

Winters could be even worse

James Bay power project could start climate changes

By JEFF CARRUTHERS

So you thought last winter, with all its snow, was bad?

The Quebec government's planned James Bay power project could insure that winters

in future years are just as long and bad, possibly worse.

The possibility of marked changes in Eastern Canada's winter weather, as a result of interfering with river flow into

James Bay, came Monday from two federal marine scientists, authors of a Science Council's special study on marine sciences just released.

Dr. Robert W. Stewart, professor at the University of British Columbia and head of the environment department's marine sciences branch in the Pacific region, explained that the power project would definitely interfere with the formation and retention of ice cover on James Bay and Hudson Bay.

The ice cover is known to have a significant effect on climate of surrounding land areas, based on saline content and evaporation rates.

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"We know it is a distinct possibility that **ice** cover would form later and stay longer — both adverse effects —" as a result of the **James** Bay power project, he said.

Similar effects have been recorded in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, both in terms of **ice** cover and local climate changes, as a result of water control and power on the St. Lawrence and its tributaries.

The climate would be affected in all of Quebec and parts of Ontario, perhaps even the Maritimes. There is also a very small chance there would be a global impact on weather.

Dr. Lloyd M. Dickie, director of the marine ecology laboratory at the Bedford Institute, said not enough is known about such effects to say such a project should be stopped.

But he added that "we ought to know what we are doing" as a result of such a major engineering project and "build in the costs of remedying any effects."

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cians might be forced to accept less than optimum use of the power **dams** if significant weather changes are discovered after the power project has been built. Extra water might have to be allowed to go over the **dams** to increase the flow of river water into **James Bay** and to minimize weather changes. This would result in less power production than expected during certain periods of the year.

Dams on rivers flowing from Quebec into **James Bay** (and thus affecting **Hudson Bay**) would likely lower the spring flow and delay the spring break-up of **ice** on the two bays. The **ice** cover would likely form later in the fall and winter and last longer in the spring.

This would in turn mean colder winter temperatures, more snowfall and a delay spring for large sections of Eastern Canada.

Construction on the first parts of the multi-billion dollar **James Bay** power project is to start later this year.
