

damage because of water withdrawal. They foresaw changes in evaporation and even rain patterns as the long-term consequence of diversions. They spoke of damage to fauna and flora because of changed levels of humidity. They predicted trouble because the flow of several rivers, once reversed, would stir sediments on the riverbeds containing toxic chemicals rendering water unusable for some time until the substance would settle again.

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Cartier claims Canada 1534

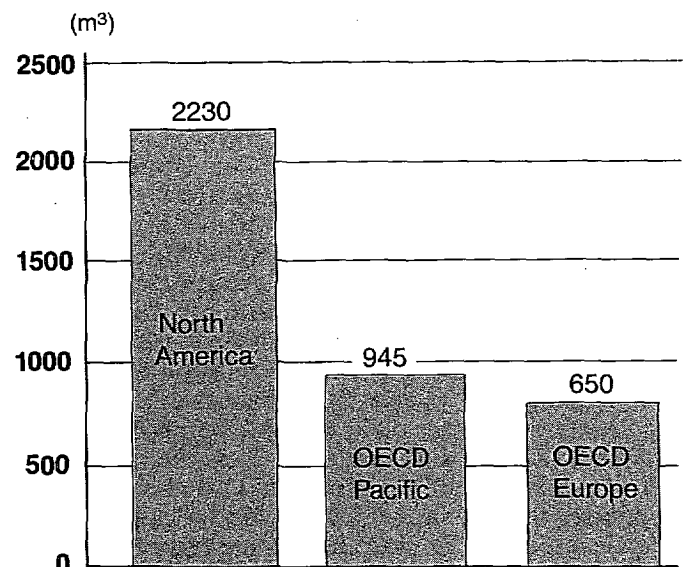
The politicians? They were divided; most were in favor right from the start, they thought it was a great idea to sell and divert water. If we sell timber, why can we not sell water? We have lots of it, how can we deny it to those who are thirsty? Besides, we should maintain good will, show the Americans our generous spirit. There were those — a few — who spoke of protecting the long-term needs of Canadians, of the implications flowing from the predicted climatic changes, of the ecological consequences of diversions and native rights, of the economic and political implications. They cautioned and said that we should not export or divert until we had a better idea, at least, of Canadian needs for future generations; they used figures like the per capita consumptions of industrial nations (see Table), arguing that we and the US were the most wasteful consumers on earth; they also argued that there would be enough water north and south of the border without having

to turn to diversions if we were only to manage better existing watersheds, our agricultural uses, our toxic waste dumps.

But what they said fell on deaf ears, did not seem practical at the time. Add those provinces which put on pressure because they wanted to get into the act by way of exporting; British Columbia, Quebec by tanker, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec by way of diversions. So the feds were divided, some provinces were in favor, and the public — no wonder — was confused.

What did you say? Political control? Yes, political control of the tap once the "Grand" system came into place. There was some discussion about that, but the question as to who would have ultimate control of the tap — Canada? the US? both? — was left hanging for a later decision. They tiptoed around it, found it perhaps awkward, a bit embarrassing, even unpleasant . . . You don't want to appear to be mean to your neighbor, once he becomes dependent on your water, do you? □

Water withdrawal per capita 1980



	m³		m³
Australia	1,281	Netherlands	997
Austria	298	New Zealand	383
Belgium	917	Norway	489
Canada	1,509	Portugal	1,062
Denmark	239	Spain	1,016
Finland	775	Sweden	479
France	633	Switzerland	108
Germany	686	Turkey	669
Greece	720	United Kingdom	226
Italy	985	United States	2,306
Japan	923	Yugoslavia	392

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