

The Department of External Affairs today announced that an application has been submitted by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, to the International Joint Commission, for regulation of the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain.

Submitted by the Canadian Government with the support of the Province of Quebec, the application is in accord with an agreement between Environment Canada and the Quebec Ministry of Natural Resources. It seeks to provide flood protection to residents of the Richelieu Valley as soon as possible, with due regard to the surrounding environment.

The Richelieu River flows into Quebec from Lake Champlain, which is located in the States of New York and Vermont. For many years flooding has occurred periodically on both sides of the international boundary, and since 1970 it has been particularly severe in Canada.

Early in 1973, concern over this situation led the Governments of Canada and the United States to ask the International Joint Commission (IJC) to investigate the desirability of regulating the lake and river in order to lessen extremely high or low water conditions.

Following the release of an IJC report on this question in March 1975, Environment Canada and the Quebec Ministry of Natural Resources proposed a new flood control scheme which has now been submitted to the IJC for approval.

This proposal involves dredging of the Richelieu River near St. Jean, and installation of a fixed-crest concrete weir. The dredging would make it possible to reduce peak water levels during floods and the weir would maintain levels in the Upper Richelieu River and Lake Champlain during low water periods.