

Biologists plan watchdog role when environment menaced

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HALIFAX — Dr. J. S. Nelson, president of the Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists, says the Canadian government has not called for a single environment study at the outset of any major development.

Dr. Nelson suggests biologists should be involved in studies for major developments just like engineers.

about 160 scientists from across Canada that "we have to take a closer look at the environment before we continue exploitation."

Neu said control of nature has been exerted in the Gulf of St. Lawrence by the growing number of hydroelectric power dams.

By holding back the natural springtime flow of river water, he said, the mixture of fresh and salt water in the

done to cause the least damage."

Dr. Nelson said the 400-member society represented the country's professional biologists and they were appointing themselves watchdogs on behalf of the public.

Later this month the society will present a dossier to the Yukon water board criticizing a start already made by Northern Canada Power Commission on a power project without adequate study.

He told a conference of the Canadian committee on fresh-water fisheries research that his organization proposes to become the environmental conscience for Canada.

"We're upset that anyone can claim to be an ecologist and hire themselves out. We see all sorts of incompetent studies done."

Hans Neu, an engineer - scientist with the Bedford Institute near here, said the environment is becoming another business . . . "a political football."

He told a symposium of

fresh and salt water in the gulf was altered. Nutrients were reduced, the water temperature, marine life and climate changed.

Spring run-off in the gulf was vital but the runoff now was largely regulated for power purposes.

He called on the scientists to find ways of determining the total cost to the environment of massive engineering projects.

"I place a lot of these responsibilities on your doorstep . . . to advise government agencies what shall be

He said "when power projects come up, such as James Bay, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and the Mackenzie Highway, anyone can pose as an environmental consultant, branching out over his depth."

"This sort of thing damages our reputation. Projects go ahead. Lip service is paid to the environment."

Dr. Nelson said: "We ask that the environmental cost be considered too. We want the alternatives weighed and considered."

He cited the Peace River dam in B.C. as an example of industry first and environment afterward.

Waffle calls for duty