

Two Big Industries Ask City For More Electricity Despite Crunch

By Joel Connelly

At a time when Seattle's electrical supplies are being squeezed, and the costs of producing power are going up, the city faces two new requests from local industry for whopping quantities of electricity.

The Boeing Co. wants 30 megawatts of extra power — more than the average daily usage of 2,000 Seattle homes — to heat steam for its No. 2 multi-purpose plant. Bethlehem Steel is studying installation of a furnace that would burn 80 megawatts of electricity.

The requests, made to Seattle City Light, total a great deal of power no matter how it is measured.

The increases sought by Boeing and Bethlehem, already big electrical users, total about one-eighth of the average amount of power now used by the city.

The 110 megawatts are nearly equal to the total electricity City Light would get from three costly Washington Public Power Supply System nuclear plants scheduled to be constructed.

Boeing and Bethlehem are asking for more power than the average generating capacity of City Light's proposed \$138 million Copper Creek Dam on the Skagit River, and more power than would be produced by the \$100 million project to raise Ross Dam.

Seattle City Council members plan to ask for a legal opinion on whether City Light can turn down the power requests.

They think the answer will be no. "According to the state Utilities and Transportation Commission, we are obliged to serve people in our area," said Councilman Paul Kraabel.

But the council's energy commit-

tee plans to study what other options the city has — particularly whether it can require specific conservation measures by Boeing and Bethlehem.

"We want to find out if we can say, 'You can't come onto our system as an energy waster,'" said Councilman Randy Revelle, energy panel chairman.

The two big power requests have drawn attention to a major problem in Seattle's much-touted energy conservation and planning program.

The City Council has conducted prolonged environmental studies, analysis of need and study of alternatives when confronted with electrical generation proposals such as "High Ross," the Copper Creek Dam and WPPSS nuclear plants.

But City Light has been granting — without any debate or hint of a hearing — every major power de-

mand made by business and industry in recent years.

"In 1976, City Light agreed to an 86-megawatt addition, while the council was loudly debating whether to buy 83 megawatts of power from nuclear plants," said Revelle.

The electricity has to come from somewhere. And the Northwest is running short of the cheap hydroelectric energy which has powered its industry and warmed its homes in the past.

Electricity from new nuclear and coal-fired power plants costs more than 10 times as much as cheap dam power.

City officials concede that nobody thought about big power loads — and how to meet them — back in the days when City Light's slogan was "Live Better for Less Electrically."

"It's strange that this has come up in 1979. Why wasn't it raised in 1960, when we could see that hydro supplies would eventually run out?" said City Light Superintendent Bob Murray.

Boeing and Bethlehem aren't the only big power users who want more electricity from City Light.

Kaiser Cement has requested six megawatts for a grinding plant; the Washington Plaza Hotel wants five megawatts for its second tower; a new annex at the Veterans Administration Hospital will use five megawatts.

Several big electrical loads have recently come "on line" — 30 megawatts at Seattle Steam, 10 megawatts at Northwestern Glass and 12 mega-

Editor's Report

At Home and Abroad

By William Randolph Hearst Jr.
Editor-In-Chief
The Hearst Newspapers

NEW YORK — Last week this report dealt with the Iranian situation and then switched to the evolving political affairs here at home. The column brought forth such a favorable response that I am



tions Security Council voted unanimously to order Iran to release its 50 American hostages. At first the new government in Iran told us to go jump in a lake. Next thing we knew, Iran's foreign minister announced that the U.N.'s vote could result in a breakthrough in relations and an easing of tensions, leading to the release of the prisoners. (And let's stop calling them hostages — they are prisoners, confined and, most of the time, bound

other than to express support of President Carter in his handling of the case.

The president, most people will agree, has been handling the situation with competency and has been showing statesmanlike restraint.

He has been tough when he had to; he has been silent when it was necessary. In his first serious international incident, he has performed well.