

APPENDIX "B"

GREAT LAKES—REPORT ON LOW WATER LEVELS

Several hon. members have recently expressed concern respecting the low water levels currently prevailing throughout the great lakes basin and I can now make a statement concerning this matter. On page 1,647 of *Hansard* I provided the hon. member for Leeds with the water levels at Kingston, Ontario, and Prescott, Ontario, and the outflows of lake Ontario since 1938. I am tabling today two reports of the international joint commission dated December, 1958, and April 5, 1961. The first report summarizes all available information on the comparison of lake Ontario water levels including the effects of precipitation, evaporation, winds and barometric pressure changes, ice retardation and crustal movement, diversions into and out of the great lakes basin and operation of the outlet control of lake Ontario and lake Superior. The second report deals with methods of regulation and includes the text of orders of approval for the construction and operation of the St. Lawrence power project.

As hon. members will realize the principal cause of current low water levels is the abnormal low precipitation which was about

3" below normal during 1962, and 5" below normal in 1963 over the great lakes basin. In addition above normal temperatures have caused higher than usual evaporation. Due to the enormous storage capacity of the great lakes levels change very slowly and while the normal seasonal rise will produce some improvement for the present, below normal levels will obtain generally during the balance of this year. Hon. members will recall that some 12 years ago the situation was quite the opposite with much damage resulting along the shoreline during the high water levels. These cycles have persisted over the period of water level records on the lakes and there is no evidence to show a long term rise or fall in the average water level.

In view of the concern which has been expressed in this house and the complexity of the problem and profusion of available reports and data, I have asked the water resources branch of my department to prepare a report summarizing the studies on the fluctuation of the levels of all the great lakes as well as the effect of regulatory measures both in operation and proposed.
