

INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement by Marion Bryden, MPP, NDP Environment Critic on
Ministry of Environment's proposed new Control Order on
Reed Ltd.

The backdown in deadline dates in the new Notice of Intent served on Reed Ltd. by the Ministry of the Environment on August 3, 1979 seems to confirm that the January 31, 1979 Notice was mere political posturing by the Minister.

His final deadline of December 31, 1982 for completion of both the primary and secondary abatement programs in the January Notice would never have been met, and once more Reed would have been let off the hook when that date rolled around.

The Minister tried to escape responsibility for compelling Reed to clean up its pollution of the Wabigoon River and the air around Dryden by submitting the January Notice of Intent to the Standing Resources Development Committee for comment. He never asked the Legislature to formally refer it to the Committee.

But by dropping the Notice in the lap of the Committee, the Minister simply delayed the issuing of the long overdue control order for another 6 months.

Following the Minister's action, the Committee did undertake extensive hearings on the Company's position and the Ministry's proposals. It also heard a variety of spokesmen from the Dryden Community and made a one-day visit to the Reed plant and the town of Dryden.

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The Minister does accept the Committee's conclusion that the final deadline for completion of the secondary treatment cannot be set until the engineering feasibility study is done.

But since his January Notice envisaged a 32 month period to install the secondary works, one would have hoped that the Minister would have set a preliminary target date for final completion of the clean up not later than August 31, 1984 if he believes his feasibility study deadline is realistic.

This would serve notice on Reed that he rejected their 1985 deadline as mere foot dragging. Certainly the Company's latest financial report showing earnings of \$17.3 million for the first 6 months of 1979 belies its claim of inability to finance a faster clean up.

The test of the Minister's commitment to the Environment will be whether he enforces the series of deadlines in the Notice.

He would be in a better position to know whether he is being conned by Reed if he had used the last 6 months to refer the January Notice of Intent to a panel of the Environmental Assessment Board which could have spent full time evaluating the technologies proposed and the cost estimates with the help of experts. It could also have held full public hearings in Dryden.

Hearings before a panel of the Environmental Assessment Board sitting in the community concerned would be a much more effective way of allowing public participation in the setting of standards and deadlines and assessing community effects than referring the details to a 16 member standing legislative committee with many other responsibilities.

In my opinion the function of the Resources Development Committee is not to pass on each of the multitude of control orders proposed but to examine the effectiveness of the whole control order process and enforcement procedures.

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