

MUSKRAT FALLS

Fork over six billion dollars or else the lights will go off. That seems to be the message that it sends. That's the kind of language that blackmailers use. It has to do with closing down the Holyrood thermal generating station. While it is true that this facility is past its best before date, one of the many reasons for substituting Muskrat Falls is that Holyrood is producing too much carbon dioxide -supposed to be a dangerous polluting substance. This is absolute nonsense. Carbon dioxide is an essential ingredient for plant life. It has nothing to do with global warming. Somehow the environmentalists have persuaded that it must be limited.

Water vapour is a far more effective heat trapping agent and without it the temperature of the earth would be below freezing. But the environmentalists seem to have carried the day. It is distressing that the some of the proponents of the Muskrat Falls project have been "sucked in". Among them are graduates with more degrees than a thermometer. We lower orders must not dare to disagree.

So if they are wrong about the danger of carbon dioxide, they could well be wrong about other things. So, I can't believe anything they say.

Let's take a look at the whole project. It is proposed that the falls at Muskrat Falls be harnessed with a dam and powerhouse at a cost of a billion dollars or so. Then a powerline running from there to St. John's with a branch line to Nova Scotia be made. The whole cost to be about six billion dollars.

To begin with I am not satisfied to be dependent upon such a distant source of power and I am not alone. This power has to traverse the Straits of Bell Isle (known as "Ice Berg Alley") via an undersea cable then down the Great Northern Peninsula ending up in St. John's. Part of this route is the stormiest part of the world in winter. Can you imagine a repair crew trying to repair a downed line in such conditions. So much for security of supply. We have an effective distribution system in place. Why jeopardize this?

It is important to note that this six billion dollars is not a grant nor a loan but a guarantee which we have to raise ourselves and pay the interest which will take all the oil money we have been counting on for other purposes. That alone will impoverish us.

While it is impossible to get inside the minds of the Muskrat Falls proponents, I suspect it is the pride of being in charge of a six billion dollar project. Not six million but six billion six thousand million. Where have we heard that kind of talk before?

Shakespeare said it best, "Better to bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of".