

Joint Commission to Study St. Lawrence Schemes

United States and Canadian Governments Refer Questions of Power Development and Canalization to International Joint Commission in Nine Questions—Instructions to Engineers in Charge—Detailed Text of Reference—Letter from Mr. Rowell to Mr. Magrath

UNDER the provisions of Article 9 of the treaty of January 11th, 1909, the governments of Great Britain and the United States have agreed to submit to the International Joint Commission certain questions relating to the proposed canalization of the St. Lawrence river and the international development of the water power resources of that river.

The questions submitted and the terms of the reference are set forth in a letter addressed to the chairman of the Canadian section of the Commission by Hon. N. W. Rowell, acting secretary of state for external affairs. An identically worded note has been transmitted to the chairman of the United States section of the Commission by Mr. Lansing, the secretary of state of the United States.

The letter from Mr. Rowell to Mr. Magrath is as follows:—

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANADA
Ottawa, January 21, 1920.

C. A. Magrath, Esq.,
Chairman, Canadian Section,
International Joint Commission,
Ottawa.

Sir:—

I have the honor to inform you that the governments of the United States of America and of the Dominion of Canada, under the provisions of Article IX. of the Treaty of the 11th of January, 1909, between the governments of the United States and Great Britain, herewith refer certain questions, as set forth below 'involving the beneficial use of the waters of the St. Lawrence river, between Montreal and Lake Ontario, in the interests of both countries, and, in general, the rights, obligations, or interests of either in relation to the other, or to the inhabitants of the other along their common frontier.'

It is desired that the said questions be made the basis of an investigation to be carried out by the International Joint Commission, to the end that the said Commission may submit a report to the two countries covering the subject matter of this reference, together with such conclusions and recommendations as may be considered pertinent in the premises.

Question 1.—What further improvement in the St. Lawrence river, between Montreal and Lake Ontario, is necessary to make the same navigable for deep draught vessels of either the lake or ocean-going type; what draught of water is recommended; and what is the estimated cost?

In answering this question the Commission is requested to consider:—

(a) Navigation interests alone, whether by the construction of locks and dams in the river; by side canals with the necessary locks; or by a combination of the two.

(b) The combination of navigation and power interests to obtain the greatest beneficial use of the waters of the river.

Question 2.—Which of the schemes submitted by the government or other engineers in preferred, and why?

Question 3.—Under what general method of procedure and in what general order shall the various physical and administrative features of the improvement be carried out?

Question 4.—Upon what basis shall the capital cost of the completed improvement be apportioned to each country?

Question 5.—Upon what basis shall the costs of operation and maintenance be apportioned to each country?

Question 6.—What method of control is recommended for the operation of the improved waterway to secure its most beneficial use?

Question 7.—Will regulating Lake Ontario increase the low water flow in the St. Lawrence Ship Channel below Montreal? And if so, to what extent and at what additional cost?

Question 8.—To what extent will the improvement develop the resources, commerce and industry of each country?

Question 9.—What traffic, both incoming and outgoing, in kind and quantity, is likely to be carried upon the proposed route both at its inception and in the future? Consideration to be given not only to present conditions, but to probable changes therein resulting from the development of industrial activities due to availability of large quantities of hydraulic power?

Pending the receipt of plans, estimates and other engineering data necessary for the final consideration of this reference, the Commission is requested to hold such public hearings as may be considered necessary or advisable in order to obtain all information bearing, directly or indirectly, on the physical, commercial and economic feasibility of the project as a whole.

To facilitate the preparation of the desired report each government will, from its official engineering personnel, appoint an engineer with full authority to confer with a similar officer of the other government for the purpose: First, of acquiring, each in his own country, such data as may be found necessary to supplement the existing engineering data and surveys; and second, of preparing complete outline plans for the estimates of the cost of the proposed improvement, including the value of all property, easements, damages and rights connected therewith. These plans and estimates are to be submitted to the Commission as soon as practicable but not later than one year from the date of appointment and the Commission is requested to forward to the two governments its final report with recommendation not later than three months thereafter. A copy of the instructions furnished these engineers is attached hereto.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

N. W. ROWELL,

Acting Secretary of State
for External Affairs.

Instructions to Engineers in Charge

St. Lawrence River, Montreal to Lake Ontario Navigation Project.

You are hereby designated to take charge of the survey of the St. Lawrence river, Montreal to Lake Ontario, for the purpose of preparing plans and estimates for its further improvement to make the same navigable for deep-draught vessels of either the lake or ocean-going type, and to obtain the greatest beneficial use from these waters.

The surveys, plans and estimates are to be submitted to the International Joint Commission within twelve months and are to assist the Commission in answering the questions of a reference to the matter under the provisions of Article IX. of the treaty of the 11th January, 1909, between the United States and Great Britain. (A copy of the letter of reference is enclosed for your information.)

It is desired to expedite the completion of the duty confided to you, by utilizing all available surveys and other reliable information, whether derived from public or from private sources. That a proper basis of procedure may be agreed upon in the first instance, and the field work and the preparation of plans and estimates promptly and efficiently carried on thereafter, you are requested to confer fully