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MARCH 9, 1976

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CANADA-U.S. MEETING ON
POPLAR RIVER POWER PROJECT,
REGINA, MARCH 5, 1976

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

Officials of the Governments of Canada, the United States, Saskatchewan and Montana met in Regina on March 5, 1976, to discuss in detail various aspects relating to the transboundary implications of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation's thermal power generating station on the East Poplar River near Coronach.

The meeting followed an exchange of notes and a series of meetings between the two federal governments and officials of Saskatchewan and Montana. Canadian officials reiterated assurances that Canada's obligations under the Boundary Waters Treaty would be met.

The two sides reviewed discussions which had taken place on the air quality aspects of the project and concurred in understandings which had been reached at previous meetings. It was agreed by Canada and the U.S., based on data to date, that a 300-megawatt plant would not create transboundary air pollution problems from emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, suspended particulate matter and fluorides.

The two delegations held a full and frank exchange of views with respect to the arrangements which Saskatchewan proposes to make for the apportionment of the waters of the East Poplar River during the filling period of the reservoir. Saskatchewan indicated that it would maintain a constant release of one cfs and would release an additional volume of 300 acre-feet each year on demand for the 1976 runoff and subsequent runoff periods, and until the East Poplar reservoir attained the required operating level. It is expected that the Governments of Canada and the United States, after examining recommendations made by the International Joint Commission, will seek to establish arrangements for long-term apportionment of the waters of the Poplar River Basin. Both sides noted that the IJC would hold public hearings in the area prior to making its recommendations to governments. Additionally, the U.S. delegation indicated that a federal EIS would be required in the U.S. prior to any bilateral apportionment agreement.

Canadian officials provided a description of the water quality monitoring program and of the studies currently being carried out in accordance with the terms of the Saskatchewan government licence and the federal licence issued under the International River Improvements Act to ensure that Canada's obligations under the Boundary Waters Treaty are met.

In this context, Canada and the U.S., on the recommendation of the International Joint Commission, have established an international monitoring network in the Poplar River Basin to provide basic data on the existing water quality in the Basin and any changes in water quality brought about by development.

In view of the transboundary implications of the project, both sides agreed to the need for continuing mutual exchange of water quality data from both sides of the border and the need for a formal bilateral mechanism to address water quality issues related to the Poplar River.