

## CONTROL OF POLLUTION IN CANADA-UNITED STATES BOUNDARY WATERS

On November 19, 1951, the Governments of Canada and the United States, authorized the International Joint Commission\* to adopt the measures to facilitate control and prevention of pollution in the boundary waters connecting Lakes Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario which were recommended in the Commission's report of October 11, 1950.

The Commission's report was made in response to a Reference dated April 1, 1946, in which the Governments of the United States and Canada requested an investigation and report to determine whether the boundary waters connecting the Great Lakes were "being polluted on either side of the boundary to the injury of health and property on the other side of the boundary."

In 1946, the Commission appointed a Board of Technical Advisers to conduct the necessary investigations and studies in the waters between Lake Superior and Lake Huron and between Lake Huron and Lake Erie. In 1948, when the scope of the Reference was extended to include the Niagara area between Lakes Erie and Ontario, a similar Board was appointed to carry on the investigations in that area. Both Boards were composed of federal, state and provincial officials concerned with pollution problems.

Working through the regularly established agencies from which they were drawn, the technical advisers analyzed waste disposal practices and problems of some 60 municipalities, 100 industries, and the vessels navigating the boundary waters. More than 100,000 laboratory determinations of the quality of water were made. Data from float tests and other sources were studied to determine trans-boundary effects of pollution.

The technical advisers recommended adoption of "Objectives for Boundary Waters Quality Control" and the Commission held hearings in Sault Ste Marie, Windsor, Detroit, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls (Ontario) to obtain information on existing waste treatment practices, the cost and time required for additional pollution control and the views of all concerned on the "Objectives" proposed by the technical advisers.

With respect to the boundary waters connecting Lakes Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario, recommendations which the Commission has submitted to the Governments of the United States and Canada, after consideration of the reports of the technical advisers and data obtained at the hearings:

(1) Provide for adoption by the two Governments of specific objectives for boundary waters quality control as the criteria to carry out that portion of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 wherein the two countries "agreed that the waters herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other." (36 Stat. 2448)

(2) Provide for implementation, by those responsible for pollution, of the measures necessary to obtain or maintain the specific water quality objectives. This programme which would necessarily require many years for completion, would cost approximately \$125 million.

(3) Provide for continuing supervision of boundary waters quality control by the Commission through international "boards of control" and through the appropriate authorities in each country charged with enforcement of pollution control laws or regulations.

\* For an article on the International Joint Commission, see *External Affairs*, March 1951.