims that to produce the estimated 6,000,000 horsepower of electrical energy which can be expected from the Niagara development would require some 60,000,000 tons of coal, require an additional 100,000 workers to mine the coal itself, and needlessly waste some three hundred lives lost in mine accidents.⁴⁴ The report claims the potential savings could be anywhere between \$120,000,000 and \$250,000,000 annually!⁴⁵ The point is that part of the initial claim made by Beck and his supporters as to the viability of public power was based on a cost-saving that, presumably, even a private profit-making firm could realize by exploiting Niagara's waters.

Perhaps the best evidence that the Power Commission was conscious of its role in opposing a specific interest is a comment in the 1906 Commission report which sees an analogy between public intervention and traditional corporate competition. The writers of the report (who included Adam Beck in their number) point out that the public interest operates just like that of the corporate world and is thus able to operate no

more harshly against existing corporate interests than existing commercial conditions and tendencies operate against private individuals. The private trader has had to risk his capital in competition with the highly organized and heavily capitalized department store of modern growth. . . . If, in the development of industrial efficiency, the corporations in turn are exposed to some

of the risks they have created for others, this seems to be merely a continuance of common experience.⁴⁶ [Emphasis added]

In fairness to the commissioners it should be stressed that the 1906 report did indicate there was no intention to "monopolize the market,"⁴⁷ but it is logical to assume that the commissioners were aware that private industry--which must show profits if it is to survive--could not long hold out against a public system of utilities which would, as a matter of principle, supply power to customers at cost. The commissioners were obviously conscious of the restrictions "created for others" by the corporate elements of society. Perhaps Adam Beck knew more about the future of public power in Ontario than he was prepared to divulge in 1906: the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission was indeed "merely a continuance of the common experience," except that Beck, as an opponent of the Toronto development group, was using public support to sustain his struggle (and that of his fellow independent manufacturers) against the Toronto Syndicate.

It is a matter of common knowledge that Sir Adam Beck's proposal for a publicly owned power distribution system in Ontario came to be accepted and is now a part of the heritage of this province. Was Sir Adam really a crook or even at all devious in chasing after his own interests in the public power controversy? Probably not: At least Sir Adam Beck, in guarding his own interests, also guarded the interests of private consumers as well. There is no doubt that the people of Ontario would have been faced with higher energy costs without Beck's

public power system. Biggar has pointed out that the Toronto power rates as set by private companies as they attempted to compete with the public utility in that city did decline simply because the private firms were forced to compete--and in the end those companies were not very successful.⁴⁷ Perhaps the people of Ontario should consider themselves lucky in that Beck's efforts to secure cheap power for himself and his fellow manufacturers coincided with a benefit to the public as well. The historian can only speculate how things might have been had a man of Sir Adam Beck's character been a member of the Toronto Syndicate. Perhaps we would all be paying our electrical bills to a private firm called "Beck Hydro" instead of to publicly owned local utilities.

Notes

In some cases footnote references are consolidated at the end of a series of sentences or at the end of a paragraph. The nearest footnote reference applies to information not immediately credited in the essay text.

¹ Reinhard Filter, The Barber Dynamo (Bramalea, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1977), p. 13. This booklet has no page numbers, though it is by no means a short publication. The page number is estimated.

² A. L. Furanna, A History of Electrical Energy in London (Electrical Department, London Public Utilities Commission, 1966), p. 8. This book actually has no author named, but is introduced by A. L. Furanna. It is a PUC in-house publication.

³ Ibid.

⁴ W. R. Plewman, Sir Adam Beck and the Ontario Hydro (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), p. 49.

⁵ Ibid., p. 29.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ E. B. Biggar, Hydro-Electric Development in Ontario (Toronto: The Biggar Press, 1920), p. 7.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹¹ Plewman, p. 37.

¹² Ibid., p. 39.

¹³ Filter, p. 15.

¹⁴ Plewman, p. 22.

¹⁵ E. V. Buchanan, "Beck, the Man", in Furanna, p. 87.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

Notes

- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Carl A. S. Hall, Electrical Utilities in Ontario Under Private Ownership, Dissertation (University of Toronto Graduate Studies, 1968), p. 18. Microfilm.
- 20 Ibid., p. 36.
- 21 Ibid., p. 174.
- 22 Ibid., p. 53.
- 23 Ibid., p. 175, p. 55.
- 24 Ibid., p. 149, p. 174.
- 25 Ibid., pp. 156-157.
- 26 Ibid., p. 186.
- 27 Ibid., pp. 174-184.
- 28 Ibid., p. 160.
- 29 Ibid., p. 183.
- 30 Ibid., pp. 184-185.
- 31 Ibid., pp. 174-179.
- 32 Plewman, 30-31.
- 33 Ibid., p. 32.
- 34 Hall, p. 221.
- 35 Plewman, p. 34.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Adam Beck, Errors and Misrepresentations Made by the Hydro-Electric Inquiry Commission Respecting the Publicly Owned and Operated Hydro-Electric Power Undertaking of Municipalities in the Province of Ontario (Toronto: Hydro-Electric Power Commission, 1925), p. 7. At one point the text of this pamphlet refers to Adam Beck, hence its text may not have been written by Beck, though Beck did write the foreward.
- 38 See note number 34 above.

Notes

- 39 Hall, p. 18.
- 40 Beck, p. 3.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Biggar, pp. 96-97.
- 43 Ibid., p. 97.
- 44 Official Report of the Ontario Power Commission, 1906, pp.
27-28.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Ibid., p. 23.
- 47 Biggar, pp. 96-97.

Annotated Bibliography

- Beck, Adam. Errors and Misrepresentations Made by the Hydro-Electric Inquiry Commission Respecting the Publicly Owned and Operated Hydro Electric Power Undertaking of Municipalities in the Province of Ontario. Toronto: Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission, 1925. This text appears to be one of a series of pamphlets produced under the direction of Adam Beck. Beck wrote the forward to this pamphlet, but a series of third-person references to "Sir Adam Beck" within the text suggest it was written by someone other than Beck. Beck's comments which introduce this pamphlet are a good example of how Beck portrayed himself as a victim of vicious, unfounded attacks; but characteristically Beck's attack on his opponents itself lacks documentation. Note the aggressive title.
- Biggar, E. B.. Hydro-Electric Development in Ontario: A History of Water-Power Administration Under the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. Toronto: The Biggar Press, 1920. This apparently self-published text is highly biased in favour of Sir Adam Beck; the text is over-written and should be considered more as an example of a contemporary opinion of Beck and his Power Commission than as a serious, independent historical account. The book does include some useful facts and is valuable as such, assuming one is careful about accepting Biggar's interpretation of those facts.
- Filter, Reinhard. The Barber Dynamo: A Perspective. Bramalea, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1977. An extremely interesting account of one of North America's earliest private uses of hydro-electric power; contains a brief history of the early days of electrical generation and distribution systems. Filter's text is a small booklet with pages which are not numbered; though obviously not a formal scholarly work, this is a good source none the less.
- Furanna, A. L.. A History of Electrical Energy in London [Ontario]. London, Ontario: Electrical Department, London Public Utilities Commission, 1966. This short book of ninety-one pages is introduced by A. L. Furanna, but likely was compiled by anonymous writers. As an in-house publication this text gives some excellently written accounts of hydro-electric developments in London, Ontario and contains useful facts pertaining to London's electrical development. This text contains E. V. Buchanan's account entitled "Beck, the Man", which in itself is a fascinating example of the respect which Adam Beck's associates accorded Hydro's founder.
- Hall, Carl A. S.. Electrical Utilities in Ontario Under Private Ownership. Dissertation. Toronto: University of Toronto Graduate Studies, 1968. Highly factual, extremely well docu-

Annotated Bibliography

mented doctoral dissertation which traces the early growth and history of Ontario's privately owned electrical utilities. Written with economics as well as history as its conceptual framework, this dissertation is excellent in its tracing of personal connections within the Toronto power "syndicate". Available on microfilm.

Official Report of the Ontario Power Commission, 1906. This famous report is the document which formally began the struggle for publicly owned power utilities in Ontario. The report is presumably written by the five Commissioners, who include Adam Beck in their number. One of relatively few original sources available on the public power movement in Ontario. Interestingly enough, the argument in favour of a public hydro-electric power system, which points out that lives will be saved by not having to mine coal for steam-generated electricity, is not too dissimilar to the argument advanced by Ontario Hydro in favour of nuclear power today.

Plewman, W. R.. Sir Adam Beck and the Ontario Hydro. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947. Almost each page of the 483 pages of this book have something favourable to say about Adam Beck. An amazingly thorough account of the life of Sir Adam, which is in fact also a history of Ontario Hydro up to 1947. It almost seems as if, at least in the early days of Ontario's public power, that Adam Beck was Ontario Hydro. Plewman's account, like that of Biggar's, is something of a period piece, perhaps written too closely to Beck's time than is desirable for a serious historical account. Yet this book is filled with facts, anecdotes, and fascinating stories about Beck. It remains an important and useful text for all its faults, and it is extremely well written.