

World press group calls for protection from harassment

LONDON (AP) — "Journalism is fast becoming one of the world's riskiest professions," the International Press Institute (IPI) said Wednesday in its World Press Freedom Review of 1977.

The IPI, a grouping of about 2,000 editors and publishers in more than 60 countries, called for an international campaign to protect journalists from assault and harassment.

The institute said in a 7,000-word report that last year brought the toughest crackdown on the press in South Africa's history; the wholesale disappearance of journalists in Argentina and Uruguay, where conditions for the press reached "a new low; and a string of incidents in Uganda that made President Idi Amin the leading contender for "Champion News Manipulator of 1977."

The institute called for "an urgent international initiative to win immunity for journalists from assault and extra-judicial detention. Immunity for journalists is not a political matter. It is an urgent matter of human and civil rights."

Munro new BPA head

Power rate equity sought

PORTLAND, (AP) — The new head of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) said Wednesday the Pacific Northwest can find an agreement to close the interstate chasm being created by disparities in electric bills.

But Sterling Munro, in his first news conference as BPA administrator, stopped short of predicting how and when that agreement might come or what it might involve.

"We will be looking for what has been called greater equity in the regional power supply," Munro told reporters. "I don't know how to achieve equity. But at least I think I recognize the problem...Maybe some things could be done to even the disparities to some extent."

"Whether we resolve the problem or not is in the eye of the beholder, I suppose. But certainly an agreement is achievable."

Munro, who will be sworn in Friday, said the BPA and the four states it serves will be re-examining basic issues such as rate disparities, the allocation of the Northwest's wealth of cheap hydropower and the preference clause.

Tampering with the preference clause, which for 40 years has given public utilities first claim to inexpensive electricity from federal dams on the Columbia River

system, almost certainly will bring a stormy reaction, especially from Munro's home state of Washington.

Most Washington residents are served by public utilities. Private utilities dominate in Oregon, Idaho and Montana. The result, as demand outgrows the supply of hydropower, has been a widening gap between electric rates in Washington and those in the other three states.

Officials of the have-not states, citing electric rates that run twice as high as those in Washington, are demanding a greater share of the federal power distributed by BPA. That is something many of Washington's public utilities are reluctant to surrender.

"The preference clause has served this region well," Munro said, "but I do think it is one of the things we need to look at in the future."

"I wouldn't characterize past interpretations of the federal provision as being wrong. But times change and perceptions change."

Munro also said the Northwest faces a risk of federal intervention in its energy planning, "but I'm not concerned...that our energy is going to be taken away from us through some form of a national electric grid system."

"Thanks to the foresight of our Northwest congressional delegation," he said, "we are protected by statute from raids on our hydropower resources."

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