

The Department of External Affairs announced today that the Honourable Jeanne Sauvé, Canada's Minister of the Environment, opened a meeting of United States and Canadian officials in Ottawa on October 2 to review the progress in implementing the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement signed by the two countries on April 15, 1972. This was the fourth such meeting for the two countries and focused on the conclusions and recommendations of the second annual report of the International Joint Commission (IJC) on water quality in the Great Lakes.

Madame Sauvé reminded those present that they had a duty not only to the population around the Lakes but to many others in different countries who were watching with interest the progress of the world's first major international pollution abatement agreement. In recalling the high hopes associated with the signature of the Agreement by the United States President and the Canadian Prime Minister, she expressed her satisfaction at the long term outlook for water quality in the Great Lakes but warned that the world thrust in the field of environmental protection would be greatly affected by the future rate of progress of the programs under the Agreement.

"Cleaning up the Great Lakes is becoming the greatest environmental achievement in the history of this continent," said Fitzhugh Green, Associate Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and United States delegation chairman. "On the United States side alone, it will require the efforts of thousands of dedicated environmentalists at the three levels of government - federal, state and local - and billions of dollars. Russell Train, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, asked me to express his personal satisfaction at this stocktaking that both countries are on schedule and living up to the Agreement signed by the heads of our two Governments."

The Commission's report stated that 98% of the sewered population on the Canadian side of the Lakes would have adequate treatment by the Agreement's target date of December 31, 1975. Canadian and Ontario officials emphasized their intention to maintain this pace of construction and reported that steps were underway to expand the Canada-Ontario Agreement which was signed in August 1971 in anticipation of the Canada-United States Agreement. This expansion entails the provision of substantial additional funds by the Canadian Government's Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and by Ontario to meet rising costs of constructing municipal sewage treatment plants.