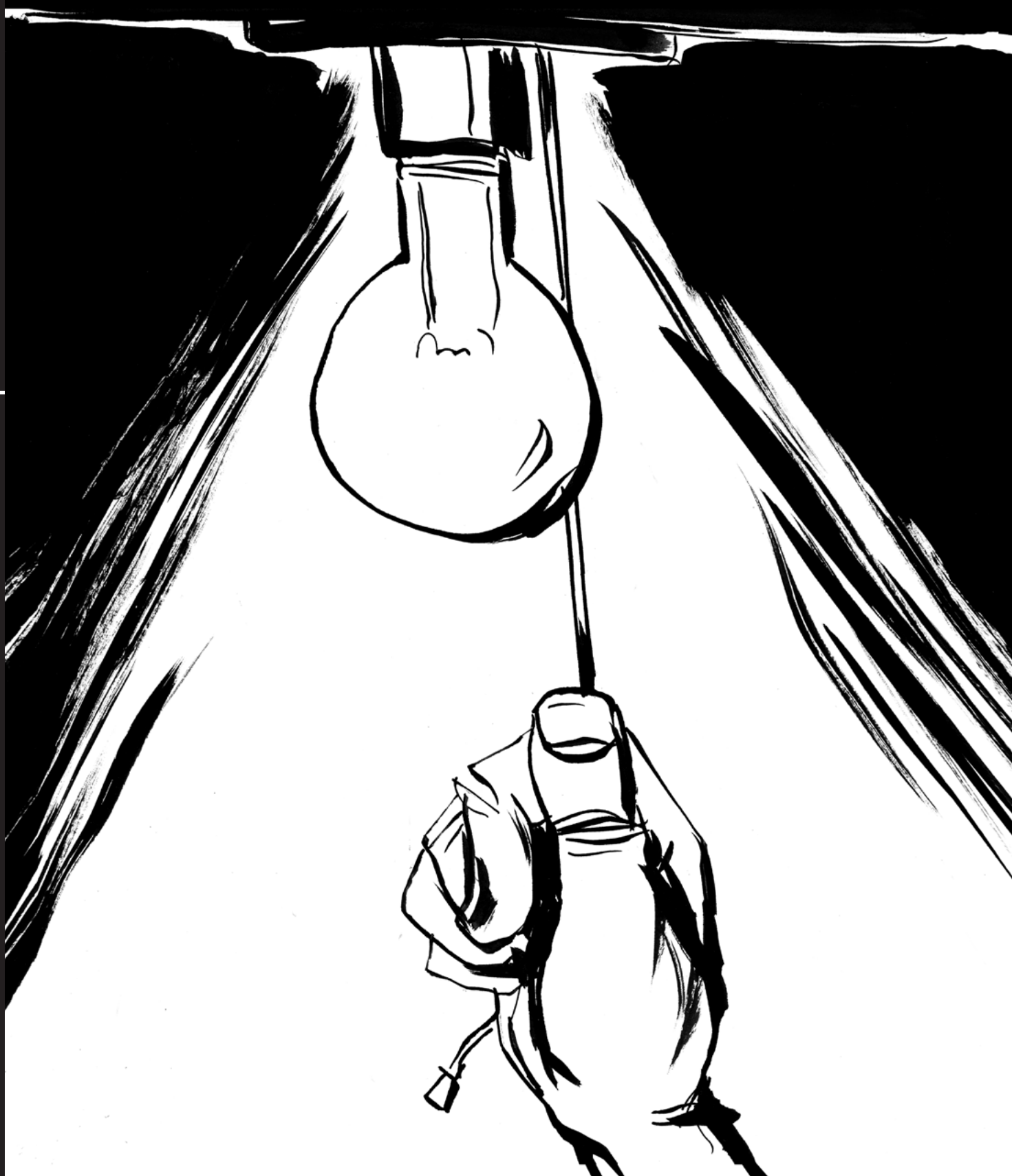


URANIUM



URANIUM

Highway
of the atom

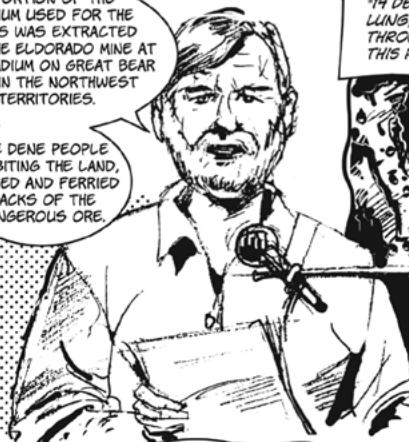
REPORTAGE BY SOPHIE TOUPIN
COMIX BY RUTH TAIT

URANIUM



A PORTION OF THE URANIUM USED FOR THE BOMBS WAS EXTRACTED FROM THE ELDORADO MINE AT PORT RADIUM ON GREAT BEAR LAKE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.

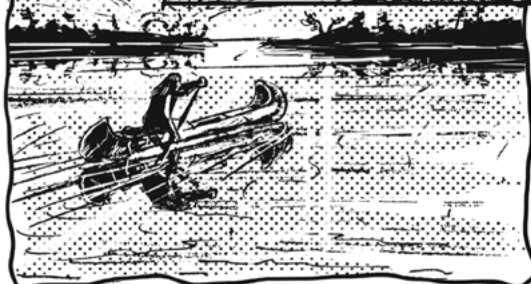
THE DENE PEOPLE INHABITING THE LAND, HAULED AND FERRIED SACKS OF THE DANGEROUS ORE.



"14 DENE'S WHO WORKED AT THE MINE FROM 1942 TO 1960 HAVE NOW DIED OF LUNG, COLON AND KIDNEY CANCERS, ACCORDING TO DOCUMENTS OBTAINED THROUGH THE TERRITORY'S CANCER REGISTRY. FEW PEOPLE HAVE MEMORIES OF THIS PERIOD, MADELAINE BAYHA IS ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE."



LONG AGO, IN NORTH BAY, ONTARIO, THERE WAS A SACRED ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF A LAKE WHERE YOUNG MEN USED TO GO FOR THEIR VISION QUESTS.



"BACK THEN, THEY DIDN'T KNOW THAT THE CONCENTRATION OF URANIUM ORE ON THE ISLAND WAS SO HIGH THAT PROLONGED EXPOSURE COULD POISON THEM AND BURN THEIR SKIN."



"AFTER VISITING THE ISLAND, MANY SUFFERED THROUGH LONG AND PAINFUL DEATHS."



"WHEN THEY RETURNED, THEY SPOKE OF FRIGHTENING VISIONS."

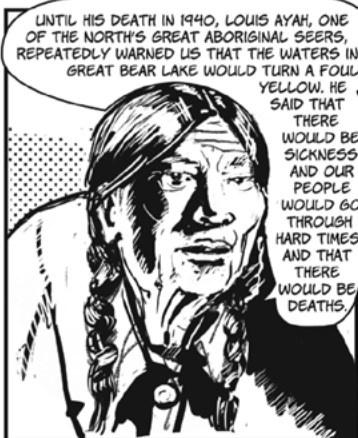
"OLD MAN FERDINAND, VICTOR DOLPHU, JOE KENNY AND JOSEPH BAYHA, FOUR OF THE DENE WHO AS YOUNG MEN HAULED 100-POUND BAGS OF URANIUM ORE CONCENTRATE ALONG A 2,100-KILOMETRE TRANSPORTATION WEB OF RIVERS, RAPIDS AND PORTAGES KNOWN AS THE "HIGHWAY OF THE ATOM" FOR \$3 A DAY. THEY ALL DIED OF CANCER."



'ON MAY 9, 2007, MINERS ARE STUNNED WHILE ENVIRONMENTALISTS CHEER OVER A NORTHERN REGULATOR'S RECOMMENDATION THAT A URANIUM EXPLORATION PROJECT BE DENIED BECAUSE IT THREATENS THE SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL WELL-BEING OF THE AREA'S DENE PEOPLE.'



IN PORT RADIUM, A SHRINE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD.



UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1940, LOUIS AYAH, ONE OF THE NORTH'S GREAT ABORIGINAL SEERS, REPEATEDLY WARNED US THAT THE WATERS IN GREAT BEAR LAKE WOULD TURN A FOUL YELLOW. HE SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE SICKNESS AND OUR PEOPLE WOULD GO THROUGH HARD TIMES AND THAT THERE WOULD BE DEATHS.



MY HUSBAND, JOSEPH, WORKED FOR YEARS AT THE URANIUM MINE AND DIED AS MANY WHITE MINERS DID: COUGHING HIMSELF TO DEATH.



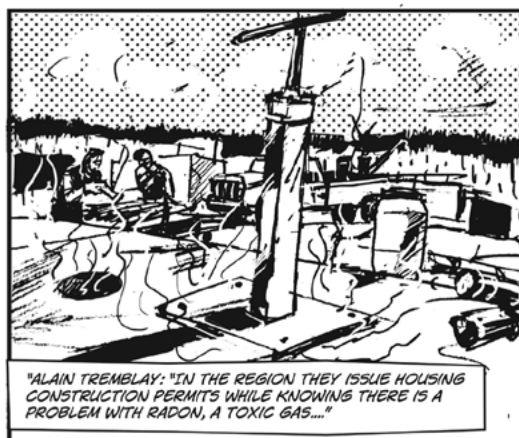
THE EL Dorado MINE WAS OWNED FIRST BY A PRIVATE COMPANY AND THEN BY A CROWN CORPORATION. IN 1988, THE OLD CROWN CORPORATION BECAME CAMECO LIMITED, THE WORLD'S BIGGEST URANIUM PRODUCER.

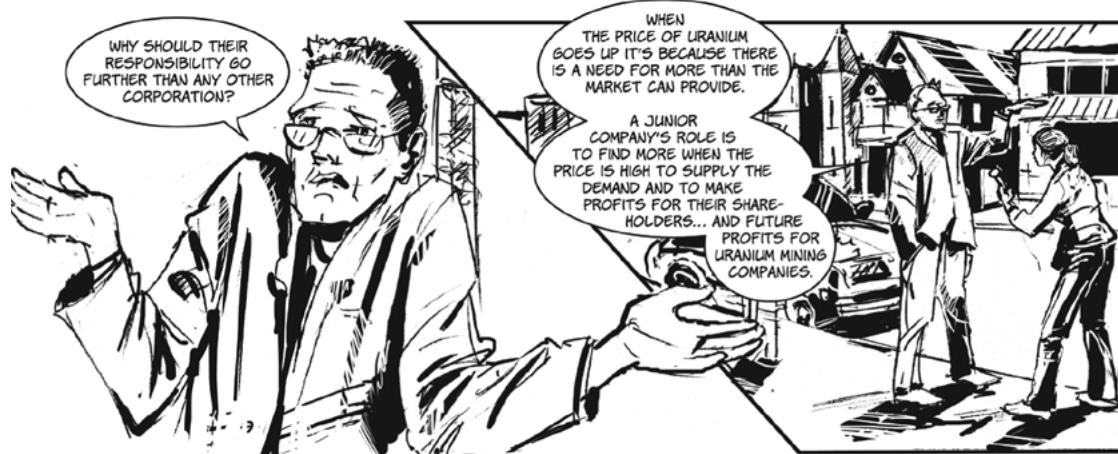


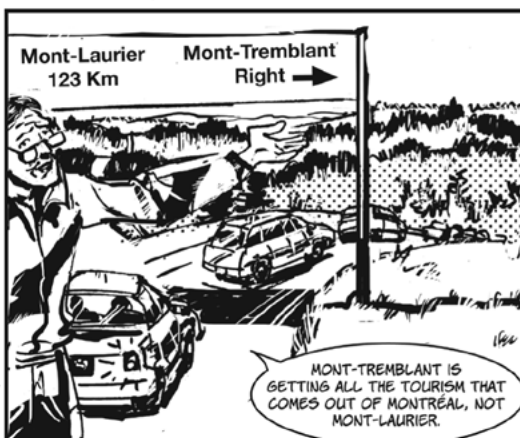
TODAY, CAMECO'S MARKET CAPITALIZATION REACHES \$19.9-BILLION, WITH CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS IN SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, THE U-CAPITAL OF THE WORLD.

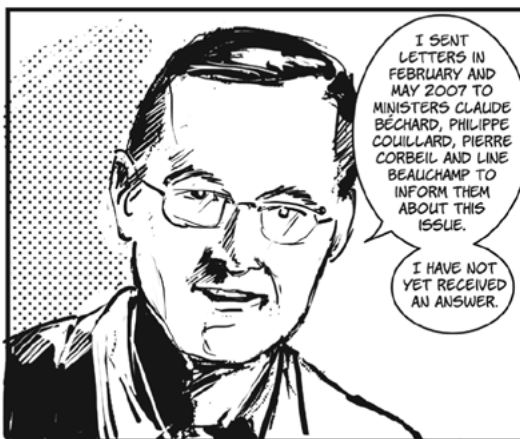
IN MAY 2007, TORONTO GRAPHIC ARTIST RUTH TAIT AND MYSELF, SOPHIE TOUPIN, A JOURNALIST FROM MONTRÉAL, WENT TO MONT-LAURIER TO INTERVIEW KEY FIGURES RELATED TO THE URANIUM EXPLORATION IN THE AREA.*

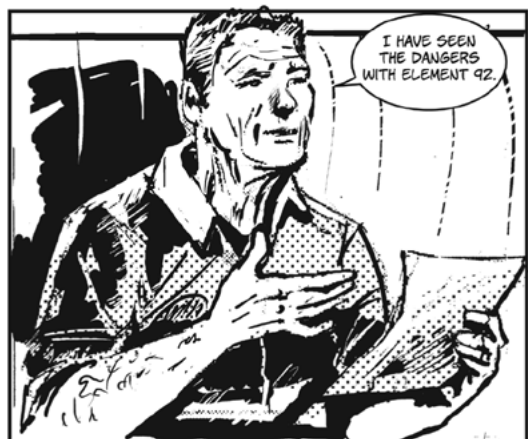


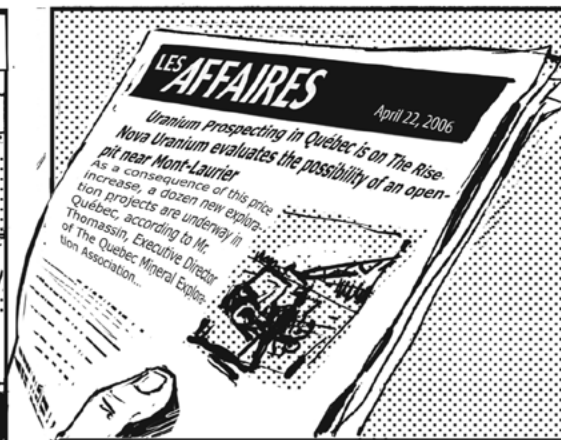


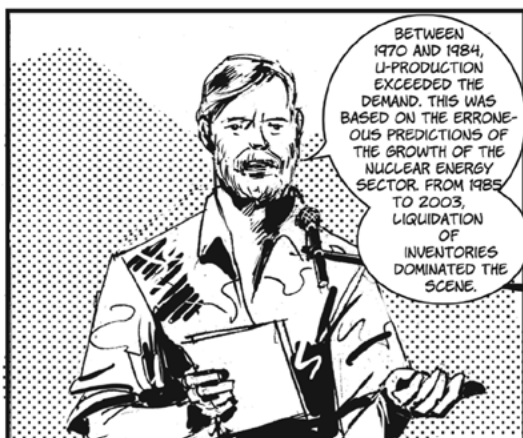














"APEHL HAS DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS TO DEVELOP A COALITION AGAINST THE URANIUM MINING PROJECT. DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES HAVE MADE NO DIFFERENCE DESPITE SUPPORT FROM LOCAL/PROVINCIAL POLITICIANS. THE U-MINING PROJECT SEEMS TO BE MOVING FORWARD..."



AT THE MAY 31, 2007 APEHL MEETING, ONLY FIVE PEOPLE SHOWED UP.



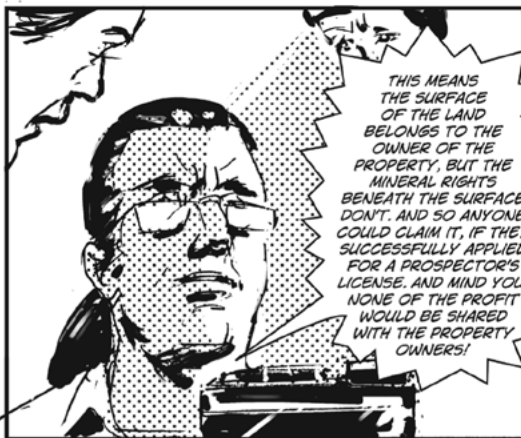
I CONTACTED MICHAEL PATELNAUDE, A CITIZEN FROM THE VILLAGE OF LA PÊCHE, WHO WAS TOLD THAT THE LAND ON WHICH HE HAD HIS COTTAGE WAS CLAIMED FOR MINING ACTIVITIES.



MICHAEL WAS TELLING ME THAT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 235 OF THE QUÉBEC MINING ACT: THE HOLDER OF MINING RIGHTS MAY ACQUIRE BY AGREEMENT OR EXPROPRIATION ANY PROPERTY PERMITTING ACCESS FOR EXPLORATION WORK OR MINING OPERATIONS.



THIS MEANS THE SURFACE OF THE LAND BELONGS TO THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY, BUT THE MINERAL RIGHTS BENEATH THE SURFACE DON'T. AND SO ANYONE COULD CLAIM IT, IF THEY SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED FOR A PROSPECTOR'S LICENSE. AND MIND YOU, NONE OF THE PROFIT WOULD BE SHARED WITH THE PROPERTY OWNERS!



"IN THE AYLMER SECTOR OF THE CITY OF GATINEAU, ECO-WATCH IS LOBBYING TO GET THE QUÉBEC MINING ACT AMENDED, TO DIMINISH THE POWER OF MINING RIGHTS HOLDERS."



AT ANOTHER APEHL MEETING ON JUNE 26, 2007....



MAY 2007, FRANÇOIS LAPIERRE PRESENTS APEHL'S CASE ON CKUT 90.3 FM AND RADIO CENTRE-VILLE, TWO INDEPENDANT RADIO STATIONS IN MONTRÉAL.

