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Résumé de l'article

L'aéroport de Pickering, annoncé en mars 1972, est annulé en septembre 1975. Cette période de trois ans fut le théâtre d'une lutte acharnée entre des opposants, dont les terres furent expropriées pour l'aéroport, et le gouvernement fédéral. Le processus d'expropriation permet aux opposants comme aux bureaucrates de plaider leur cause lors de débats publics sur la nécessité de l'aéroport de Pickering. Vers les années soixante-dix, les citoyens se sentent davantage méfiants des experts et exigent de participer à l'élaboration des politiques tandis que les bureaucrates sont frustrés par la remise en question de leur autorité et la lenteur du processus décisionnel. Le débat entourant l'aéroport de Pickering soulève d'importantes questions quant à l'efficacité de forums tels que des audiences ou des enquêtes publiques pour l'élaboration de politiques. Les groupes de citoyens ont peut-être voix au chapitre, mais le processus politique demeure acharné et conflictuel.

"On Their Knees": Politics, Protest, and the Cancellation of the Pickering Airport, 1972–1975

Michael Rowan

The Pickering Airport in Ontario was announced in March 1972 and cancelled in September 1975. During that three-year period there was a bitter struggle between protesters, whose land was expropriated for the airport, and the federal government. The expropriation process gave both protesters and bureaucrats the opportunity to plead their cases through public forums on why the Pickering Airport was necessary or not. By the 1970s, citizens became more distrustful of experts and believed they deserved a full seat at the policy table, while bureaucrats were frustrated by challenges to their authority and the slow policy process. The debate over the Pickering Airport raises important questions about the effectiveness of public forums like hearings or public inquires in determining policy. Citizens groups may have a seat at the policy table, but the policy process has remained bitter and divisive.

L'aéroport de Pickering, annoncé en mars 1972, est annulé en septembre 1975. Cette période de trois ans fut le théâtre d'une lutte acharnée entre des opposants, dont les terres furent expropriées pour l'aéroport, et le gouvernement fédéral. Le processus d'expropriation permet aux opposants comme aux bureaucrates de plaider leur cause lors de débats publics sur la nécessité de l'aéroport de Pickering. Vers les années soixante-dix, les citoyens se sentent davantage méfiants des experts et exigent de participer à l'élaboration des politiques tandis que les bureaucrates sont frustrés par la remise en question de leur autorité et la lenteur du processus décisionnel. Le débat entourant l'aéroport de Pickering soulève d'importantes questions quant à l'efficacité de forums tels que des audiences ou des enquêtes publiques pour l'élaboration de politiques. Les groupes de citoyens ont peut-être voix au chapitre, mais le processus politique demeure acharné et conflictuel.

As Prime Minister Trudeau cut the ribbon to open the new federal airport in Mirabel, north of Montreal, he taunted Toronto for forcing the hand of politicians to cancel the Pickering Airport. Trudeau stated, "Torontonians will be down here on their knees," as they marvel at Montreal's new airport while lamenting the fact that Malton Airport would get no relief.[1] Only two weeks earlier, members of People or Planes (POP) celebrated with champagne and cheer as the federal government cancelled the construction of the Pickering Airport after three years of protest and resistance.[2]

During the 1960s, planning became more open and inclusive, as the new left challenged top-down visions that focused more on grand schemes over citizen participation.[3] Citizens became more vocal about participating in the political process beyond sending a letter or calling their member of Parliament. Citizens groups were formed to create and manufacture data, mould public opinion, and fight against government decisions.[4] Federal airport planning provides an example of how the federal government responded to calls for more inclusive planning in the reform era.[5] The federal government engaged in a number airport expansions during the 1970s, including the Pickering Airport, the Mirabel Airport in Quebec, and the expansion at the Sea Island Airport in British Columbia. In all these cases, citizens groups emerged to fight back against the expropriation of their property and disrupt the planning process. Citizens in general were not able to come to terms with the plans being proposed by the federal government. The Pickering Airport is worth examining as the only federal airport project cancelled in the 1970s.

The relationship between citizens and the state will be examined in this article through the conflict over the Pickering Airport.[6] By looking through commentary before, during, and after the most public confrontations, we can understand the tensions between citizens and experts, including why state-sponsored public forums failed to satisfy the public and the bureaucracy. Ultimately the decision to build or scrap the Pickering Airport is based more on electoral results than the public forums that are supposed to help governments make decisions. In 1972 the Swackhamer Hearings heard testimony from concerned citizens and groups over the Pickering Airport.[7] Following continued controversy over the airport, the federal government created a public inquiry to investigate the issues and recommend on whether the planned airport would proceed. The Airport Inquiry Commission (AIC) was established in 1974 with Judge Gibson as its head commissioner, and the inquiry reported in early 1975.[8] In both instances protestors and the state commented on each other's concerns. It is clear from the historical documents, newspaper coverage, and interviews that there was very little room for compromise.

Progress and Protest

By the 1970s the Canadian state at the provincial and federal level had expanded its powers and list of responsibilities. The state was boundless, and the continuing dominance of the postwar welfare state meant for politicians and bureaucrats it was not a matter of why, but why not. This ideology of progress shaped many states in the twentieth century, including Canada, and resulted in the state taking on larger and more complicated responsibilities.[9]

The Ministry of Transport (MOT) became one such agency as it planned and pushed the government to build huge airports.[10] Canadians would directly feel the power of the state through expropriation. Expropriation is one of the most powerful tools available to the state to fulfill policy objectives. Through expropriation the state can move citizens and shape the land down to lines on a map. James Scott has written extensively on state planning and how the state can refashion society through the force of law.[11] The doctrine of high modernism served the state planners who conceived the Pickering Airport as warranted and indisputable.[12] The civil servants in MOT were convinced that the data behind the Pickering Airport were solid and that forecasts for a large increase in passenger volume at Malton justified a need for a second airport to relieve some of that stress.[13] The federal Expropriation Act, 1970, made it legally possible for the federal government to expropriate land from citizens and hold it in reserve for the Pickering Airport. The federal government had passed legislation dealing with expropriation in many areas, including railways and pipelines, long before 1970.[14] These laws were seen as necessary to build up public infrastructure to support, for example, transportation and communications infrastructure development. However, changes in the Expropriation Act (1970) made it possible for citizens to contest expropriation and for the federal government to hold hearings to listen to their concerns.[15] As James Scott wrote, perhaps the last defence against high modernist plans is a strong civil society that can fight back.[16] POP represented a new robust civil society that had emerged and developed in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s as they successfully fought back against expropriation.

During the 1960s Canada had high rates of economic growth and immigration, thanks to revisions in federal immigration policy. This contributed to a country that would look radically different by the end of the decade.[17] Both the federal and provincial governments engaged in many high modernist projects that would be built through the 1960s and 1970s. The history of public works in Canada runs parallel to the development of the modern Canadian state. Canadian politicians built railroads, highways, and canals that crisscrossed the landscape.[18]

During the 1960s and 1970s governments planned public works beyond their traditional role of job creation and patronage.[19] Public works could not just create jobs; they could also lead to renewed regional development. As Bret Edwards has argued, the social definition of an airport changed throughout this period. Airports can be analyzed as federal megaprojects that had new economic objectives.[20] For the federal government, the creation of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) in 1969 represented the apex of regional planning, as the federal government sought to facilitate economic development and social adjustments in less endowed parts of the country.[21] Until DREE there had been no coherent national policy on regional economic development in Canada.[22] In addition, the Trudeau government had recently created the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs (MUSA). MUSA's role was to examine urban issues from a federal perspective and help with the planning process. The ministry in some ways was to be a neutral arbiter between municipalities, the provinces, and federal departments. With these new departments, the federal government was taking a strong interest in urban development and planning—much to the chagrin of the provinces.[23]

Meanwhile, Ontario was also engaging in regional development. Its government, which had been solidly Tory since the end of the Second World War, was very concerned by urban sprawl and the infrastructure issues it was creating. Between 1956 and 1970, Toronto's population grew by almost 50 per cent, from 1,358,000 to 2,045,000. More Ontarians were concentrating in urban areas.[24] The province tried to address some of the problems of urban sprawl through regional development plans that reorganized municipalities and transit projects, such as the Spadina Expressway, to help ease congestion.[25] One regional development plan was the Seaton community, which was expected to have a population of 150,000 people, and was going to be built south of the new Pickering Airport.[26] The Pickering Airport and Seaton Community fit into new federal policy priorities. These bold pronouncements of state policy did not go unnoticed, as citizens started to rally against megaprojects and big government.

The 1960s has been associated with the reform era of planning, when activists fought against high modernist methods of planning and tried to encourage more inclusionary politics.[27] The expansion of the Canadian polity to include many new groups contesting power has been linked to a new understanding of democracy that developed in the 1960s. Richard Harris describes this appropriately, as he writes about the rise of the new left in Kingston and its effect on politics in the city. Democratic reform in the 1960s was not necessarily about changing the system, but improving and increasing citizen participation in government and making society more equal.[28] These new groups challenged the state and contested power in places that were previously inaccessible. In Toronto the new left influenced planning and were critical to the election of Mayor David Crombie. Crombie challenged developers and the sprawl associated with the city. His leadership gave room for people to question how we live in our cities. He was a part of an emerging

critique of planning that citizens need to be involved in policy debates on where they live.[29]

The 1960s was also a time when citizens began to question the notion of progress. The idea of unrestrained progress intensified during the post–Second World War period when urbanization accelerated in part to fulfill a need for more housing and state policies encouraging the development of suburbs. Suburbs represented a new prosperity as many Canadians moved into a more comfortable middle class, but they also became a symbol of excessive growth and environmental destruction.[30] This anti-modernism inspired some members of the environmental movement, who wanted to improve or change urban life. It manifested at different levels of society. Interest groups like Pollution Probe and Greenpeace questioned how citizens relate to the environment.[31] Citizens became more involved with urban issues and challenging state plans. In Ontario this included the campaign to stop the Spadina Expressway, a galvanizing issue for Toronto in the 1970s. The campaign, which culminated in cancellation of the expressway by Premier Bill Davis, was one of the first successful urban campaigns against megaprojects.[32] Citizens also vigorously fought against Davis's regional plans. Some journalists even speculated that the high modernist visions of Premier Davis would be the end of the Big Blue Machine in Ontario.[33] POP had some of the anti-modernist tendencies associated with the environmental movement. The Pickering Airport clearly threatened their way of life. The group was formed on 2 March 1972, the same day the Pickering Airport was announced, and their goal was to stop the federal government from developing it.[34]

POP was a group of people who skipped the protests that we commonly associate with the 1960s.[35] It brought together farmers, engineers, urban planners, and housewives, as well as corporate executives, doctors, and lawyers. Although farm families and ex-urbanites had different motivations and occupations, both groups put such potential differences aside to form the resistance to the airport.[36] They were working with people with whom they might not have otherwise interacted had the federal government not announced its intention to proceed with the Pickering Airport. Many lifelong friendships were created out of this struggle.[37] People such as Bill Lishman, a sculptor who made a living partly through doing wacky stunts to attract media attention, worked across the table from members such as Lorne Almack, who was seen as a "staunch Conservative."[38]

There are a few observations we can make about this group of people. Their protest revolved mostly around the issue of property. For some protestors whose families had lived in the area for generations, it was inexcusable that the government was going to take their home.[39] For others who had escaped urban sprawl and the "noise" of the cities, it was disheartening that even in Pickering the desire to develop land could not be stopped. Many members of POP were formerly from Toronto and had no desire to move again to escape urban sprawl.[40]

Then there were those who were concerned about farmland that would be paved over. This formed the crux of how many POP members saw nature.[41] POP framed its protest in a very specific way. They ensured that the debate was not framed around property loss. Although many letters to the editor expressed concern and anger about the loss of property, this was not the main argument of POP. If the debate was just about property, then the image of POP as greedy landowners would have stuck and they would not have received as much public or political support.[42] The group instead advanced two distinct arguments: the airport was not needed and, if it was warranted, it should not be built on prime farmland.[43] POP kept up these arguments throughout the campaign and emphasized them during their encounters with the press. They conducted research to prove both cases and emphasized their alternative uses for the land. This can be seen in their submissions to both the hearings and the AIC.

Plans for Pickering

The federal government had planned to develop a second major airport in Ontario long before the 1972 announcement. Under section 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867, the federal government has the power to create policy on transportation that crosses provincial lines or is declared to be for the advantage of the country. However, services that provinces provide, including hydro, roads, and even facilitating labour, are vital in the construction of the airport. So both the provincial and federal governments are involved. The municipalities that were affected, including Pickering, protested loudly during the debate. But as creatures of the provinces they did not participate in the final decision. They were informed about the announcement of the airport just hours before the official press conference.[44]

MOT had studied the capacity of airports in the early 1960s and estimated increases in volume to 6.9 million passengers by 1980.[45] This statistic was quoted frequently by politicians to argue the need for this airport. It was brought up in response to citizens' pleas that a second airport was unnecessary and, during the AIC, Judge Gibson used the forecasts as proof of why the airport was required.[46] This specific set of statistics was based on the perceived huge increase in passenger volume during the 1960s as flights became more affordable and jet aircraft were introduced.[47] Malton Airport had already been enlarged twice before, but this was seen as insufficient to cover the anticipated increases in passenger traffic.[48] Although a report commissioned by the federal government had called for an additional runway at the Toronto International Airport, the public was not in favour of this idea.[49] Residents felt they already suffered from the noise pollution caused by Malton and put political pressure on the federal government to build no additional runways.[50]

In 1966 the government commissioned R. Dixon Speas Associates to investigate this issue. The firm reported that Dorval Airport in Montreal could handle future capacity and

did not need a second airport. Yet Montreal would eventually end up with two airports, and the same idea was being pitched to Ontario.[51] The Speas report was largely ignored and Kates Peat Marwick, another consulting firm, was asked to advise the federal government.[52] By 1968 Paul Hellyer, the federal minister of transportation, resigned and was replaced by Don Jamieson. Journalist Walter Stewart argued that a consultant named Phillip Beinhaker came to the rescue and produced a report that recommended a new airport that was politically acceptable.[53] Additionally, the provincial study conducted by the Toronto Planning Team also recommended a new airport and no Malton expansion.[54] In 1968 both levels of government started to engage in a preliminary search to find a suitable site for the airport. Pickering was never the first, the second, or even the third choice. Pickering was dismissed early in 1968 but was recommended as the site for the airport in 1971.[55] The other sites had issues. Lake Simcoe, Lake Scugog, Guelph, and Orangeville all had drawbacks, and even the most preferred site, Guelph, would conflict with Malton flight paths and regional developments plans.[56] Orangeville was a site that both levels of government had agreed on, but local opposition by citizens quickly ended that idea.[57]

The federal and provincial governments consulted with each other to try and find a site, yet no agreement could be reached. Beinhaker, who had consulted for Transport Canada and worked on the previous reports, called for a new airport site. The two levels of government were at a standstill. As a result, the government was back to having no site.[58] Officials decided to change their approach. They would build two smaller airports on sites that were rejected beforehand: Beverly in the West and Pickering in the East. The federal and provincial governments kept changing their minds about a site.[59] Although Beverly ranked as a better site for the airport, the province was determined to have the airport in the East to promote growth in that area. In the end the federal Cabinet approved the Pickering site, despite evidence suggesting Beverly would have been a better choice. On 2 March 1972 Transport Minister Jamieson and his provincial counterpart, Darcy McKeough, announced the Pickering Airport alongside the development of a new city called Cedarwood.

Hearings and Inquiry

The real fight between POP and federal officials took place during the public hearings and intergovernmental meetings, during which both sides presented their arguments on why the airport should or should not be built. Adam Ashforth examines how public inquiries may be viewed as sites of state legitimization. Public inquiries are called to investigate a problem and report a solution to the government. Public inquiries are used additionally to support the legitimacy of the state. By researching a problem and advocating "the truth," public inquiries can reinforce the state's perspective. Furthermore, public inquiries connect citizens to the state through public engagements, which help legitimize the state's actions.[60] Public hearings and public inquires give citizens a venue to voice their concerns about public policy. Local MPs consistently argued that public hearings should be held into Pickering to alleviate concerns.[61]

In 1972 the Swackhamer Hearing considered complaints and objections to the Pickering Airport. POP members described the process as pleasant and Mr. Swackhamer a fair judge of the case. In his report he emphasized to the government many of the POP arguments.[62] Lorne Almack and Brian Buckles, two members of POP, testified at the hearing. Almack stressed that Malton could be expanded and that Transport Canada's estimates for passenger growth were unreasonable and would not come to pass.[63] By analyzing the federal documents, Almack also concluded that Pickering was never chosen as one of the original sites. Transport Canada directly contradicted reports that Malton would be more accessible and able to serve a larger population.[64] However, Philip Beinhaker assumed that Malton could support expansion and therefore a new airport must be built. Almack was very critical of this approach in planning and chastised the government for making a decision based on assumptions instead of facts.[65] Almack also claimed that Transport Canada was so concerned with social disruption if Malton was expanded that they never considered how the residents of would be affected.[66] When Buckles spoke at the hearing he emphasized many of Almack's criticisms but also argued about the large financial cost of the Pickering Airport. If Malton was reconfigured to accommodate more passenger traffic it would cost less than building a new airport. The multi-airport system was designed for user convenience, which Buckles claimed was a poor excuse to build a new airport. Additionally, he argued, three airports were needed to take advantage of that model, not two.[67]

Other experts who worked with POP testified. One witness was Kenneth Fallis, who worked for the Ontario Department of Agriculture. He did not believe anyone consulted with his department. He discussed the produce that came from the land and was highly critical of the environmental assessment conducted by the province for ignoring the amount of farming conducted on the land. He was not the only person who testified that the province conducted a poor environmental assessment.[68]

In his final report J.W. Swackhamer summarized the strong objections to the airport, including the procedure involved in choosing Pickering as the final site.[69] However, MOT rejected these claims and said all the necessary steps and studies were taken to ensure the best site was chosen.[70] They rebutted most of the claims presented in the hearing. In terms of urban sprawl, MOT countered by citing the province's Toronto-Centered Region Plan as evidence that the province had carefully planned this policy.[71] Transport Canada stressed that, before the airport could begin

construction, the public would be involved in the timing and type of airport to be built.[72] These discussions on the environmental impacts of the airport were limited. They acknowledged that the Pickering Airport lands were good quality farmland, but urban sprawl was already spreading. It was only a matter of time before that land would be absorbed into the city.[73]

In discussing the results of the public hearings with politicians, MOT officials denounced the hearings as only a staging ground for protestors to repeat their grievances.[74] In one analysis of the public hearings, MOT claimed that two-thirds of the people whose property was expropriated did not object. MOT officials did not believe a few objections by the public were worth investigating.[75] The bureaucrats saw the hearings as the end of the public discussion, not the beginning. In one telling letter from Deputy Minister O.G. Stoner to Transport Minister Marchand, Stoner claims that, despite POP members wanting further discussion, "[POP] had every opportunity to submit their views."[76] Stoner believed that if there were additional hearings, POP would have more opportunities to submit their views and possibly sway public support.[77] The correspondence clearly shows that the bureaucracy had enough of dealing with the public. In one lengthy correspondence between POP member Anne Wanstall and J.M. Davey, special advisor to the minister, Davey called Ms. Wanstall's comments not very helpful to the exercise.[78] Transport official L.W.F. Beasleigh said it was pointless to respond to the letter of POP member Brenda Davies, as she would never change her mind. The hearings did not change anyone's opinion, although they did result in an increase of pay for expropriated land owners.[79] The public inquiry that soon followed seemed to only harden everyone's viewpoints.

Before the public inquiry was even called, MOT officials were already planning to make the inquiry support their interests. In a memorandum to Transport Minister Marchand, Deputy Minister O.G. Stoner explained that it was important for the government to control this process. Stoner argued that funding citizen groups may help legitimize the process although he admitted he would hate to fund POP.[80] The inquiry was designed to support the arguments behind the location of the airport.[81] Jim Davey of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) admitted it would be difficult to control the process from Toronto, compared to Ottawa. He suggested Toronto ministers should be on hand to ensure the inquiry was handled politically for the government.[82] Davey also suggested the importance of the minister's sensitivity to the needs of public servants, including that they be protected from excessive questioning. Davey believed that public servants may be more reluctant to advise ministers if they had to undergo public examination.[83] It seems that the PMO was well aware that the public service was not accustomed to citizens questioning their authority.

The AIC was held in 1974 to appease the protestors and the general public about the Pickering Airport. The three commissioners were Judge Hugh Gibson of the Federal Court of Canada, Murray V. Jones, and Dr. Howard Petch.[84] This inquiry not only served as legitimization of the state but also as a symbolic dialogue between the state and the public. POP complained bitterly about the terms of reference established by the federal government (which Marchand had tabled). These terms of reference gave the commissioners the power to determine which evidence would be considered. The heads of the inquiry would only call witnesses they felt were necessary. Finally, the commissioners were interested primarily in new evidence and would not consider old facts.[85] They reconsidered the terms of reference, and POP was able to present evidence, although they believed it was a pointless exercise.[86] This gave the commission the power to determine who was a certified expert and who could present their data and opinions.[87] The AIC served as the final battleground over the Pickering Airport. The commission was expected to advise the federal government on the Pickering Airport and allow the government to make a final decision.

The commissioners certainly were busy during that year holding numerous public hearings, receiving oral and written evidence, and writing a report of over six hundred pages. They first had to deal with an application for prohibition on the grounds that one of the commissioners, Murray V. Jones, was biased in law.[88] This application was dismissed by the Federal Court of Appeal, but it did not alleviate concerns by some parties that the inquiry was fixed.[89] It is likely that the strategy pursued by both government members and state officials was to be as inclusive as possible, no doubt in the hopes of shaping, or at least nudging, public opinion in support of the proposed airport. The report provided a legal and technical argument for development of the Pickering airport.[90] Their conclusion draws on the previously mentioned Ministry of Transport statistics about airport traffic and how expanding Malton would be expensive and politically difficult.[91] The focus of the report is quite telling. The chapter on environmental aspects is a meagre eight pages. The report claims that less than half of the agricultural prime land was being used at the time and that crops can still be produced within the region.[92] The three commissioners made a very significant statement on sprawl. Urbanization was already spreading rapidly in what would be known as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Occupational farming was decreasing in the area. It was only a matter of time before it spread to Pickering, and why would that matter for the residents who mostly owned "weekend homes" in the area?[93] The commissioners commented favourably on how the airport would provide employment opportunities and, combined with Cedarwood, would help with regional development.[94]

The most striking chapter is the role of the proposed Pickering Airport. These brief five pages explain how Toronto needed a second airport to relieve Malton of increased passenger traffic. The airport was proposed for this reason.[95] The report called for more organization when studying and planning airports. Perhaps the most decisive line is that the best way to solve

these pressing problems is to acquaint the public with all the facts so that they can see the urgency of the problem.[96] The facts are quite clear from thhis report. The airport should be developed. Transport Canada statistics as well as projected economic benefits from building this public works project shaped the way the government promoted the Pickering Airport.

POP made an extensive presentation to the AIC, drawing on data from the City of Toronto's 1974 *Pickering Impact Study.* The Institute of Environmental Management, who conducted the study for the city, looked at how Toronto would be affected by the airport, how this would affect growth in the area, and the regional implications for the airport. The study concluded that the airport would only further spur urban sprawl and lead to a thinning of jobs over a wider area. The study recommended that the province encourage growth over a wider geographic area instead of specific regional centres.[97] The jobs created would be mostly low-paying, and those workers would not be able to afford living in the North Pickering community.[98] The report also debated the accuracy of the federal Ministry of Transport statistics for air travel and claimed that, as the result of inflation, air travel would only get more expensive and fewer people would be able to afford this service. This study presents the image of unstoppable urban sprawl, of which the airport would be only the first step. Citizens were concerned about sprawl at the time, especially as the provincial government kept pushing forward its plans for regional development.[99] This was all brought together in POP's presentation to the AIC.

The City of Toronto supported POP financially to cover their legal fees to make a presentation at the inquiry.[100] The support of the City of Toronto cannot be underestimated. With important allies like Mayor David Crombie, who at the time was changing planning in Toronto, it gave POP more legitimacy in their presentations. The ideas they were presenting were becoming more politically relevant.[101] POP's technical committee gave evidence for two days. Citing eighty-two pages of evidence, POP attacked the federal data. Although they emphasized the economic consequences of expanding Malton, acquiring the land for the Pickering Airport was nothing short of a financial black hole.[102] One of the biggest issues was the Ministry of Transport's assumption that passenger levels would increase every year for the next thirty years.[103] That evidence did not sway the commissioners' decision. They recommended the immediate development of the Pickering Airport.[104]

On paper the government may have been happy with the inquiry's outcome, yet politicians in Ottawa and Queen's Park were on edge. The results of one poll taken after the inquiry's report was released in March 1975 are worth examining. Metro wide, 54 per cent of people did not agree with the airport. But in the Malton impact area, where that airport would certainly be expanded if Pickering was not, only 37.3 per cent of citizens surveyed agreed with the Pickering Airport.[105] Despite the public inquiry, the public was still divided over the Pickering Airport.

POP at the time and looking back complained about the lack of neutrality and the terms of reference of the inquiry. Even though the members knew it was a farce and that the result was going to be what they expected, they still presented evidence at the inquiry.[106] The press reported on the legitimacy of the public inquiry, and there were many negative editorials written about the inquiry as a sham and a front for the airport developers.[107] By 1975 environmental issues and urban sprawl were no longer fringe policy issues. Everyone from Toronto City Council to the Science Council of Canada was weighing in.[108] The narrative was changing. Progress may mean growth but perhaps sprawl was not always good or necessary.

Elections and Airports

The most important political event that affected the future of the Pickering Airport was the 1975 Ontario provincial election. As discussed above, during the 1970s the Progressive Conservative government engaged in modernist plans of regional planning and development, which included drives to restructure local governments and infrastructure projects such as the ill-fated Spadina Expressway.[109] These issues were the subject of a provincial election campaign. Social housing, regional development, and questions of arrogant governance held sway.[110] POP knew the importance of fostering political relations and keeping the airport issue on the radar of politicians. Protestor Lorne Almack related that MP Barney Dawson and MPP Don Deacon drove some POP members to Ottawa after they saw the Spring Festival in Pickering, where more than thirty thousand showed up.[111] Some members of caucus or Cabinet were against the airport but they rarely spoke up. Pickering MP Norm Cafik fumbled the airport issue. He conducted a survey showing a little over 50 per cent supported the construction of the airport.[112] Although Cafik tried to help residents get better prices for their property, he evidently stuck with his party. He was criticized by some residents for not defending their interests, while some newspapers, including the *Stouffville Tribune* defended his position.[113] However, by 1975, after the results of the AIC, he completely supported the airport.[114] The provincial environment minister, William Newman, whose riding included Pickering, was against it,[115] although that did not seem to stop the Davis government from pushing forward with their development plans. However, as the airport became a more contentious issue, the federal and provincial governments lost credibility in the eyes of the media.[116] This was especially true when the government(s) charged that members of POP were greedy landowners. Attorney General Dalton Bales resigned because he owned property that may have benefitted from government land-use decisions.[117] This was extremely embarrassing for the provincial government, as Bales was close to Premier Davis.

In most cases the MP or MPP followed his party and supported his government's decisions about the airport. The opposition parties did their best to help POP but proved rather ineffective in most cases. Perhaps the best of ally of POP turned out to be the provincial NDP, which were not against the airport from

the start.[118] However, they conducted their own research and eventually came on the side of POP. Stephen Lewis, leader of the NDP, was opposed to the destruction of the Pickering farmland for an airport.[119] Liberal MPP Don Deacon for North York was consistently against the airport. His columns, which were published in the *Vaughn News*, were very critical of how the government treated the residents.[120] The provincial Liberal Party, which was traditionally close to the federal Liberals, broke off with their federal partners over the airport issue.[121]

POP wanted to elect a member of their organization to the House, but provincial Conservatives and Liberals were not interested in having one run as a candidate. The provincial NDP welcomed the idea.[122] Dr. Godfrey, the leader of POP, used its members as his campaign team, and in the September 1975 provincial election they got him elected to the House. The key was that Dr. Godfrey and POP had made connections with all political parties and had spent a lot of time talking to the provincial government. They had kept the issues in the public eye for three years, and their experts had talked to the Davis government on many occasions about the issues surrounding the Pickering Airport. Bill McMurtry, who helped POP, had many contacts in the government and apparently talked to Bill Davis about the airport.[123] Premier Davis admitted in an interview that the reason that the province stopped supporting the airport was that funding the necessary infrastructure would be expensive. The economy, which had been booming in the 1960s, had slowed considerably in the 1970s.[124] The results of the provincial election, which put the Tories in a precarious minority, also would have made the government reconsider their unpopular regional plans.[125] The election of Dr. Godfrey sealed the deal. The timing was right for POP. With Dr. Godfrey in the provincial NDP caucus and with both opposition parties opposing the Pickering Airport, there was very little manoeuvring room for Premier Davis. Few groups had stood up to the government previously when there was a major proposition for land use.[126] But POP was able to attract key allies and make use of the political system that was available. If the federal government would not listen, then the province might. POP could not have gotten to that point without the effort of all members over the three-year struggle. It all came together on 26 September 1975 when the airport was cancelled.[127]

Conclusion

The cancellation of the Pickering Airport is an example of how the federal government responded to a wave of anti-modernism that had already hit municipalities and the provinces. The reform era of planning that challenged politicians to make policy decisions more inclusive and open had already effected cities such as Toronto, and the province of Ontario, through the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway.[128] Indeed, the federal government changed the way it planned airports after Pickering's cancellation. During the planning of the Sea Island Airport, the federal government allowed greater participation by letting citizens sit on the Airport Planning Committee beside experts and bureaucrats.[129]

The decision to cancel Pickering is not closed. Even today the federal government is still considering developing the Pickering Airport, and residents of the area have formed a successor protest group to fight back.[130] The state-led inquiries failed to satisfy the government or citizens. Large infrastructure projects like airports are not going away. We cannot cancel every project. There are profound consequences when citizens reject expert opinion and make it more difficult to implement large-scale public works projects. Further research is needed on how interest groups have become part of the state apparatus and effected consultation. In the case presented here, the public, in public works, seems to represent a small minority of people stopping development on a major government project. Forty-five years ago, this may have seemed progressive and inspirational. Today, it seems static and conservative.[131]

Notes

1 This article was funded with support from York University, McMaster University, a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant, and an Ontario Graduate Scholarship. I would like to thank everyone who gave me an interview and provided valuable feedback on the topic. In addition, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers and the editors of the *UHR* for providing helpful feedback. See editorial, "Trudeau's Taunt Makes a Point," *Toronto Star*, 7 October 1975. Malton Airport is now referred to as Pearson Airport.

2 "POP Goes the Airport," *Toronto Star*, 26 September 1975, Tommy Thompson Fonds, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University.

3 For the reform era of planning in Toronto, see Richard White, *Planning Toronto: The Planners, the Plans, Their Legacies, 1940–1980* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016). Examples of citizens fighting back against large public works projects include expressways and hydro projects. See Danielle Robinson, "'The Streets Belong to the People': Expressway Disputes in Canada, c. 1960–75" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 2012), for a look at opposition to expressways being built in cities. For hydro see Tina Loo, "People in the Way: Modernity, Environment, and Society on the Arrow Lakes," *BC Studies*, 142/143 (Summer/Autumn 2004): 161–96.

4 This is most pronounced in the 1960s, where Canadians started to challenge their governments on a variety of social issues. See Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). See Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

5 White, *Planning Toronto*, 263.

6 There is very little literature on airport disputes in Canada. Most works have been written by protestors or people who lived in the area of these major expropriations. This includes Charles Godfrey and Hector Massey, *People or Planes* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1972); Victor Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group in Attempting to Thwart a Major Project of a Senior Level of Government" (MA thesis, York University, 1994). On the Mirabel Airport there is Gilles Boileau and Jean-Paul Raymond, *La Mémoire de Mirabel* (Saint-Lambert, QC: Éditions du Méridien, 1988); Suzanne Laurin, *L'Echiquier de Mirabel* (Montreal: Les Éditions du Boréal,

2012). Also see Bret Edwards, "Breaking New Ground: Montreal-Mirabel International Airport, Mass Aeromobility, and Megaproject Development in 1960s and 1970s Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 50, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 28–9. See Gilles Boileau, "La colère et le chagrin des gens de Mirabel," *Histoire Quebec* 10, no. 3 (2005): 30–3; Éric Gagnon Poulin, "La Mobilisation Politique Des Expropriés de Mirabel" (maîtrise, Université de Montréal, 2009); Walter Stewart, *Paper Juggernaut: Big Government Gone Mad* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979); Sandra Budden and Joseph Ernst, *The Moveable Airport: The Politics of Government Planning* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1973). See Elliot J. Feldman and Jerome Milch, *The Politics of Canadian Airport Development* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983). Recently some authors have begun to re-explore the history of airport development in Canada. See Bret Edwards, "A Bumpy Landing: Airports and the Making of Jet Age Canada" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2017).

7 Government of Canada, *Report of J.W. Swackhamer* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974.)

8 The AIC is also known as the Gibson Report. See Government of Canada, *Report of the Airport Inquiry Commission* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974).

9 Doug Owram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State 1900–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 334; J.L. Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins, 1935–1957* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982), xii. In addition, I found the memoirs of Gordon Robertson in particular demonstrate that boundless optimism of civil servants during the postwar period. See Gordon Robertson, *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). For a more general overview of the evolution of federalism in the postwar period, see Ian Robinson and Richard Simeon, "State, Society, and the Development of Canadian Federalism," *Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.)

10 See J. Barry Cullingworth, *Urban and Regional Planning in Canada* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 24. Of course Mirabel Airport in Quebec was the biggest airport in the world at that time. See "Montreal Moves Ahead with Its Bonanza," *Canadian Building*, May 1972. See Edwards, "Breaking New Ground."

11 James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 3.

12 Ibid., 4–5.

13 Government of Canada, *Report of the Airport Inquiry Commission*, 49.

14 Law Reform Commission of Canada, Working Paper 9: Expropriation (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1975), 92–6.

15 Government of Canada, "The Expropriation Act," 1970.

16 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 6.

17 Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*.

18 Some of the public works being built during this time include hydro expansions and expressways. See Robinson, "'Streets Belong to the People,'" for a look at opposition to expressways being built in cities. For hydro see Loo, "People in the Way."

19 The building of the canal system alone created tens of thousands of jobs in the 1840s—jobs that people desperately fought over. See Ruth Bleasdale, "Class Conflict on the Canals of Upper Canada in the 1840s," *Labour/Le Travail* 7 (Spring 1981): 9–39.

20 See Edwards, "Breaking New Ground."

21 R. Harley McGee, *Getting It Right: Regional Development in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), xxvi.

22 Ibid., 14. Also see Cullingworth, *Urban and Regional Planning in Canada.*

23 Very little has been written on the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. See Zachary Spicer, "The Reluctant Urbanist: Pierre Trudeau and the Creation of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs," *International Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue international d'études canadiennes* 44 (2011): 185–99. See Zachary Spicer, "The Rise and Fall of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs," *Canadian Political Science Review* 5, no. 2 (2011): 117–26.

24 Cullingworth, *Urban and Regional Planning in Canada*, 297–300.

25 Ibid., 298. Also see Robinson, "'Streets Belong to the People.'"

26 See Pat McNenly, "$2 Billion Airport Plan to Create City of 150,000," *Toronto Star*, 3 March 1972.

27 See Owram, *Born at the Right Time*; Palmer, *Canada's 1960s.*

28 Richard Harris, *Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics, 1965–1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 5. See also John Sewell, *The Shape of the Suburbs: Understanding Toronto's Sprawl* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

29 White, *Planning Toronto*, 266–8. The idea of progress is debatable. Many politicians believed they were doing the right thing at the time, and history has not always been kind to them. See Tina Loo, "Africville and the Dynamics of State Power in Postwar Canada," *Acadiensis* 39, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2010): 23–47.

30 See Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 35; Andrew G. Kirk, *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007), 23.

31 See Ryan O'Connor, *The First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014).

32 See Robinson, "'Streets Belong to the People'"; Ian Milligan, "This Board Has a Duty to Intervene: Challenging the Spadina Expressway through the Ontario Municipal Board, 1963–1971," *Urban History Review* 39, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 25–39.

33 See Cullingworth, *Urban and Regional Planning in Canad*a, 331; "End of a Dynasty or Just a Case of the Staggers," *Globe and Mai*l, 25 May 1973; "Davis Faces Criticism," *Toronto Star*, 21 April 1973; "PC Stalwarts Fear Bill Davis Is Going Too Far Too Fast," *Toronto Star*, 19 May 1973.

34 This can be seen in many of POP's stunts, which had anti-modernist or environmental themes. For the Mother Nature eulogy, see *Toronto Star*, 20 June 1972. See Godfrey and Massey, *People or Planes*, 3.

35 During my interviews, none of the original protestors revealed that they had been involved in 1960s protests; the vast majority had no experience in challenging the state through civic activism.

36 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 33.

37 Interview with Bill Lishman, 22 May 2013.

38 Interview with Charles Godfrey, 29 May 2013.

39 I conducted eight interviews with POP protestors. Four members of POP had the property they owned or were living on expropriated for the federal airport. Two members were tied down in the provincial expropriation. Only Dr Godfrey and Pat Horne did not have to face expropriation. See Godfrey and Massey, *People or Planes*, 7.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 84.

42 Isabel Thompson, letter to the editor, *Toronto Star*, 16 October 1973.

43 Interview with Lorne Almack, 23 May 2013.

44 For the jurisdictional history of airports see T.M. McGrath, *History of Canadian Airports* (Toronto: Lugus Publications, 1992); Budden and Ernst, *Moveable Airport*, 99.

45 This statistic is the most important stat and argument on why airport expansion was needed in Canada. The projection of future growth was repeated in the development of the Pickering Airport, Mirabel in Quebec, and Sea Island in British Columbia. Progress and growth were the political benchmarks of the day. For Pickering, see Government of Canada, *Report of the Airport Inquiry Commission*, 49. For Sea Island see O.G. Stoner, "Memorandum to the Minister," 28 February 1973, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG 32-B46, vol. 89, file 14. For Mirabel's justification based on growth statistics, see Ministry of Transport, *Montreal International Airport Technical Information*, 7 October 1968, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ Quebec) E7 1994-10-010/60.

46 Government of Canada, *Report of the Airport Inquiry Commission*, 49.

47 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 7.

48 Ibid.

49 This was made quite clear to me in an interview with Jim Fleming. His constituents who lived under Malton did not want more airport noise. They pushed all local MPs in the area to support the Pickering expansion. See interview with Jim Fleming, 23 June 2016. Also see John Bickley to Jean Marchand, 19 July 1975, LAC, MG32-B46, vol. 88, file 5.

50 Feldman and Milch, *Politics of Canadian Airport Development*, 83–6.

51 Stewart, *Paper Juggernaut*, 22.

52 This firm was heavily involved not only in drafting reports on projected growth but also in the development on the Pickering Airport. The Ministry of Transport did not seem to have an issue mixing public and private interests. See W.H. Huck, memorandum to the deputy minister," 22 May 1973, LAC, MG 32-B46, vo. 87, file 1.

53 Stewart, *Paper Juggernau*t, 58.

54 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 11; Stewart, *Paper Juggernaut*, 60.

55 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 12.

56 There was a lot of controversy over why Pickering was chosen as the site. For the federal perspective, see Government of Canada, "Federal-Provincial Joint Announcement of Site Selection," 2 March 1972, CTA Fonds 220, series 11, box 103158, file 9. To this day the protestors do not believe the federal government was being honest. See interview with Godfrey.

57 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 15.

58 Ibid.

59 Stewart, *Paper Juggernaut*, 72–5.

60 Adam Ashforth, "Reckoning Schemes of Legitimation: On Commissions of Inquiry as Power/Knowledge Forms," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 3, no. 1 (March 1990): 17.

61 Norm Cafik, MP for Pickering, was seen as a weak advocate for the people of Pickering. Letters like this show he did try to advocate for their concerns. Don Jamieson to Barney Danson, 1 September 1972, LAC, MG-32-B46, vol. 87, file 1.

62 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 103.

63 Government of Canada, *Report of J.W. Swackhamer*, 41–2.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., 45–50.

66 Ibid., 60. In Transport Canada files there is very little mentioned about how expropriation affects the residents beyond debating the value of their properties.

67 Ibid., 103.

68 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 112–16.

69 Ibid., 35.

70 "Statement by Transport Minister Jean Marchand on the Site Selection for a Second Toronto-Centered Region International Airport," Transport Canada, 30 January 1973.

71 See Air Transport Board, "Response to Synopsis Report of the Hearing Officer on the New Toronto Airport" (Ottawa: Air Transport Board, 1974).

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 O.G. Stoner, memorandum to Jean Marchand, 22 January 1973, LAC, MG 32-B46, vol. 85, file 11.

75 W.H. Huck, memorandum to Jean Marchand, 11 December 1972, LAC, MG 32-B46, vol. 89, file 3.

76 Stoner, memorandum to Jean Marchand.

77 Ibid.

78 J.M. Davey to Anne Wanstall, 23 February 1973, LAC, MG 32-B46, vol. 89, file 3.

79 See L.W.F. Beasleigh to Brhnda Davies, 10 July 1973, LAC, MG 32-B46, vol. 86, file 5; J.E. Dube to Barney Danson, 30 March 1973, LAC, MG 32-B46, vol. 89, file 3.

80 O.G. Stoner, memorandum to Jean Marchand, 25 April 1973, LAC, MG 32-B46, vol. 86, file 3.

81 Ministry of Transport, memorandum to Cabinet, 28 January 1975, LAC, RG 19, vol. 6269, file 4220.

82 Jim Davey, memorandum to Jean Marchand, 20 June 1973, LAC, MG 32-B46, vol. 86, file 5.

83 Ibid.

84 Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group, 130.

85 Ibid., 129–31.

86 Interview with Almack.

87 Ashforth, "Reckoning Schemes of Legitimation, 4–5.

88 Government of Canada, Report of the Airport Inquiry Commission, 12–13.

89 See editorial, "Reluctant Inquiry," *Globe and Mail*, 24 December 1973; editorial, "POP Has a Point on Cute Inquiry," *Guelph Mercury*, 28 February 1974.

90 Government of Canada, *Report of the Airport Inquiry Commission*, 3.

91 Ibid., 251.

92 Ibid., 155.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid., 158–65.

95 Ibid., 213.

96 Ibid., 239.

97 City of Toronto, *Pickering Impact Study* (Toronto: Institute of Environmental Research, 1974), 1–2:245.

98 Ibid., 246.

99 Graham Fraser, "Dream Town or Just Sprawl," *Globe and Mail*, 25 March 1975.

100 "City Joins POP in Battle against Pickering Airport," *Toronto Star*, 16 March 1974.

101 Interview with Almack. See White, Planning Toronto.

102 Throughout the period many articles examined the rising cost of expropriation. When the government also went back and sold some of the expropriated land, that only increased the cost. See Thompson, "Workings of a Protest/Pressure Group," 105.

103 Ibid., 110.

104 See "POP Angry over Airport Result," *Toronto Star*, 3 February 1975

105 "What the Public Thinks," *Toronto Star*, 3 March 1975.

106 Interview with Godfrey.

107 There were a lot of editorials written about the public inquiry. Many questioned the legitimacy of this project. See editorial, "When Minds Close Inquiry Futile," *Globe and Mail*, 4 April 1974; editorial, "POP Has a Point on Cute Inquiry"; editorial, "It's Called 'Blindman's Bluff,'" *Stouffville Tribute*, 28 June 1973; editorial, "Is This the Democratic Way," 19 July 1972, *Pickering Bay News*.

108 The Science Council of Canada reported that Canada is losing the best agricultural land and specifically mentioned the land set aside for the Pickering Airport. See Clive Baxter, "Science Council Backs Potatoes, Not Planes," *Toronto Star*, 26 July 1975.

109 Robinson, "'Streets Belong to the People.'"

110 See editorial, "The Campaign," *Pickering Post*, 25 August 1975.

111 Interview with Almack. See "North Pickering Spring Festival," *Markham Economist and Sun*, 4 May 1972.

112 Two polls taken in 1972 show a slim majority of support for the airport in Pickering and a minority of support in the Metro area. See John Rolfe, "52% Favor Airport in Survey by MP; 3-Level Study Urged," *Globe and Mail*, 12 July 1972; Peter Regenstreif, "Majority Oppose Airport Area Survey Indicates," *Toronto Star*, 1 April 1972.

113 See editorial, "Criticism Not Justified," *Stouffville Tribune*, 22 March 1973.

114 "Go Airport Cafik Said," *Ajax-Pickering News Advertiser*, 19 February 1975.

115 See Bill Newman, "Report from the Legislature," *Pickering Post*, 27 February 1975.

116 See editorial, "Pickering: Counting Costs or Winging It?" *Globe and Mail*, 3 October 1974.

117 Editorial, "The Air Still Needs to Be Cleared," *Globe and Mail*, 29 September 1972.

118 See "Lewis Says Land Expropriation Plan Contempt of Public," *Toronto Star*, 11 January 1974.

119 See "Lewis Cites Study Best Farmland Chosen for Airport," T*oronto Star*, 13 October 1973.

120 Don Deacon, "Don Deacon Says," Vaughn News, 7 February 1973.

121 See "Nixon Calls Pickering Plan Costly Disaster," *Toronto Star*, 5 September 1973.

122 Interview with Godfrey.

123 Ibid.

124 See Interview with Tommy Thompson, 28 February 2013 ; Jean Marchand to Premier Davis, 12 June 1975, LAC, MG 26 O7, vol. 436, file 735.13.

125 Cullingworth, *Urban and Regional Planning in Canada*, 332.

126 Interview with Godfrey.

127 "POP Goes the Airport."

128 See Robinson, "'Streets Belong to the People."

129 See Airport Planning Committee, *The Airport Planning Committee Final Report*, Vancouver, 1976.

130 Guy Dixon, "The 40-Year Argument: A Pickering Airport or Farmland," *Globe and Mail*, 31 August 2013.

131 White, *Planning Toronto*, 374–5.