

LIFE

LAW and ORDER

▶ Volatile
Campaign Issue

▶ Security Alert for Democratic Convention



Deputy Chiefs
John Hartnett and
Frank Lavelle in charge
of security at Chicago's
convention hall

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AUGUST 23 • 1968 • 35¢



Shocking case of our inland seas dying from

BLIGHTED



man-made filth

GREAT LAKES

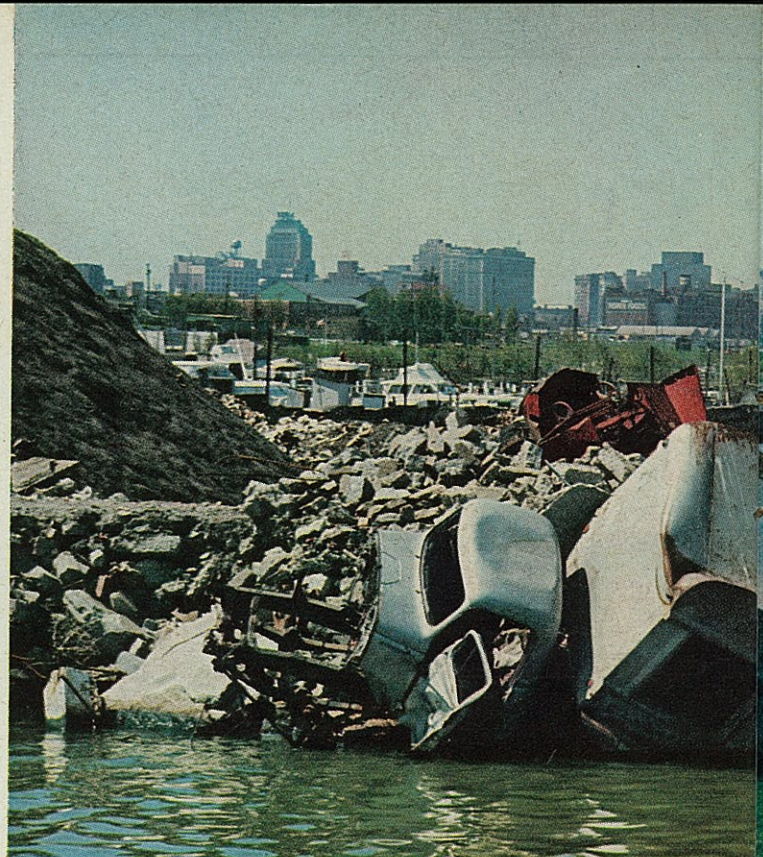
Down Ohio's Cuyahoga River glide iceberglike masses of dirty soapsuds. Shimmering in sewage, they are bound for Lake Erie, which is so polluted that

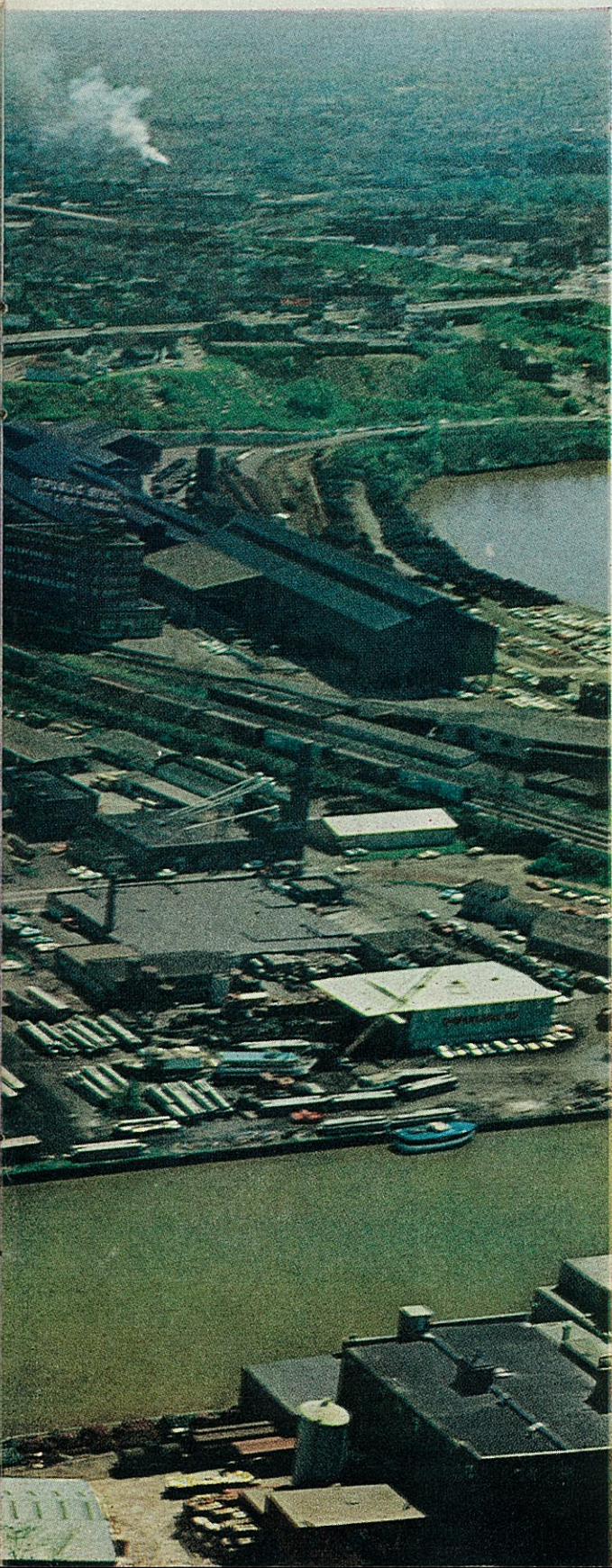
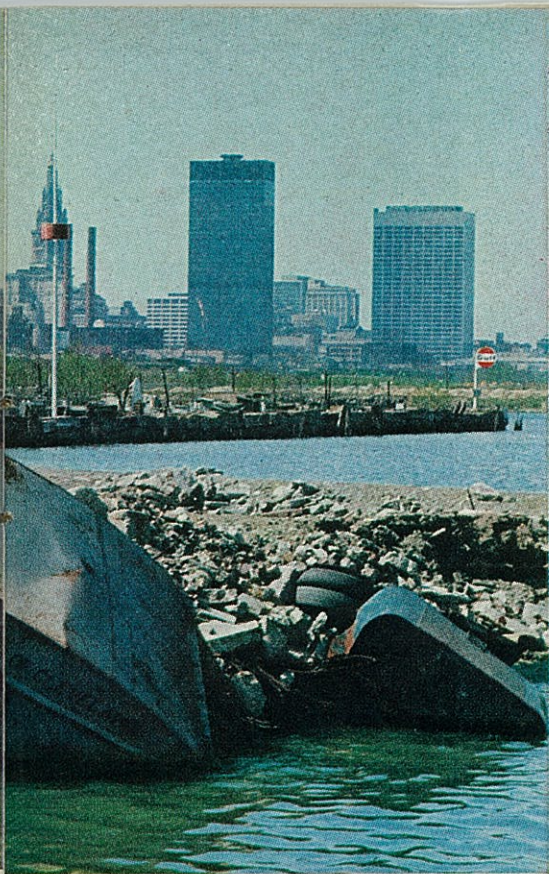
scientists say it is almost dead. This crisis of man-made cretinism threatens the very existence of the inland seas which are five of our natural wonders.

**Photographed by
ALFRED EISENSTAEDT**

Eyesores, scum and hardly any fish left

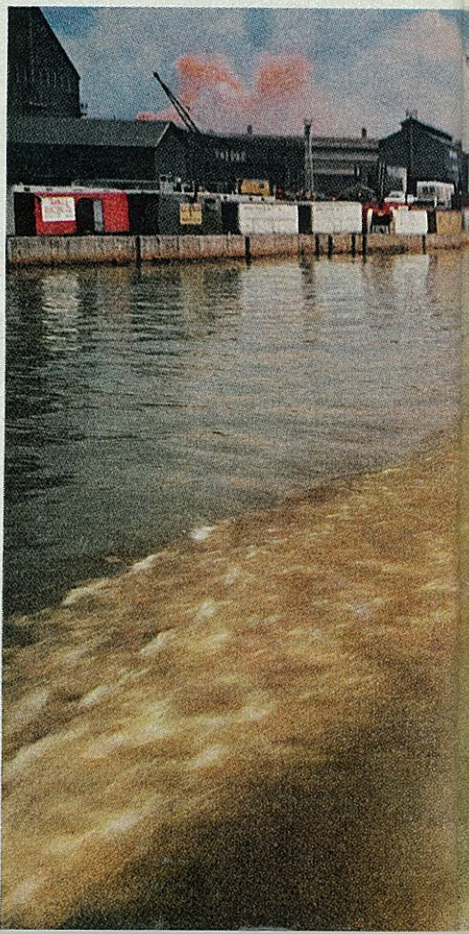
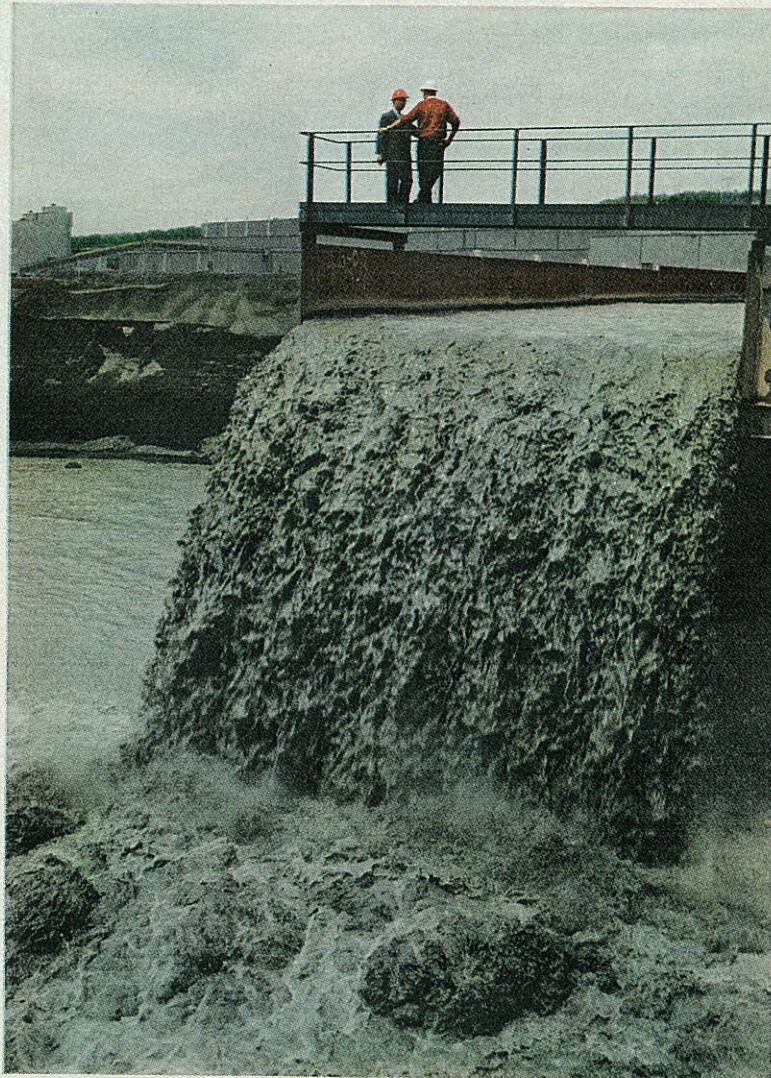
Erie's curse is the Cuyahoga, which snakes through Cleveland (below) carrying a load of detergents, sewage and chemicals to the lake. Eyesores abound at river's edge (right, a junkheap in Jaite, Ohio) and in the Cleveland port itself, where left-over litter is used to build unsightly breakwaters (center). The big port has only one commercial fisherman left, and Fred Wittal, shown at far right cleaning a meager perch catch, is leaving too.



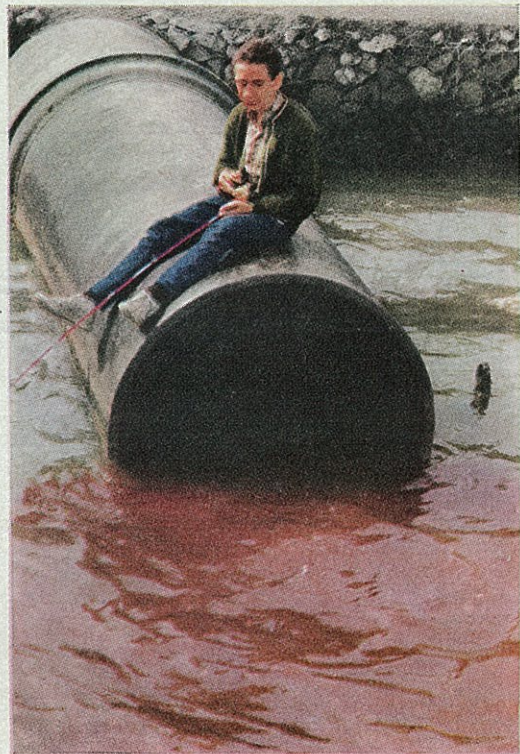
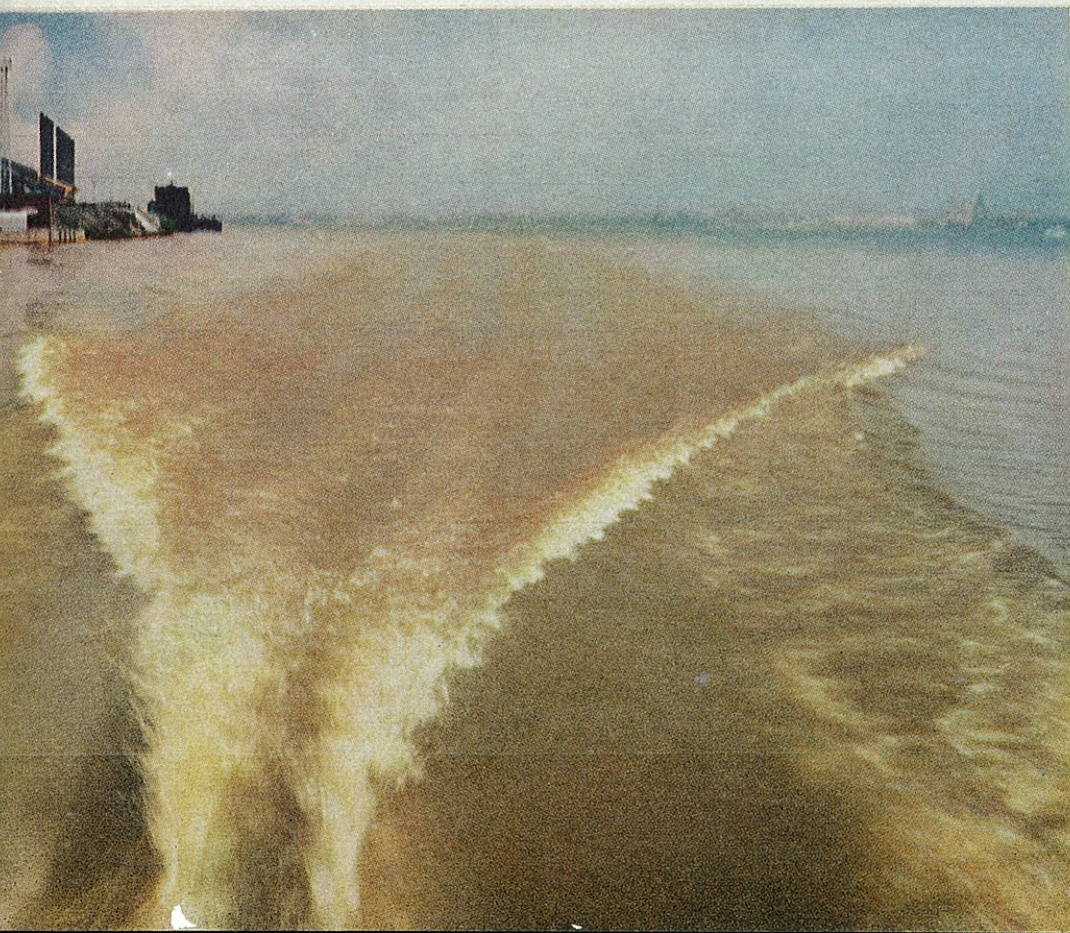


The Great Lakes were beautifully blue when Champlain sailed into them 353 years ago, but men ever since have done their worst to foul them. Now the shorelines abound with evidence of error and negligence: stinking water, windrows of rotting algae, oil slicks and assorted debris. Lake Erie, the smallest and shallowest of the five lakes, is also the filthiest; if every sewage pipe were turned off today, it would take 10 years for nature to purify Erie. Ontario is a repository for Buffalo-area filth. Michigan, where 16 billion small fish, called alewives, mysteriously died last year, is a cul-de-sac without an overflow pipe, and if Michigan becomes further polluted, the damage may take 1,000 years to repair. Huron and Superior are still relatively clean, but they are in danger. Renovation of the Great Lakes, starting now, would cost at least \$15 billion.

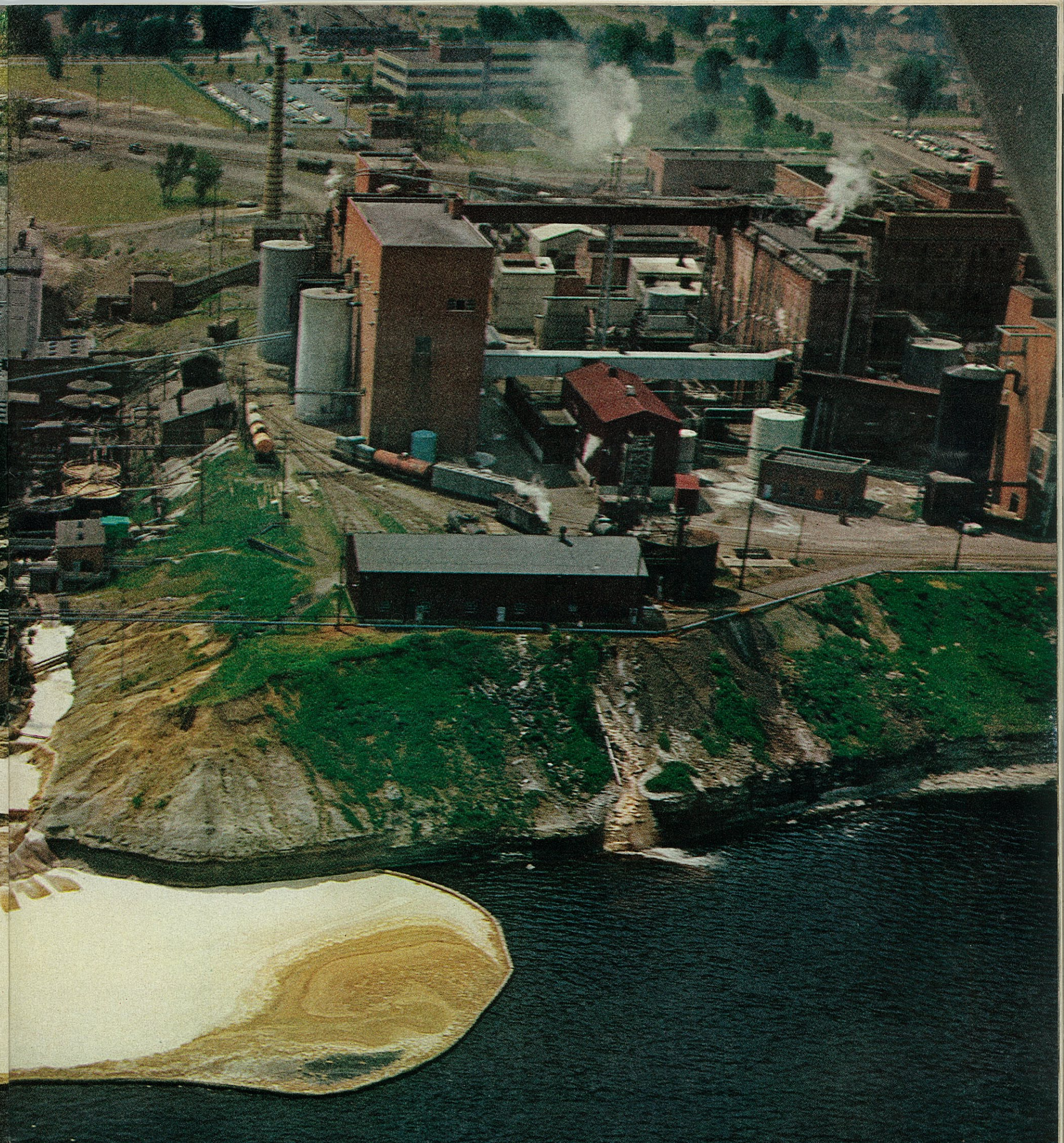
Beside the deep, clear waters that inspired Longfellow to write "By the shore of Gitche Gumee," a waterfall of taconite tailings from the Reserve Mining Co.'s plant at Silver Bay, Minn. spills into Lake Superior at the rate of 20 million tons a year. Conservationists are outraged, but the company says the grime is harmless. Another problem is natural pollutants such as the red clay inflexibly delivered by the Big Iron River (below). The oil mélange at right is waste from the U.S. Steel Corp. It is shown on the Grand Calumet River, a Lake Michigan tributary where even worms can no longer survive. Only a shade cleaner is the Detroit River (below, center), flowing into Lake Erie. On the Canadian shore, a slaughterhouse pipe (far right) is the best place to fish for what fish are left.



Rainbow of filth reaching to Gitche Gumee



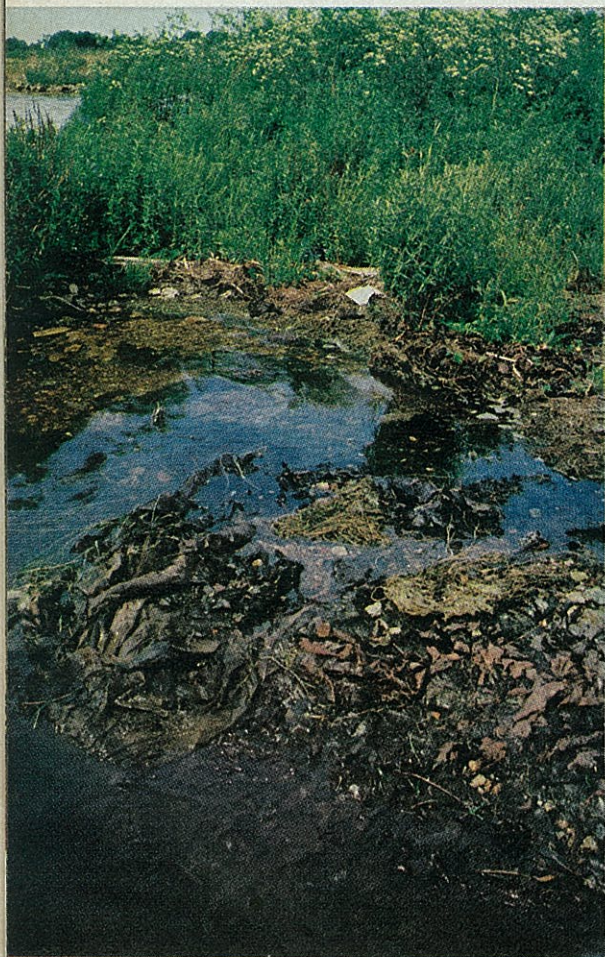
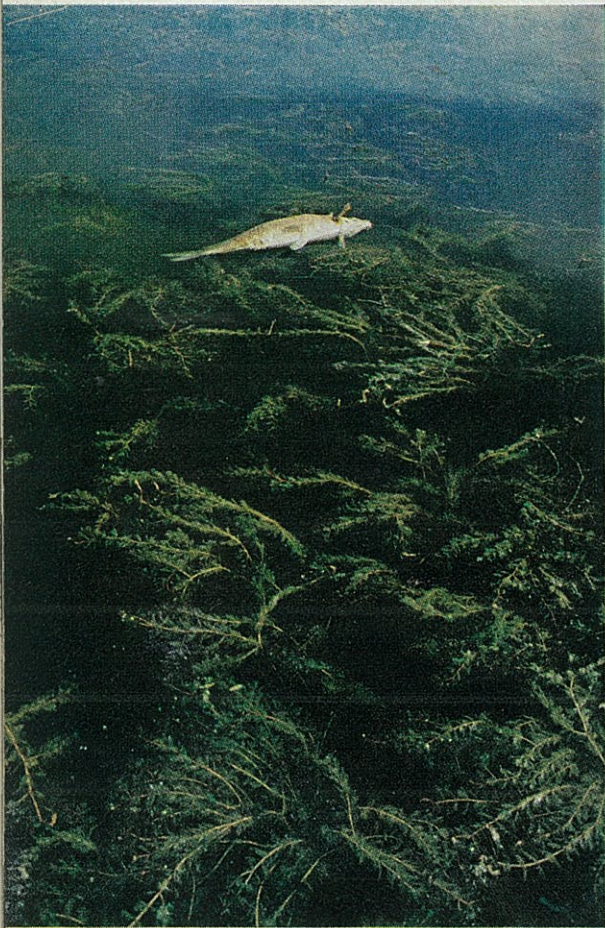




Looking like a giant glob of beer foam, pulp wastes from the Hammermill Paper Co. stain Lake Erie's Pennsylvania shore. The white mess is penned in by a dike built of old tires and

oil drums, but residue seeps through (left) to foul open waters. Hammermill has promised action, either by routing waste to an existing sewage plant or by building a new facility.

**Pollution-fed
weeds that
choke a lake
to death**





Every lake has its own natural life cycle. The normal aging process, called eutrophication, begins with a cold, clean body of water. Then plant and animal life appear, organic matter accumulates and the water becomes shallower and warmer, until the basin is filled and becomes a marsh which will support only the lowest forms of marine life or no life at all. All this takes—or should take—thousands of years, but pollution can kill a lake in 500 years. Pollution feeds the plant life, particularly algae, which not only fills the basin but ruins the remaining water by removing the oxygen. Since the Great Lakes complex is the only practical disposal basin for 1,000 shoreline industries and communities, scientists agree that the remedy lies in removing the noxious elements from the waste before it enters the lakes.



White Lake, a five-mile-long catch basin on Lake Michigan's eastern shore, is covered by sewage-fed weeds. They sprout all over the water, ruining it for boaters and swimmers and driving out fish. The picture at top left is a detail of this scene. The bottom picture shows an island in the lake formed by cattle hides discarded by a tannery. Above, at Green Bay, Wis., paper mill refuse helped turn the municipal beach into a marsh; there has been no swimming here for 25 years. Lake Erie's Sterling State Park (right) has been dangerously polluted by septic-tank wastes for eight years, but—despite warning signs—the state of Michigan still permits swimming.

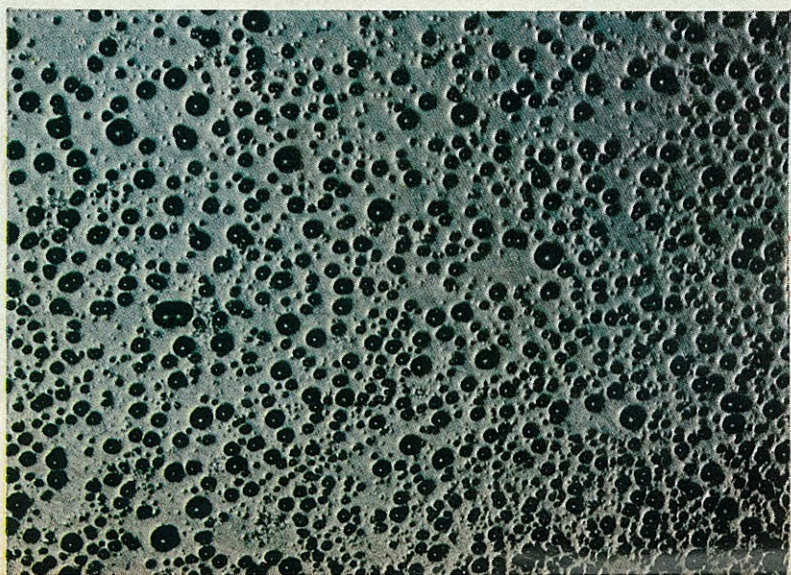




The beach at Whiting, Ind., 20 miles from Chicago, was closed 10 years ago. Whiting has a problem in common with other lake communities: it has only one sew-

er system for human refuse and storm waters. After a heavy rain, everything must be funneled—raw—into Lake Michigan. The lake's big polluters are steel mills and re-

A picnic beach in ruins, a canal's oily caldron



fineries, some of which are clustered along the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal (right, top), an oily caldron running through East Chicago. And decomposing wastes

have so contaminated the nearby Chicago River system with bubbling methane gases that some water, as in the close-up at right, no longer looks like water.

Sewage gushes on, but something is being done

by RICHARD WOODBURY

The pictures on these pages point to the appalling conclusion that water pollution has brought the U.S. to a point of no return: either we curb the slatternly despoiling of our environment, or we accept the death of lakes and rivers and a denigration of the quality in our life. The choice is obvious but expensive to implement; the \$15 billion price tag on a Great Lakes cleanup comes from Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. At the present rate of weed growth, Lake Erie will become a Sargasso Sea within the lives of our children; already a foot-deep mat of algae covers several hundred square miles of Erie. But it is within man's competence to restore Erie, avert biological disaster in Michigan and Ontario and preserve Huron and Superior.

There are lots of villains in this piece—so many that they are hard to isolate. The list of known culprits in the rape of the planet's grandest freshwater mass is a roll call of the lake cities (Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee) and mammoth industries (Ford, Gulf Oil, DuPont, Bethlehem Steel). By and large, these cities and these industries have—belatedly—made themselves constructively concerned. Water pollution, having been merely a physical annoyance for years, has become socially unacceptable—and uneconomic. Chicago is spending \$2.7 million a year—twice what it spent 10 years ago—just on chemical processing to make Michigan's water fit for drinking. Some industries have discovered that untreated lake water is too filthy for use in their mills. It may be that we are past the day of the classic bad joke about the Norwegian freighter captain who, rather than take on filthy ballast water from Lake Erie, ordered his crew to prune the mast to pass under a bridge. Today 25 million people live around the Great Lakes shores, and shoreline companies represent 25% of America's industrial sinew. For selfish as well as civic reasons, more has been done in the past three years to clean the lakes than in the preceding 30.

"An early problem," a federal official says, "was convincing people that after years of neglect, it wasn't too late." The real begin-

nings of a program date from the institution of the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration in 1965. Pure-water standards were set with laws and penalties strong enough to stick, and some money was made available for pilot research. This step was welcome to ardent conservationists like Robert Wesley of Montague, Mich., who had been crusading against a tannery polluting White Lake near his shorefront home. Three days after Senator Robert Kennedy's assassination Wesley received a scrawled threat: "Watch out! Your name is Bob too." The worst desecraters of the Great Lakes are big and essential employers, and Wesley believes the letter came from a tannery employe who feared the plant might be shut down. Conservationists often have had to answer the challenge: "What do you want? Jobs or fish?" With the federal promise—generally enforceable by 1972—that offenders, prestigious or not, will be dealt with, the tide has turned in favor of the Robert Wesleys.

Technology is better prepared for the job than it was in the early 1900s, when engineers reversed the flow of the Chicago River and helped transform the Mississippi into a 2,350-mile sewer that still wrinkles New Orleans noses. A storm last summer overwhelmed Chicago's combined storm-and-sewer system to send a 12-mile-long slug of excretion into Lake Michigan; now the city is experimenting with underground reservoirs for sewage. Cleveland, where foul breezes from Lake Erie sometimes drive strollers from the streets, is planning to construct one huge waste plant, renovate two others and mold a 900-acre refuse basin in Lake Erie.

The worst municipal polluter is Detroit, which daily deposits the nearly raw sewage of three million people into Lake Erie. By 1970 a \$112 million installation will deliver waste to the lakes as so much biologically harmless tonnage. The heaviest industrial polluter is the U.S. Steel Corp., which slips Lake Michigan a massive poison pill each day—the equivalent of 130,000 junk automobiles. Yet U.S. Steel has invested \$100 million in water-purifying equipment and is creating a new system which will scrub the effluent and make waste water at Gary, Ind. pure

enough to drink. At Midland, Mich., the largest chemical complex in the world, Dow Chemical, has waste facilities which take up more acreage than the plant. The company, which budgets \$3 million a year for pollution control, boasts a 99% efficient purification system that utilizes lagoons, rock filters, ferocious waste-devouring microorganisms and, as an ultimate consumer test, fish tasters. Republic Steel will spend \$15 million to make water cleaner than it was when it came out of the Cuyahoga River (which carries the waste of 28 towns and 26 other manufacturers). Ford has promised to remove red iron oxide from the Rouge River. The Hammermill Paper Co. has already spent \$2 million on deep wells for its most odious effluent. Industries that line the Buffalo River—a waterway so laden with oil as to be an official fire hazard—have found a novel technique for flushing the tributary with lake water.

The Department of the Interior hopes to avoid prosecutions and has moved against only one violator, the city of St. Joseph, Mo. Reclamation will be agonizingly slow, but given genuine public enthusiasm for a revitalized Great Lakes—once again teeming with fish, the water safe for drinking, swimming and boating—we may return to a state where a grossly disrupted natural cycle again can preserve the water. Secretary Udall has his own program: remove phosphates from treated wastes; build new sewers; enforce and strengthen the laws we already have; build drains and dams to control agricultural pollutants; find a replacement for the septic tank system; accelerate research; get the \$15 billion and spend it wisely. The best hope of all is the concern of people like 15-year-old Jeff Zimmer of Lancaster, Ohio, who looked at a beach strewn with dead and decomposing fish and wrote Udall a letter which ended with this sorrowful indictment: "I was truly amazed that such a great country should not solve this problem before it's too late."

On the U.S. side of Niagara Falls, nearly raw sewage—71 million gallons a day—gushes into Niagara River. To the fury of Canadians, it then pours into Lake Ontario.



