

Text of Note From Canadian Embassy to State Department, October 23, 1973

The Canadian Embassy presents its compliments to the Department of State and has the honour to refer its Notes No. 313 of October 19, 1971 and No. 35 of January 25, 1973, concerning the effect on water quality in the Souris River of the proposed Garrison Diversion Project in the State of North Dakota.

The Embassy reaffirms that the Government of Canada continues to be gravely concerned that return flows from the irrigation of land in the Souris Loop and areas adjacent to tributaries of the Red River will significantly and seriously degrade water quality in these two Rivers. The Government of Canada has concluded that based on studies conducted in both countries the proposal would run counter to the obligations assumed by the United States under Article IV of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 that:

"...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."

Studies have been undertaken in Canada that indicate that communities, such as Souris and Portage la Prairie, would be required either to seek alternative sources of water supply or undertake additional treatment of present water supplies drawn from the Souris and Assiniboine Rivers. The attachments to this Note contain more detailed explanations of the injury to property resulting from transboundary pollution likely to be incurred by these two Canadian municipalities. The Department of State will understand that the property damage values listed are indicative and minimum values and do not represent other injury to health or property that might be incurred. Such other injury by way of example would include: the unsuitability of the Souris return flows for irrigation purposes, and for various industrial uses including food processing; and adverse effects that may accrue to other downstream interests on both rivers from the Boundary to Lake Winnipeg. In short, options available to Canada for the use of the flows of these Rivers will be severely limited by the Garrison Diversion.

The Government of Canada is also mindful that on July 13, 1972 the Canadian Minister of Environment and the Chairman of the United States President's Council on Environmental Quality jointly reaffirmed their support for Principle 21 of the Declaration on Human Environment that:

"States have, in accordance with the charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond national jurisdiction."

The Department of State will recall that the group of Canadian and U.S. officials which was to consider alternatives to the present plans