

From the Eagle Watch #2

Ole Man Pete Never Quits Trying to Flood out Indigenous

July 22, 2009

Ole Man Pete aka F. Pierre Gingras never seems to quit. One of the head technical and economic engineers behind the James Bay Hydro Projects in northern Quebec, he figures he can always succeed in his insane schemes. Pete worked at Hydro Quebec for 30 years to dam the rivers in Cree territory and build numerous hydro power stations. He helped create a handful of Cree hydro sheiks while destroying the traditional Cree way of life. Now a retired busy body, he wants to divert three more mighty northern rivers and send what he calls "surplus" water south to the U.S. This would affect not only the people in Cree territory but also in Algonquin and Haudenosaunee territory. Animals and plants in these territories would be endangered and could be exterminated. Ole Pete calculates there is enough "wasted" water flowing into James Bay that could be sold to over 150 million people. If each household paid just \$50/year, he and Quebec could make piles of \$money\$.

It's an old plan from at least the 1930's. It gets periodically revived by people like Tom Kierans and Louis Desmarais of GRANDCo. This time around, the ole man Gingras is backed by the Montreal Economic Institute and the Desmarais family, some of Canada's wealthiest billionaires. These people have made their fortunes plundering Turtle Island and robbing us Indigenous.

Ole man Pete's been at this latest mad plot since at least 2004 putting forth articles and studies on water diversion. His team of engineering experts have been revising the Grand Canal scheme into what they say is a more economically viable and environmentally safe plan. It's now known as "L'Eau du Nord" or "Northern Waters".

His main concern is that the U.S. will come and take the water, by force if necessary, when they get desperate enough. He refers to the old mass murderer, Henry Kissinger himself when he says wars are already being fought over water. Court battles are already being waged in the US as the drought widens. What Pete really wants is to make more money any way he can.

Huge swaths of farmland in the U.S. are now experiencing widening drought conditions. California declared a state of emergency this year with drought there into its fourth year. Farmers have been forced to stop cultivation after being denied up to half their annual water allowance. Southern California has always been dry but people like the warm climate. Farming, there has been accomplished with irrigation for over a century. Fruit like peaches and apricots and vegetables like squash and broccoli are exported all over North America. You may be eating some of them.

The drought conditions exist all across the south - Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas and even Florida. The agricultural area in central Mexico is also experiencing drought. The prairie provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta are very dry this year, affecting grain crops like wheat and oats and hay for livestock feed. It looks like it's getting worse.

With people flocking to the pleasant warm dry climate, many southern US cities are also demanding more water. For people in the Great Lakes area, this is hard to imagine. The Great Lakes is the largest surface freshwater in the world.

In April, 2008 ole man Pete sent a letter to the International Joint Commission IJC promoting the big water diversion scheme. Set up in 1909, the IJC handles water issues between the US and Canada.

Pete sent the English version of his letter to IJC headquarters Frank Bevacqua in Washington, DC and the French version to the Commission Mixte Internationale, Gregg McGillis in Ottawa. He attaches a document called "L'Eau du Nord Project Synopsis" which summarizes his privately financed conceptual study.

Bilingual readers may notice there is a difference in at least one line of the letter. The English version claims the project will give "the Government of Quebec an extremely important financial margin." The French version says it will "apportant aussi aux gouvernement du Quebec and de l'Ontario une marge financiA"re forte importante..."

Ole man Pete thinks he has all the bases covered, including the legal aspect. He writes, "The international legal framework in force between Canada and the U.S. would prohibit the water diversion towards US, starting from basins bordering Canada." He is referring to the Great Lakes Water Compact which, like a sieve, cannot hold water.

He continues, "However, it seems it would not prohibit the bringing of additional exterior contributions or to use these same basins for the moving of these new external water contributions. The project would thus be apparently legal, as is, within the current legislative framework."

He also wants to see the "amending of constitutive law of Hydro-Quebec to add from now on the sale of water to that of energy." He'd like to see Bechtel involved in his project.

Pete foresees a "possible dam in Montreal on the St.Lawrence River, suggested by the Authority of Le Havre of Montreal to prolong the basin of La Prairie [ten minutes from the Mohawk community of Kahnawake] to Sainte Helene Island, thus creating a vast nautical recreotouristical basin". The water would then flow back into the Great Lakes instead of flowing out to the Atlantic Ocean. How many Indigenous and mostly poor people would be flooded out along the way?

Pete's original plan has the water redirected from three northern undeveloped rivers, the Bell, Waswanipi and Broadback flowing south

into the Ottawa River through a series of canals. Then it would be diverted to Lake Huron via the Nipissing River and Lake Nipissing. His revised plan has it all going down the Ottawa to hit the dam at Montreal. He plans 22 new dams and power stations with 1/2 of them along the Ottawa.

On July 15, 2009, the Montreal Economic Institute MEI published an editorial by Pete which was taken up by the National Post. His latest synopsis, "Northern Waters: A realistic, sustainable and profitable plan to exploit Quebec's blue gold" is available at the MEI web site. It's a special edition of their Economic Notes in English only.

Helene Desmarais, businesswoman and wife of Paul Desmarais Jr., is the chair of the institute. The 13 directors include Marcel Boyer and Leon Courville, two economists with degrees from the US Carnegie Mellon University and Stephan Cretier, head of Garda World Security Corporation.

Garda has offices in major cities all across the land including at Val d'Or, Quebec. Garda does armored transportation of currency and valuables, cash logistics, protection of persons and premises, physical security, consulting and investigations and electronic security solutions. They guard mine sites, hydro and nuclear power stations, banks and VIP like Barack Obama. They're all set to take on guarding the water diversion.

For those who say it will never happen, there are precedents. The St. Lawrence Seaway was first proposed in 1895 but not completed until 1959, over 60 years later. It made the St. Lawrence deeper so that ships could travel all the way to Thunder Bay on the western end of Lake Superior. Grain, iron ore and coal are the main goods shipped along the Seaway. About 6,500 people were relocated during its construction. Many of them were Mohawks. Thousands of acres of good farmland were flooded.

In his latest document, ole Pete Gingras figures the project will cost only \$15 billion, much less than Kierans Grand Canal scheme, estimated at \$100 billion. Pete thinks his plan can be completed by 2022. They're not in a big rush because the water crisis isn't critical enough yet to be profitable. Xstrata, a Swiss company, needs til about 2013 to dig up all the copper and zinc they are mining near Matagami, Quebec. Domtar also needs time to cut down all the rest of the trees that would otherwise be flooded.

The Grand Canal project would have seen James Bay turned into a lake. Gingras' revised plan intends to block the rivers upstream and create a basin stretching between Matagami and Mistissini. Val d'Or would be on the southwestern edge. Chibougamau and Waswanipi would be flooded. These two towns with combined population of about 10,000 currently depend on tourism, fishing and logging to survive. Since 1957, over 44 million tons of gold and silver have been mined out near Matagami. The toxic tailings ponds they left behind will likely be flooded too.

Gingras' plan is insane and destructive.

Firstly, what he calls "surplus" water is part of the natural cycle of spring floods, needed for many species' survival. This includes the traditional Cree people living off the land. No one can forget the horrible picture of 10,000 drowned caribou who got stranded in previous diversions for hydro development. The huge protest movement against the James Bay development was overwhelmed by multinational corporate interests.

What does Gingras know about the spring runoff going into the sea where species depend on the natural level of salination? His lunatic scheme could cause the ocean to become too salty. Who can predict what awful consequences this could lead to? Mother Earth has natural cycles that humans don't understand. Too much human interference on such a grand scale could be disastrous!

Ole Gingras claims the flooded area or basin would not be very large and thus not harmful to the environment. His basin looks as big as Lake Ontario itself. That sounds like a lot of water to us. Artificially raising and lowering water levels would destroy fish spawning habitat and kill the fish. Many Cree and Algonquins still depend on fishing for their food.

Pete says there would be no damage from mercury because the water wouldn't sit for long. What he forgets is there wouldn't be any fish to be contaminated with mercury anyhow.

It's uphill all the way to Amos in Algonquin territory. This would require a lot of power to pump the estimated 25 billion cubic meters of water to the top of the hill.

How does Pete figure all this water could then be sent down the Ottawa River without flooding and damage along the way? Chalk River Laboratories is on the Ottawa River. There's a lot of nuclear waste stored there, some of it underground. What would happen if there were a flood? Annual spring flow varies from year to year, more so with climate change.

We condemn ole man Pete Gingras' schemes as utter madness. You know he's a real sneak when he claims that "Quebec could export a large quantity of freshwater - without one drop having to leave the province". How does he figure that one?

If he didn't have all that money behind him, his ideas could be quickly dismissed. He keeps on trying to get the project going. Water continues to be wasted and polluted by careless humans, causing a water shortage to grow. The economic crisis means people desperate for work. This demented and destructive plan must be stopped.

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Notes and Sources

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