

Aide-Mémoire of February 20, 1959

On a number of occasions in the past, the Canadian Government has expressed its objections to proposals envisaging increased diversions of water from Lake Michigan at Chicago. Once again, and at the invitation of the Government of the United States through the United States Embassy's Aide-Mémoire of February 9, 1959, the Government of Canada is anxious to make known its views on legislative proposals now before Congress such as Bill H.R.1, which are intended to authorize an increased diversion of water from the Great Lakes Basin into the Illinois Waterway.

While recognizing that the use of Lake Michigan waters is a matter within the jurisdiction of the United States of America, it is the considered opinion of the Canadian Government that any authorization for an additional diversion would be incompatible with the arrangements for the St. Lawrence seaway and power development, and with the Niagara Treaty of 1950, and would be prejudicial to navigation and power development which these mutual arrangements were designed to improve and facilitate.

The point has been made repeatedly by Canada that every withdrawal of water from the Basin means less depth available for shipping in harbours and in channels. Additional withdrawals would have adverse effects on the hydro-electric generation potential on both sides of the border at Niagara Falls and in the international section of the St. Lawrence River, as well as in the Province of Quebec, and would inflict hardship on communities and industries on both sides of the border.

The Government of Canada therefore protests against the implementation of proposals contained in H.R.1.

Ottawa, February 20, 1959.

U.S. Note of June 12, 1959

Excellency:

I have the honor to refer to your Note No. 184 of April 9, expressing the concern of your Government with regard to legislative proposals to increase the diversion of water from Lake Michigan at Chicago, which are now pending before the United States Congress.

The Department transmitted copies of this Note to the Committee on Public Works of the United States Senate on April 16. Additionally, the Department has been giving careful study to its contents with particular regard to the allegations therein that certain enumerated agreements and understandings between the United States and Canada would be broken should unilateral action be taken to increase the diversion from the Great Lakes Watershed at Chicago. It is to be noted in this connection that the Department is not in accord with all of the points made by your Government in the aforesaid Note and consequently must reserve its position with respect to those allegations of a legal nature contained therein.

The Department considers that further consultation between representatives of our two Governments might prove useful. Accordingly, we would be pleased to receive the views of your Government on the desirability of such consultation taking place in the near future.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Ivan B. White
for the Acting Secretary of State.

Department of State,
Washington, D.C.,
June 12, 1959.