

could be too easily opened in times of drought, thereby incurring the risk of biota transfer from the Missouri to the Hudson Bay Drainage Basins.

The Joint Technical Committee, comprising representatives of Canada, the Province of Manitoba, the United States, and the State of North Dakota, has already had one meeting and a second is scheduled for February 15. It is envisaged that the Technical Committee will present its findings to a further meeting of the senior-level consultative group in April. In addition to addressing and, hopefully, resolving, Canadian technical concerns related to Phase I, the Technical Committee will also function as an "early warning system" to alert the Canadian Government regarding any Phase II features which appear to be proceeding in advance of consultations. You will be aware that Canada is opposed to Phase II which, as presently constituted, could allow transfer of biota from the Missouri to the Hudson Bay drainage systems.

I appreciate your concerns respecting the McClusky Canal Fish Screen and the risk of seepage through Lonetree Dam. These are shared by the Canadian Government and were prominent among the technical questions raised in Canada's note of October 3, 1983. The USA has agreed to leave open a decision on whether or not the Fish Screen would be built, until the April consultations in Washington. At that time, Canada and the USA will consider the question based on the Technical Committee's report on the biota situation in the Missouri and the Hudson Bay drainage systems. Canada values the Fish Screen as a first line of defence against inter-basin biota transfer, and communicated this view to the USA at the November 21st consultations as well as at the bilateral discussions between Minister MacEachen and Secretary Shultz last October in Halifax. Canada's concerns over potential seepage through Lonetree Dam are also under examination at this time by the Joint Technical Committee; their findings are expected this spring.

I trust this information will answer the concerns you raised yesterday in the House of Commons.

Yours sincerely.

(signed) Jean-Luc Pepin