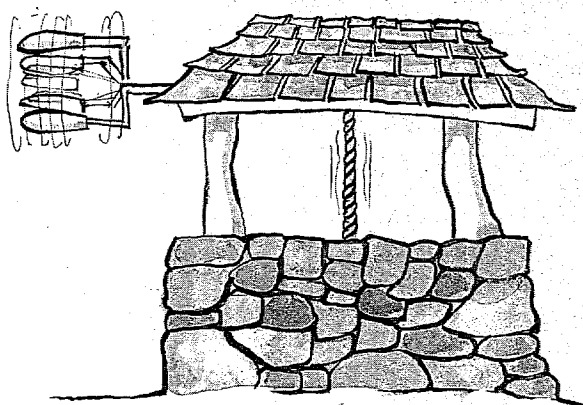


In such cases, the reports of the Commission to the governments are not regarded as decisions either on the facts or on the law. In addition, disagreements between the two countries may be referred to the Commission for decision, provided that both countries consent.



The IJC can handle government-to-government problems; it cannot, however, be expected to eliminate those water problems that could result in the future from public misunderstanding by Americans or Canadians of each other's water problems and water-supply. After the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the line-ups for gasoline in the U.S., Canadians witnessed this type of misunderstanding in the energy field. Many Americans, unaware of Canada's diminishing supply of hydrocarbons, expected the "oil-rich blue-eyed Arabs of the North" to turn on the taps and supply the United States with energy. It took some time for Canada to get the message across that it did not have enough oil and gas to supply its own needs.

Canadians cannot say quite the same thing about water resources. Canada can claim 7 per cent of the world's land-mass, approximately 7.6 per cent of which is covered with fresh water. Canada, which has less than 1 per cent of the world's population, has rivers that discharge nearly 9 per cent of the world's renewable water-supply.

Not so abundant

Water resources in the U.S. are less abundant. The annual average precipitation of about 30 inches for conterminous states of the U.S. provides a usable stream flow with only about one-third reaching the sea. The remaining 20 inches evaporates or is used to nourish forests and crops, to cool industrial plants and to provide water for individual use. Alaska, as one might expect, is the most fortunate state; it accounts for about ten inches of the U.S. residual water available for consumption. The Eastern half of the

United States has a natural water-surplus; the Western half generally has a water-deficit. Most fresh water is taken from stream-flows, with the average annual runoff being about ten inches in the more humid one-third of the country but less than one inch in the more arid part. Areas in the upper Midwest and the Southwest already have severe water problems. Groundwater sources in the United States are plentiful, with withdrawals amounting to 260,000 million litres a day, or 8 per cent of the estimated discharge. However, not all the water is economically recoverable or usable without costly treatment.

Water-supply problems were recognized some time ago. In 1968, President Johnson informed the Congress that, after the first assessment of the nation's water-resources, he foresaw complex water problems. He noted that "rapid population growth and economic expansion foretell even more complex problems for the future". The 1968 Water Resources Council study concluded that, unless counter-measures were taken to reduce impending water problems, water-shortages would effect the pattern of economic activity in the United States. Specifically, water problems could mean a slow-down in the rate of increase in total economic activity in various regions; and major industries that withdraw or consume large quantities of water or add substantially to water-pollution could require greatly-increased supplies of water during the next 50 years.

The Water Resources Council, using a predicted growth-rate of 1.6 per cent a year from 1970, projected a U.S. population in 2020 of 468 million. In view of that population growth, it estimated that only three of the 18 federally-designated water regions on the United States mainland (New England, the Ohio Basin and the south Atlantic Gulf) would be able to live comfortably with their existing water-supplies by the year 2000 (and then only if they preserved water-purity).

Water-management

After promises made during the 1976 election campaign, President Carter has taken some steps towards managing this precious resource. His focus on water-projects and related concerns also served to highlight national water-resource needs. In a January 1978 five-day, seven-state Western United States tour, Vice-President Mondale discussed such items as acreage limits and rules governing federally-irrigated farms - thus indicating an Executive Branch awareness of the need for water-resource policies.

U.S. state governments are concerned primarily with private-property water and