storm

FROM PAGE ONE

As late as last fall, a top KCP&L official told the legislature that the plant was needed to meet Kansas energy demands.

The utility companies used a method, however, which resulted in the highest projected growth of peak power needs. They based their projections on 1963-73 peak loads, disregarding the fact that higher prices and conservation measures had slowed growth in demands.

The utility estimates for 1973-77, for example, have exceeded actual peak growth by 100 per cent.

Utility lobbyists and some state officials put pressure on the legislature to approve the water contract. Governor Robert Bennett told the legislature that,"brown-outs" were sure to happen in less than 15 years and possibly within 8 years if the plant wasn't built.

Little attention was given to estimates by other groups that the electric needs were considerably less than estimated by the utilities, nor was there a detailed discussion of the costs and financing of the plant.

With the power plant now under construction, the legislature has finally begun to ask some of the basic questions that failed to be raised two years ago.

The legislature and the public was warned that the estimates put forth by the utilities were inflated by citizens groups such as People's Energy Project and the Mid-America Coalition for Energy Alternatives. Yet the water contract, permitting construction to begin without further intervention by the state, was based entirely on figures from KG&E and KCP&L, the owners, developers and profiteers of the project.

While projections for electric use were wildly high, utility company projections for construction costs were too low. Actual costs are expected to run considerably over the present $1 billion estimate by the time the plant is finished in 1983.

To make matters worse, the plant is being built on a cost-plus contract, which provides that as construction costs rise, the utilities must pick up the increases. Increases are then passed on to electric customers.

Calling for the investigation were: Sen. John Simpson, R-Salina; Sen. Arnold Berman, D-Lawrence; Rep. Robert Miller, R-Wellington; and Rep. Donald Mainey, D-Topeka.

The basic question to be explored is whether the legislature was mislead, according to Rep. Miller.

"We should proceed today to show the people of Kansas that the legislature is more than a bunch of pesky gnats who will go away with the wave of a hand," he said.

Additionally, the committee will investigate:

--whether a proposal by KCP&L to sell 17 per cent of its interest to a Nebraska utility is in the best interest of Kansas.

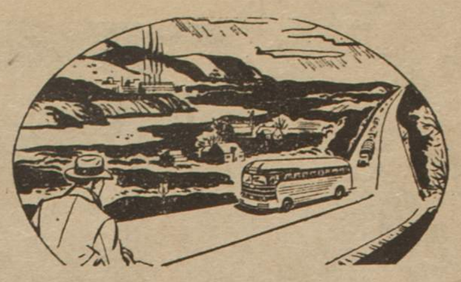
--whether Kansas utilities were given a chance to buy an interest in the plant.

--whether state laws permit regulation and monitoring of the proposed sale.

If you'd like to comment on the question of nuclear power in Kansas, direct your letters and phone calls to members of the special investigative panel that is now checking into the Wolf Creek Power Plant. Members may be contacted through the State House in Topeka. They are:

Rep. Donald Mainey, D-Topeka, chairman; Sen. Elwaine Pomeroy, R-Topeka, vice-chairman; Sen. Robert Talkington, R-Iola; Sen. Arnold Berman, D-Lawrence; Rep. Richard Brewster, D-Topeka; Rep. Ben Foster, R-Wichita; Rep. Robert Miller, R-Wellington.

The committee should complete its investigation by the end of April.



Can You Picture KANSAS without Highways?

What Was Good for the Railroads...

The Mount Oread Bicycle Club is sponsoring two public rallies and a bike hike on Sunday April 9. The events have been organized to marshal support for the creation of a bicycle path between Lawrence and Tonganoxie.

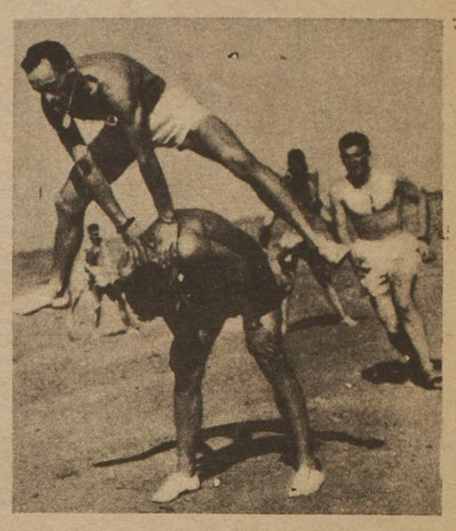
A railroad right of way between the two towns is being abandoned. There is competition among adjacent landowners, groups wanting to maintain rail service for tourism and profit, and those who seek to establish a bicycle and pedestrian path.

A rally to organize the rail trail bike tour will begin at 10:30 a.m. at the South Park Gazebo. The group gathering at the park will bicycle to Tonganoxie for a 1:00 rally there.

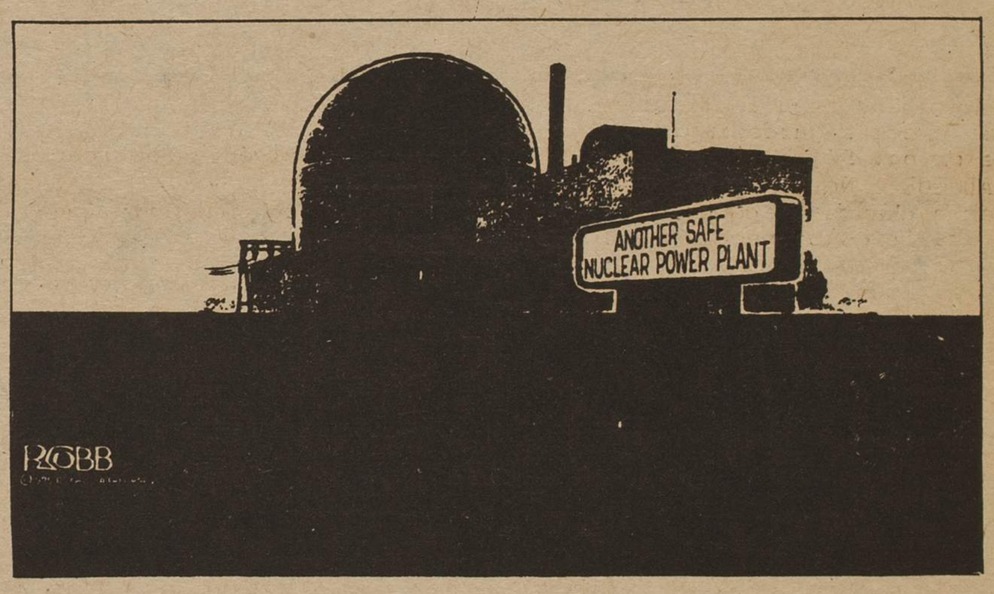
For more information, contact the Mt. Oread Bicycle Club at 864-3477.

Upon having traveled from the naked Pacific beaches of southern Mexico, through her verdant jungle mountains, across the primitive deserts of Arizona and New Mexico, the generous plains of Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas--then onto 23rd Street: If Manitou could have shown the Native American what the white man was going to do to this strip of prairie grassland, he would not have rested until the last pale face was on a boat heading back across the ocean or until the last red skin lay bleaching under the desert sun.

--Alan Hurlbut



"NEW GAMES" were played in South Park on Sunday the 19th of March. Spring's arrival and Lawrence's playful souls were definitely a successful combination. If you want to join in the fun and meet some folks, drop by South Park (near the recreation center) on April 2. We plan to play at least every other Sunday. Everyone WELCOME!!!



NOW WHAT?

FROM THE PARSONS SUN
March 13, 1978

To believe Kansas Gas & Electric as that utility tells the story is to believe that nuclear power is flourishing and has few if any problems.

More objective sources, however, tell quite a different story: Nuclear power never has had so many troubles.

The Wall Street Journal, a highly reliable newspaper, said in a full length story published only last week that "nuclear power, once considered the panacea for the nation's future energy needs, has fallen on hard times.

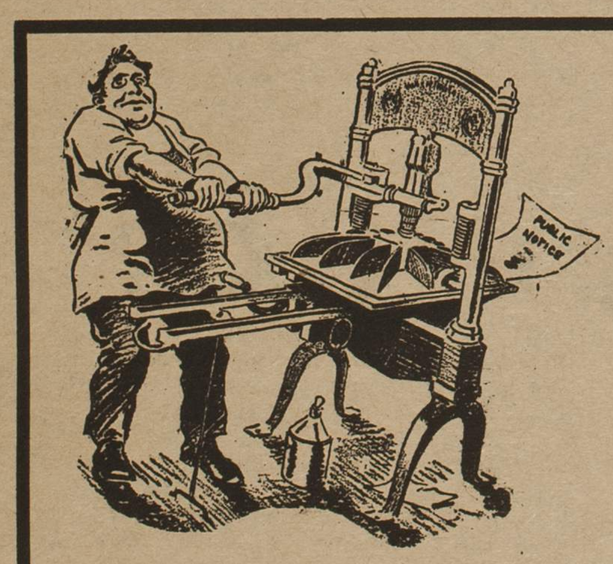
"Grandiose plans to dot the landscape with 1,000 atom-powered generating plants by the year 2000 are only memories now. Today, projections call for only 400 such plants by the end of the century, including 67 already completed. Even that may be too optimistic. In the past three years, utilities have ordered only 13 new reactors; in the decade before that, they were placing orders at the rate of 20 a year.

"Nuclear power's problems aren't simply the result of vocal criticism, of course. There are unresolved questions related to reactor safety, the disposal of nuclear-plant waste and the availability of nuclear fuel. Moreover, cost overruns and construction problems at many plants, along with unexpected slowdowns in the growth rate of demand for electrical power, have increased the economic risk of building big nuclear plants."

Kansas also appears to be experiencing a case of severly inflated nuclear plant costs. KCP&L at any rate is seeking to unload part of its burden in the new Wolf Creek plant, being built with KG&E, by selling a share to Nebraska power cooperatives.

KG&E consistently has minimized the cost and other problems as if they were of little moment to the consumer who will pay the final bill, whatever it is.

The public needs more facts and it is good that the Kansas Legislature is preparing to look into the projected sale to Nebraska interests and related questions. Citizens are entitled to know, not be kept in the dark while awaiting painful rate increases.



Public Notice

The PUBLIC NOTICE is published monthly by PUBLIC NOTICE INCORPORATED in cooperation with the Community Mercantile Food Cooperative and the People's Energy Project. Our office is located on the top floor of the Stubbs Building, 1101½ Massachusetts, Lawrence, Kansas, 66044. Call 842-5657.

PUBLIC NOTICE SUBSCRIBES TO
PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE

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