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Reference to the International Joint Commission
on Water Levels in the Great Lakes

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, announced today that the Governments of Canada and the United States of America have placed jointly before the International Joint Commission a Reference on the level of waters in the Great Lakes. The text of this Reference is as follows:

"In order to determine whether measures within the Great Lakes Basin can be taken in the public interest to regulate further the levels of the Great Lakes or any of them and their connecting waters so as to reduce the extremes of stage which have been experienced, and for the beneficial effects in these waters described hereunder the Governments of Canada and the United States have agreed to refer the matter to the International Joint Commission for investigation and report pursuant to Article IX of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

It is desired that the Commission study the various factors which affect the fluctuations of these water levels and determine whether in its judgement action would be practicable and in the public interest from the points of view of both Governments for the purposes of bringing about a more beneficial range of stage for, and improvement in:

- a) domestic water supply and sanitation,
- b) navigation,
- c) water for power and industry,
- d) flood control,
- e) agriculture,
- f) fish and wildlife,
- g) recreation, and
- h) other beneficial public purposes.

In the event that the Commission should find that changes in existing works or that other measures would be practicable and in the public interest in light of the foregoing purposes, it should indicate how the various interests on either side of the boundary would be benefited or adversely affected thereby. The Commission should estimate the cost of such changes in existing works or of such other measures and the cost of any remedial works that might be found to be necessary and make an appraisal of the value to the two countries, jointly and separately, of such measures. For the purpose of assisting the Commission in its investigations and otherwise in the performance of its duties under this Reference the two Governments will upon request make available to the Commission the services of engineers and other specially qualified personnel of their governmental agencies and such information and technical data as may have been acquired or as may be acquired by them during the course of the investigation.

The two Governments have agreed that when the Commission's report is received they will consider whether any examination of further measures which might alleviate the problem should be carried out, including extending the scope of the present Reference.

The Commission is requested to submit its report to the two Governments as soon as may be practicable."

The above text has been forwarded for Canada by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, to the Secretary of the International Joint Commission.