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CANADA-U.S. AGREEMENT ON GREAT LAKES POLLUTION

Mr. Jack Davis, Canada's first Minister of Environment, reported as follows to the House of Commons recently on the outcome of a Canada-United States ministerial meeting on pollution of the Great Lakes, which was held in Washington on June 10 and attended also by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and Messrs Kerr and Goldbloom, the ministers responsible for resources management and environmental quality in the Ontario and Quebec governments respectively:

...At our meeting yesterday we agreed that Canada and the United States should conclude a formal agreement which would have the objective of cleaning up the Great Lakes and protecting them in the future. We also reached general agreement on the contents of this agreement, on the basis of recommendations by a joint working group which was established by a first ministerial meeting on Great Lakes problems held in Ottawa last June. We agreed that negotiations should begin right away on the precise text of this agreement, in the expectation that it can be ready for signature in the early autumn.

The decisions we reached yesterday reflect the

determination of the governments concerned, at the federal, province and state levels, to take action to deal with the critical pollution situation in many areas of the Great Lakes, especially in Lake Erie and its connecting waterways. The proposed agreement will be solidly based on extensive scientific investigations by the International Joint Commission, and on recommendations submitted by the Commission in a report which was tabled in the House in January.

AIMS RECOMMENDED BY IJC

This agreement will establish common water-quality objectives which will be based on objectives proposed by the International Joint Commission. On the basis of these common objectives, the governments concerned will establish compatible and legally enforceable standards; and they will also commit themselves to carry out the pollution-control programs and other measures to achieve the common objectives within agreed time periods. These programs will include accelerated municipal and industrial pollution-control programs; the reduction of phosphorus inputs, which is causing particularly serious problems in Lake Erie; the elimination of mercury and other toxic heavy metals from discharges; control of thermal pollution and pollution from radioactive wastes; control of pollution from pesticides and the development of controls for pollution from combined sewer overflows.

This agreement will also provide for effective and compatible regulations throughout the whole Great Lakes system designed to reduce the risk of pollution from shipping and land transportation, including regulations to control waste discharges by ships. The International Joint Commission will be requested to conduct an intensive investigation into pollution from agriculture, forestry and other land-source pollution and to create new arrangements for the better co-ordination of water-quality research.

The International Joint Commission will be given additional responsibility and authority in the surveillance of the water quality in the Great Lakes

CONTENTS

Canada-U.S. Agreement on Great Lakes Pollution	1
Take-over of NORAD Radar Sites	2
Eskimo on Panarctic Board	2
Salmon-Fishing Pact with Denmark	3
Youth-Exchange Program	3
Nelson River Line Completed	4
Ecology Probe for New Airport	4
Art Centre of Quebec City	5
School Notes	6
Monthly Index	7