



# PRESS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 105A

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1955.

An exchange of correspondence has taken place between the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, and the chairman of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission, General A. G. L. McNaughton, in relation to the control of the levels of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence power and seaway projects. In his letters General McNaughton has recommended, on behalf of the Commission, that the Government of Canada approve a specific range of elevations for the lake, certain criteria according to which the outflows from the lake should be regulated, and a specific plan of regulation in accordance with the range of elevations and criteria recommended.

The Government of Canada has accepted the Commission's recommendations with respect to the range of elevations and the criteria. It also has approved the plan of regulation as a basis for channel excavations required for seaway and power purposes in the St. Lawrence River.

In his second letter to General McNaughton, Mr. Pearson has informed the Commission of an arrangement which has been made to permit the use of a portion of the seaway canal to bypass as much as 40,000 cubic feet of water per second between Lake St. Louis and Laprairie Basin near Montreal, during the non-navigation season.

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INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

17 March, 1955

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the intention expressed in the letters which it addressed on 23 February, 1955, to the Secretary of State of the United States and to the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada respectively, the International Joint Commission met in Montreal on 14, 15 and 16 March, 1955. The meeting was held to enable the Commission to reach tentative conclusions as to the range of stage of Lake Ontario which, on technical considerations, would be most appropriate in accordance with the purposes of the Lake Ontario Reference dated 25 June, 1952, submitted to the Commission by both Governments under the provisions of Article IX of the Boundary Waters Treaty of January 11, 1909.

At the meeting in Montreal, the Commission received technical information and advice from the International Lake Ontario Board of Engineers. It also had the benefit of the advice and views of the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control, the St. Lawrence River Joint Board of Engineers and Counsel for the Governments of the United States and Canada.

Written representations were received from lakeshore property owners and municipalities and from the St. Lawrence power and seaway agencies of both countries.

As a result of its deliberation, the Commission is satisfied that measures can be taken, having due regard to the interests of all concerned, to regulate the level of Lake Ontario for the benefit of property owners on the shores of the lake in both countries, so as to reduce the extremes of stage which have been experienced in the past.

It is the Commission's tentative conclusion that the works for the development of power in the International Rapids Section of the St. Lawrence River, which were approved by the Commission in its Order of Approval dated 29 October, 1952, should be operated in accordance with the criteria set forth below. These criteria are consistent with the basic, governing requirements of paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of that Order of Approval. The elevations indicated in the criteria are referred to the Oswego gage and are based on the principal gages on Lake Ontario, adjusted to the Oswego gage, United States Lake Survey 1935 datum. As soon as a method of regulation, based on these criteria, has been worked out in detail and approved, the Commission proposes to substitute it for Method of Regulation No. 5 mentioned in paragraph (i) and in paragraph (a) of Appendix A of that Order of Approval.

Proposed criteria for a method of regulation of outflow and levels of Lake Ontario applicable to the works in the International Rapids Section of the St. Lawrence River:

- (a) The regulated outflow from Lake Ontario from 1 April to 15 December shall be such as not to reduce the minimum level of Montreal Harbour below that which would have occurred in the past with the supplies to Lake Ontario since 1860 adjusted to a condition

Honourable L. B. Pearson,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs,  
Ottawa.

assuming a continuous diversion out of the Great Lakes Basin of 3100 c.f.s. at Chicago and a continuous diversion into the Great Lakes Basin of 5000 c.f.s. from the Albany River Basin (hereinafter called the "supplies of the past as adjusted").

(b) The regulated winter outflows from Lake Ontario from 15 December to 31 March shall be as large as feasible and shall be maintained so that the difficulties of winter power operation are minimized.

(c) The regulated outflow from Lake Ontario during the annual spring break-up in Montreal Harbour and in the river downstream shall not be greater than would have occurred assuming supplies of the past as adjusted.

(d) The regulated outflow from Lake Ontario during the annual flood discharge from the Ottawa River shall not be greater than would have occurred assuming supplies of the past as adjusted.

(e) Consistent with other requirements, the minimum regulated monthly outflow from Lake Ontario shall be such as to secure the maximum dependable flow for power.

(f) Consistent with other requirements, the maximum regulated outflow from Lake Ontario shall be maintained as low as possible to reduce channel excavations to a minimum.

(g) Consistent with other requirements, the levels of Lake Ontario shall be regulated for the benefit of property owners on the shores of Lake Ontario in the United States and Canada so as to reduce the extremes of stage which have been experienced.

(h) The regulated monthly mean level of Lake Ontario shall not exceed elevation 248.0 with the supplies of the past as adjusted.

(i) Under regulation, the frequency of occurrences of monthly mean elevations of approximately 247.0 and higher on Lake Ontario shall be less than would have occurred in the past with the supplies of the past as adjusted and with present channel conditions in the Galops Rapids Section of the St. Lawrence River.

(j) The regulated level of Lake Ontario on 1 April shall not be lower than elevation 244.0. The regulated monthly mean level of the lake from 1 April to 30 November shall be maintained at or above elevation 244.0.

(k) In the event of supplies in excess of the supplies of the past as adjusted, the works in the International Rapids Section shall be operated to provide all possible relief to the riparian owners upstream and downstream. In the event of supplies less than the supplies of the past as adjusted, the works in the International Rapids Section shall be operated to provide all possible relief to navigation and power interests.

The Commission will hold public hearings at Rochester, N.Y. and Toronto, Ont. on 12 and 14 April, 1955, respectively, at which all interested parties, including the property owners on the shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, both upstream and downstream from the works in the International Rapids Section, will be given full opportunity to present their views upon the range of stage and the other criteria tentatively proposed.

After consideration of the views of all concerned, and as soon as possible after these public hearings, the Commission will present an interim report recommending, for the approval of the two Governments, a range of lake levels and criteria for acceptable duration of high stages of Lake Ontario.

If the two Governments approve the recommendations which will be contained in the interim report, the Commission will put the recommendations into effect by issuing an appropriate supplement to its Order of Approval, dated 29 October, 1952. The Commission hopes to be able to issue this supplement on or about 1 May, 1955.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) A.G.L. McNaughton  
Chairman, Canadian Section,  
International Joint Commission.

INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

9 May, 1955

Dear Sir,

In my letter of March 17, 1955, I transmitted to you on behalf of the Commission criteria for a plan of regulation of Lake Ontario in connection with the St. Lawrence Power Project, having regard to all interests affected. In that letter, I also informed you that after public hearings and a consideration of the views of all concerned, the Commission would present an interim report recommending, for the approval of the two Governments, a range of lake levels and criteria for acceptable duration of high stages of Lake Ontario.

Public hearings were held at Rochester, New York and at Toronto, Ontario on April 12 and 14. The Commission considered this matter fully at an executive session in Buffalo, New York on May 5, 1955.

As a result of these deliberations the Commission has reached agreement on a range of elevations, 244 (navigation season) to 248.0 feet as nearly as may be. Further, a plan of regulation (No. 12-A-9) has been developed within this range and three copies of it are enclosed. This plan, subject to minor adjustments that may result from further detailed study, and evaluation, seems to offer the best possibility of achieving the optimum objective set forth in the Reference.

The Commission accordingly recommends to the Governments the adoption of the criteria, range of elevations and plan of regulation mentioned above. If the Governments concur in this recommendation the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power entities should be advised that they may proceed with the determination of the critical profiles and the final design of channel excavations based on this range and plan of regulation 12-A-9, with the assurance that any adjustments required will be of a minor nature.

Taking into account the downstream interests and on the basis of the past 95 years' experience, the recommended method of regulation will lower all stages in Lake Ontario above elevation 246 and thus provide substantial benefits to the lakeshore owners.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) A. G. L. McNaughton  
Chairman, Canadian Section,  
International Joint Commission.

Ottawa, December 3, 1955

Dear General McNaughton:

I have for reply your letter of May 9, 1955, on the subject of Lake Ontario levels. I note that the International Joint Commission has reached agreement on a range of elevations for Lake Ontario, namely, 244 feet (navigation season ) to 248 feet, as nearly as may be. I am pleased to inform you that this range of mean monthly elevations is approved by the Government of Canada.

In your letter of May 9, you also stated that the Commission recommended approval of the criteria for the operation of the regulatory works being built in the International Rapids section of the St. Lawrence River, set out in your letter of March 17, 1955. I am pleased to inform you that the Government of Canada approves these criteria as recommended in your letter of May 9.

Copies of plan of regulation No. 12-A-9, which had been developed within this range of elevations and according to these criteria, were enclosed with your letter of May 9. It is apparent that the plan of regulation will be modified in minor details from time to time, both during the construction stage and afterwards, particularly as the works in the other sections of the St. Lawrence River are completed and come into operation. Accordingly, it is important to preserve the flexibility for adjustments and progressive improvements which, subject to specified requirements and procedure, is prescribed in paragraph (i) of the Commission's Order of Approval of October 29, 1952. It is important that the St. Lawrence River Joint Board of Engineers and the power and seaway entities be provided with a plan of regulation in substitution for plan of regulation No. 5 referred to in the Order of Approval, as the basis on which they may proceed with the termination of the critical profiles and the design for channel excavations, if the whole St. Lawrence project is not to be delayed seriously. Therefore, the Government of Canada approves plan of regulation No. 12-A-9 for the purpose of calculating critical profiles and the design of channel excavations.

The Government urges the Commission to continue its studies with a view to perfecting the plan of regulation so as best to meet the requirements of all interests both upstream and downstream, within the range of elevations and criteria herein approved.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) L. B. Pearson.

Gen. The Hon. A.G.L. McNaughton, C.H., C.B.,  
Chairman, Canadian Section,  
International Joint Commission,  
O t t a w a

Ottawa, December 3, 1955

Dear General McNaughton:

I refer to my letter of today's date in which I informed you of the approval by the Government of Canada of the range of elevations, the criteria and, for the purpose of calculating critical profiles and the design of channel excavations in the International Rapids section of the St. Lawrence River, plan of regulation 12-A-9.

The Government of Canada is naturally much concerned about the effects which the regulation of Lake Ontario levels might have downstream in the exclusively Canadian section of the river. This concern relates more particularly to:

- (i) flows during the ice-forming period each year; and
- (ii) the flooding hazard in February and March each year in the Montreal area.

Studies which have recently been made in Canada indicate that, with the "supplies of the past as adjusted", referred to in the criteria, and within the range of elevations, criteria and design of channel excavations referred to in my letter of today's date, it is possible to adjust the plan of regulation in such a manner:

- (1) that the total outflow from Lake St. Louis is maintained at or below 230,000 cubic feet per second during the ice-forming period each year in the Lake St. Louis-Laprairie Basin area of the St. Lawrence River; and
- (ii) that the danger of flooding in the Montreal area will not be aggravated.

The Government of Canada wishes to inform the Commission that arrangements have now been made for the redesign of a portion of the new 27-foot canal in the vicinity of Montreal which will allow a flow of 40,000 cubic feet per second to be by-passed from Lake St. Louis to Laprairie Basin through the canal during the non-navigation season. This will not only provide more favourable ice-forming conditions in the narrows between Lake St. Louis and Laprairie Basin by reducing the flows in this critical section of the river as the occasion may require from 230,000 to 240,000 cubic feet per second, but should also be of benefit to upstream interests on the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) L. B. Pearson

Gen. The Hon. A.G.L. McNaughton, C.H., C.B.,  
Chairman, Canadian Section,  
International Joint Commission.  
Ottawa