

Garrison Diversion Unit halted

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Don Jamieson, tabled in the House of Commons on March 1 the text of a note received from the United States Department of State concerning the Garrison Diversion irrigation project in North Dakota.

The U.S. note was in reply to a Canadian note of October 12, 1976, requesting that construction, and decisions on construction, of the Lonetree Reservoir be deferred until the International Joint Commission had an opportunity to report the findings of its studies on Garrison and the two governments had a chance to consult on the IJC recommendations.

The U.S. note stated (in part):

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“The Department of State has been informed by the Department of the Interior that the construction of the Lonetree Reservoir would not be completed under the present construction schedule until August 1979. Filling of the reservoir with waters from the Missouri River system is not scheduled to begin until after the construction has been completed, i.e., until May 1981 at the earliest. Thus a considerable period of time would elapse between the scheduled publication in June 1977 of the International Joint Commission report on the transboundary impacts of the Garrison Diversion Unit and the 1981 date for the commencement of filling of the Lonetree Reservoir with Missouri River Basin waters.

“Nonetheless, in order to meet the concerns expressed in the Embassy’s note regarding the potential transfer of foreign biota from the Missouri River into waters flowing into Canada, the United States Government wishes to advise the Government of Canada that a contract for the construction of the Lonetree Dam will not be let until after the report to governments of the International Joint Commission has been received and subsequent consultations between the two governments have taken place.

“The Embassy will recall that the joint reference from governments to the International Joint Commission specifically calls upon the Commission to examine the issue of the potential

transmission of foreign biota from the area of the Garrison Diversion Unit into Canada.

“The United States Government reiterates its commitment of February 5, 1974, to undertake no construction of works in the Garrison Diversion Unit potentially affecting waters flowing into Canada until it is clear that

its obligations under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 will be met.

“These undertakings are in keeping with the spirit of mutual understanding and forbearance which has characterized and will continue to characterize the efforts of the two governments in addressing transfrontier pollution matters.”

The Garrison Diversion Unit is an irrigation project that would divert the waters of the Missouri River to irrigate a quarter of a million acres in North Dakota. On the basis of studies conducted in both countries, the Canadian Government has concluded that, if the project were completed according to existing plans, it would have adverse effects on Canadian portions of the Souris, Assiniboine and Red Rivers and on Lake Winnipeg. This could constitute a contravention of Article IV of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909,

under which both countries have an obligation not to pollute boundary waters, or waters flowing across the boundary, to the injury of health and property on the other side. In October 1975, a reference was presented to the International Joint Commission, asking it to make recommendations that would assist both governments in ensuring that the Article IV provisions of the treaty were honoured. The IJC was unable to complete its investigation by the October 1976 deadline, and the release of its report was postponed until early in 1977.

Stamp stresses plight of eastern cougar

Postmaster General Jean-Jacques Blais has announced that the Post Office will issue a new 12-cent stamp to highlight the plight of one of Canada’s endangered animals, the eastern cougar. The approximately 100 members of this sub-species live under constant threat of extinction by hunting and the destruction of their habitat. The illustration for the stamp was prepared by the noted wildlife artist and conservationist Robert Bateman, who has depicted the cougar in one of its known haunts – the remote forested



areas of New Brunswick and Quebec’s Gaspé Peninsula.

“Through this stamp I hope we can draw attention to the precarious hold these magnificent creatures have on life,” said Mr. Blais in his announcement. “Canadians, as individuals and as responsible corporate citizens, must work to ensure the sur-

vival of the eastern cougar and all other endangered animals.”

A total of 22 million stamps, printed by Ashton-Potter Limited of Toronto, were issued on March 30.

Annual report on Canada’s water

The 1976 annual report on Canada’s freshwater resources has just been released by the Department of Fisheries and the Environment. The new edition not only updates information on water-use, water research and other topics covered in the volume it replaces, but also covers a variety of subjects not dealt with previously. Several of the new articles seek to demonstrate the necessity for flexible, multi-purpose planning if a given quantity of water is to satisfy a wide range of uses.

Canada’s participation in the recent United Nations Water Conference, held from March 14 to 25, at Mar del Plata, Argentina, is featured in the new 1976 *Water Year Book*.

In 1974, some 1,070 gallons of fresh water per person per day were used in Canada for public supply, industrial purposes and agriculture. The *Year Book* provides a breakdown of these water statistics and reports in considerable detail on six recently-completed water-resource studies.