

Editorials

The overwhelming issue

1. The environment

If locating a refinery on the Great Bay is a bad decision in itself, nothing good can come of it if the Seacoast community or New Hampshire allows it to stand.

If the decision is a bad one from an environmental point of view then all of the assurances of the principals in this proposal will only amount to an effort to minimize a bad decision.

The way to handle a bad decision not yet in effect is to avoid it, rather than attempt to minimize its effects.

Therefore, the proper approach to this enormous proposal is not to seek assurances, but to stop the forward progress of the venture and take the necessary time to determine its value.

2. Planning

Regardless of its environmental effects from a conservationist's point of view, the refinery will have an enormous impact on

local and regional planning.

For Durham, it would mean a complete uprooting of that town's master plan, because a refinery of this size would affect every aspect of town life. One can make an endless list beginning with housing, water and sewage facilities, roads, schools, businesses and so on.

To plan on ways of fitting the refinery into the seacoast community at the same time it is under construction is the same as no planning at all.

Therefore, the question of planning, like the ecological questions, demand that the forward progress of the venture be stopped so that necessary time be available.

3. Project immediacy

Obviously, as land was being cornered, the projectors of this refinery found it important to be canny, secretive and hasty.

Now that the project is out in the open, it is imperative that it be halted until the seacoast



"IS THAT YOU, UNCLE MEL?"

community and Durham can study what is projected.

And if the project principals argue that they cannot wait because there are business or financial or some other imperatives, then the enterprise deserves to collapse.

The democratic process

This paper believes that the way in which this proposal was thrust upon the seacoast was outrageous.

Whether or not the proposal itself is outrageous will be defined

as information is gathered and intelligence is brought to bear on the problem.

One solid impression gained from this week's massive public meeting of Save Our Shores (SOS) was that Durham seems as capable as any town in organizing the democratic processes that normally are capable of combating a potential threat.

A second impression was the priceless resource the town has and the region has in the community of individuals that comprise the University of New Hampshire.