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engineering that formerly would have gone to Toronto or other specialists is being done in New Brunswick, upgrading Provincial technical capacity. NB firms have won all construction contracts so far placed, as well.

As a result of making the public aware of such shortcomings, the Conservation Council believes that it was instrumental in promoting Environmental Minister Jack Davis to launch an Environmental Impact Study on the question; the findings of which are to be released sometime in October. Not everyone, however, shares the Council's optimism concerning the outcome of this study. Mr. Norm Ferguson, Head of the Lorneville Ratepayer's Association, feels that the study was initiated only to appraise the local citizens and that any alterations in design of pollution abatement systems was unlikely. It is somewhat interesting to note that this Environmental Impact Study was launched AFTER the plans had been finalized and construction begun, rather than during the actual planning stages.

Clearly, the "direct benefits" of the project which the National Energy Board referred to are numerous. Unfortunately, the so-called "social costs" have got to be evaluated as to their relative magnitude. At this point, the only certain aspect concerning this is that the people of St. John and vicinity will be "footing the bill".

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Traditionally, oil fired thermal plants such as the Coleson Cove generator alter the environment to varying extents in two ways: via thermal or "heat" pollution and through emission of sulphur dioxide (So_2) into the air.

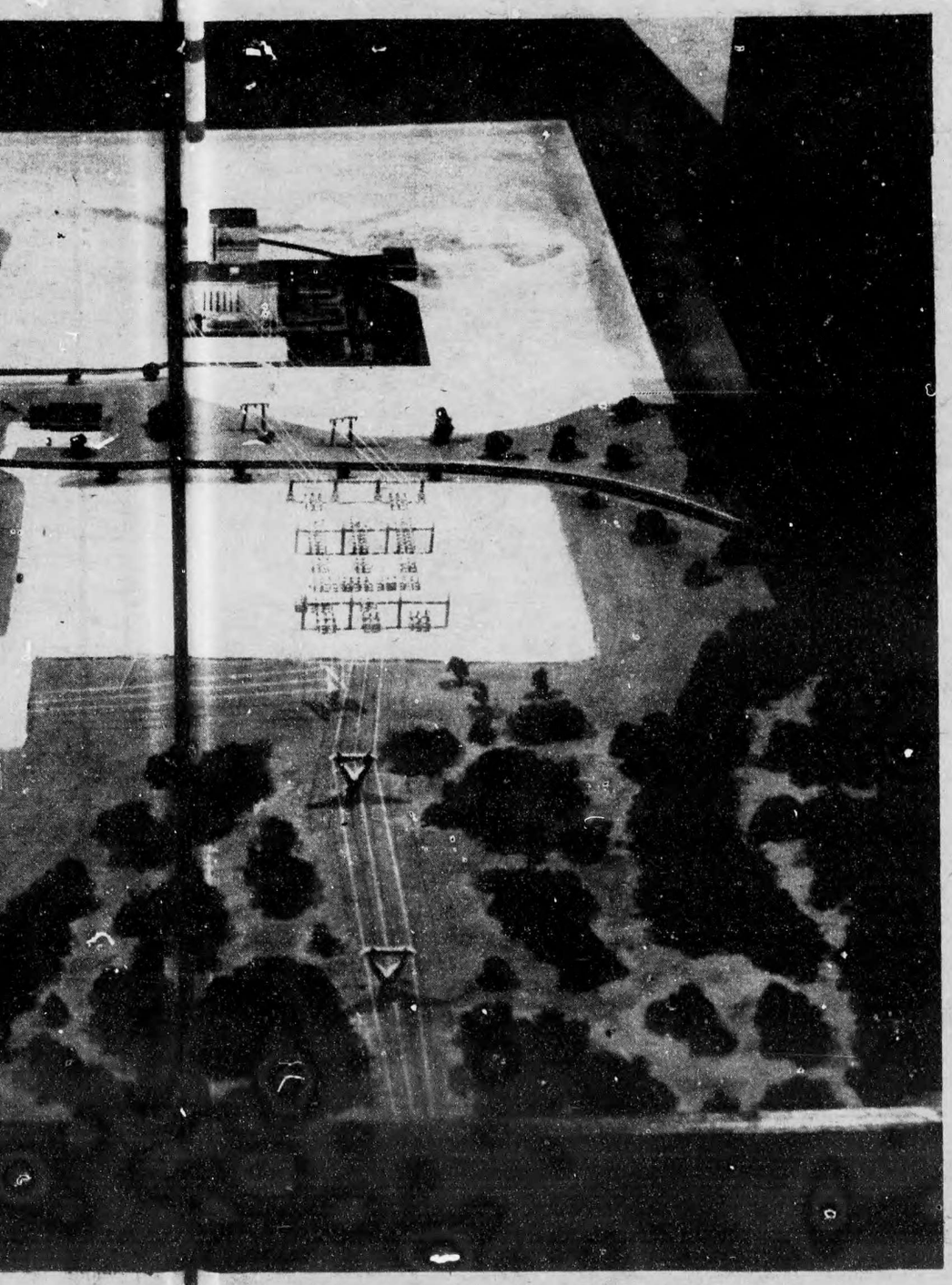
In order for such a plant to operate, it requires an effective cooling system. In the case of the Coleson Cove plant, the cold waters of the Bay of Fundy will satisfy this need.

According to both the NEB and the NBEPC, the emission of varying quantities of heated water will have a negligible effect on the marine life of the area as the outgoing volume will be readily mixed and subsequently cooled in the Bay. This conclusion, however, was not unanimous, as Mr. F. Tobias, Head of the Saint John Chapter of the Conservation Council will testify. He feels that there hasn't been enough research carried out in this area to allow such conclusions to be drawn. Still to be determined are the amounts of outgoing effluent water as well as its velocity and temperature.

A greater controversy, however, revolves over the air pollution that the plant would cause. Despite safety measures such as tall chimneys, which supposedly allow adequate dispersal of pollutants, compounded with dust collectors and the use of low-sulphur fuel, the Conservation Council has estimated that over 23,000 tons of fallout will be produced annually. According to Mr. George E. McInerney, Chairman of the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission, this volume will have no effect on the people of St. John as it will be blown out to sea. The Council, along with Pollution Probe of Toronto, feels that this possibility is unlikely during the summer months since the prevailing winds are from the Southwest thus causing any dispersal to occur over the city itself. The Council also feels that the proposed tall chimneys will be ineffectual due to the frequent fog producing temperature inversions resulting in downward dispersal of air currents.

It would seem that the controversy is far from being resolved. There is no doubt that the power produced by the Coleson Cove terminal will be extremely beneficial to New Brunswickers. Whether or not the seemingly inevitable toll on the local environment is justifiable remains to be seen. Certainly the citizens of St. John and Lorneville have proven to be quite opinionated about the matter but it is doubtful that their arguments will prompt the Federal Government to reverse the NEB's decision.

Perhaps the government's attitude can best be summed up by Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Donald S. MacDonald's statement that "any thermal plant would cause some pollution and the only way to stop such pollution entirely was not to generate any electricity".



on Cove. The plant itself is in the background, on the shore. The oil drums are on the left.