

# 1950

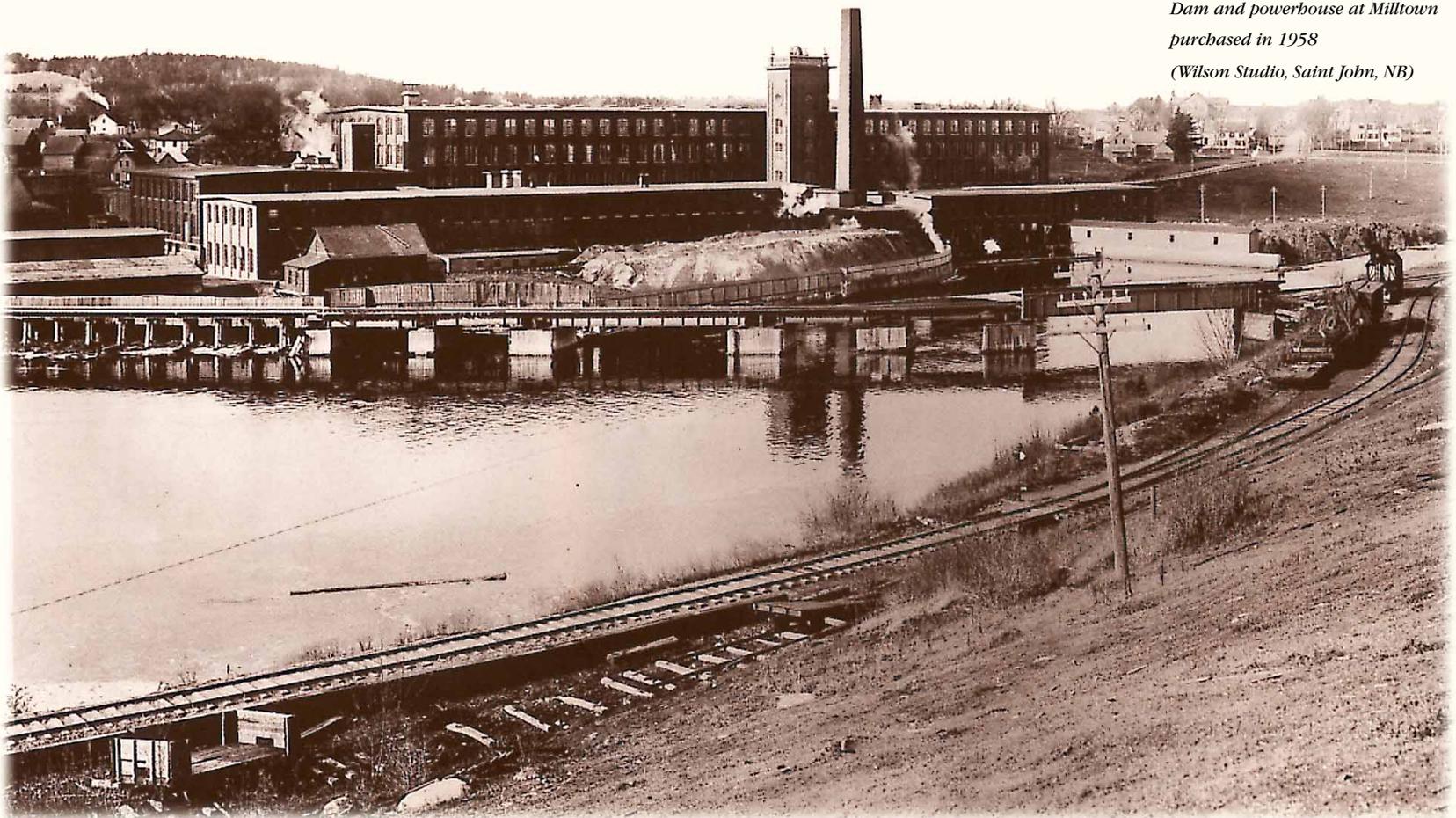
## the nineteen fifties - the hydro years

If the 1940s was a period of growth brought on by the war, then the following decade brought a recognition that if the Commission was to serve its customers properly and contribute to the

economic and social growth of the province, it would have to make changes to its structure and operation.

In the late 1940s the demand for electricity far exceeded the Commis-

sion's supply. To complicate matters, low rainfall had reduced the capacity of the hydro plants to generate electricity. For the first time in its history, the Commission had to ration electricity, particu-



*Dam and powerhouse at Milltown  
purchased in 1958*

*(Wilson Studio, Saint John, NB)*

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larly in Carleton County.

Households were asked to reduce their use of electricity between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm. It was obvious that more generating capacity was needed. Surveys of

potential hydroelectric sites along the Saint John River valley revealed several possibilities for the construction of power dams. The most promising site was on the Tobique River. A dam

was built and the hydro plant began producing power in 1953.

The year 1953 was significant not only because it marked the opening of the Tobique dam, but also for other



*Construction shot of Tobique dam, 1951  
(R.H. Smith, Sackville, NB, August 1951)*

*Glen Kitchen demonstrating how to test high voltage gloves at the Service Centre, 1959*



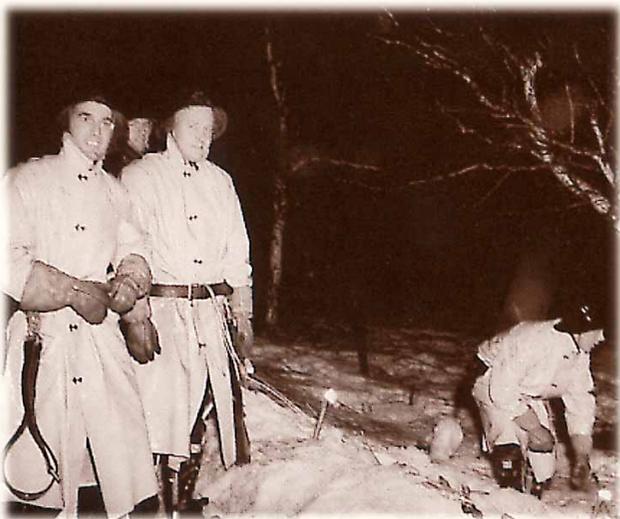
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reasons. Perhaps the most important of these was the recognition that New Brunswick's commercial and residential demand for reliable and inexpensive electricity required a more sophisticated and

diverse system of generation. Prior to the 1950s, hydro generation had produced only a small proportion of the province's electric energy, the greater part being generated by steam in thermal

plants. But, while the Commission produced more kilowatts than ever before, the need for maximum amounts of electricity at peak times was such that planning for the future had to be



*On January 2, 1956, a severe ice storm struck the eastern side of the province. After 10 days of continuous freezing rain and sleet, 423 miles of distribution line and 10 miles of 69 kV transmission lines were knocked down. At the height of the storm, 23,000 customers were without electricity*



*Ice storm damage*

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based on a generating system of integrated and interconnected hydro and thermal plants.

During the 1950s, electric utilities in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island operated as totally iso-

lated entities. By the end of the decade, New Brunswick had broken that trend when the Commission established the first interconnections in the region with two small utilities in Maine.

Changes were not only

taking place in operations.

As the Commission's

activities expanded and became more sophisticated, it became necessary to introduce

REGIONAL MEMORIAL SCHOOL  
PORT ELGIN, N.B.

HON. J. EDGAR FOURNIER  
C/O N.B. ELECTRIC POWER COMMISSION  
FREDERICTON, N.B.

DEAR MR. FOURNIER:

NO DOUBT YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT THE ROAD THAT IS PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS. FOR SEVERAL WEEKS NOW I HAVE BEEN PLANNING TO WRITE BUT..... I DO WANT TO PASS ALONG MY PERSONAL THANKS, CONGRATULATIONS AND COMMENDATIONS FOR THE TERRIFIC JOB DONE IN THIS AREA FOLLOWING THE DISASTROUS "SILVER THAW." IT IS HOPED YOU MAY HAVE SOME HOUSE ORGAN THROUGH WHICH EVERY ONE OF YOUR PEOPLE WILL LEARN HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATE THEIR EFFORTS AND ADMIRE THEM FOR THEIR DRIVE AND DETERMINATION UNDER EXTREMELY ADVERSE WORKING CONDITIONS. I'M SURE YOU MUST BE VERY PROUD OF THEM.

YOURS VERY TRULY,

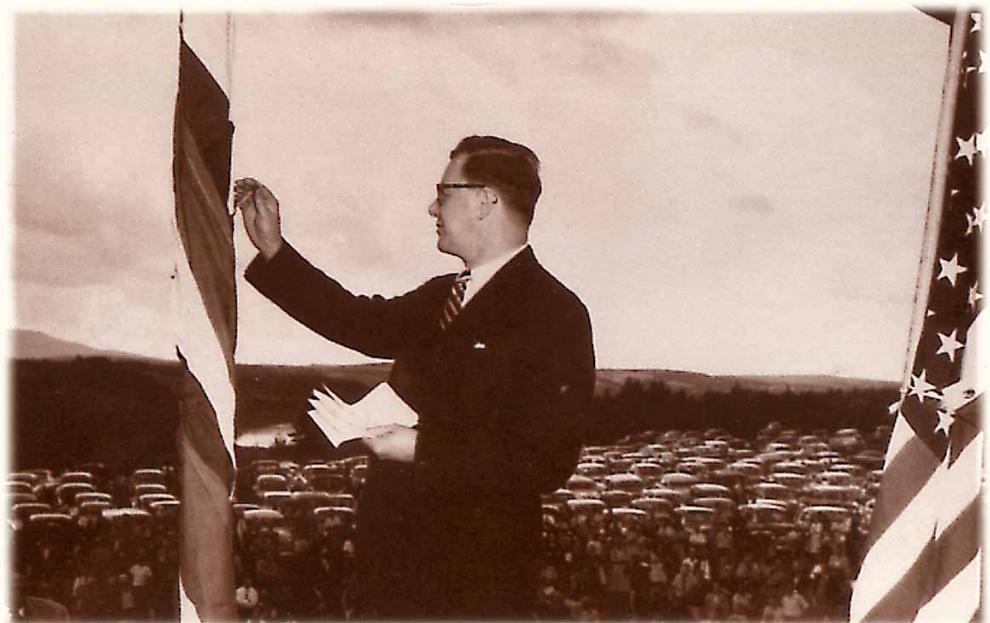
*G.E. Bennett*

(SGD.) G.E. BENNETT, DIRECTOR  
MEMORIAL SCHOOL

*Grand Falls generating station,  
purchased in 1959*



*Premier Hugh John Flemming  
opening Beechwood hydro plant  
June 11, 1955*



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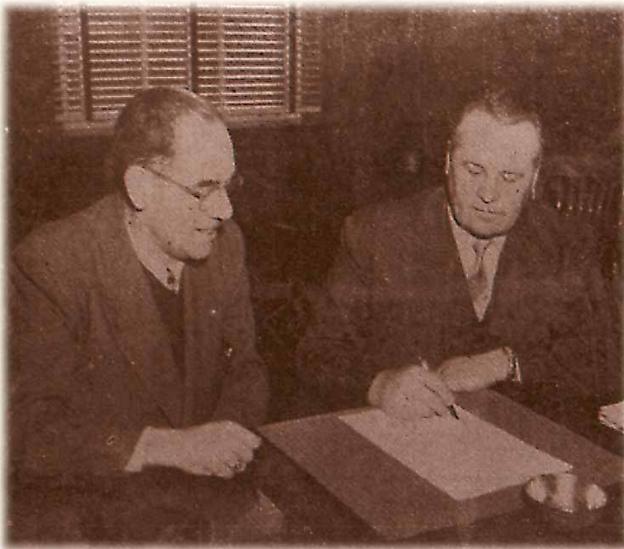
changes in administration to keep pace with the inherent complexities of growth. In 1957, Reginald Tweeddale, the chief engineer, became the Commission's first general manager. He assumed responsibility for

all operating functions and established a strong executive committee made up of department heads to deal with such crucial matters as rate structure, expropriations and industrial development strategy.

In 1953 the Commission, and seven locals of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, representing over 400 employees, signed a collective agreement for the first time.



*Reginald E. Tweeddale, first general manager, 1958*



*Labour leader H.C. Tracy and Hon. Edgar Fournier signing the first collective labour agreement between The New Brunswick Electric Power Commission and the local unions of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL), 1953 (Daily Gleaner, Fredericton, NB)*

*Graduates of the first linemen's class, a three week course, 1953*

