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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 21, 1975

CANADA-U.S. MEETING APRIL 15 IN REGINA  
ON EAST POPLAR RIVER POWER PROJECT

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

Officials of the Governments of Canada, the United States, Saskatchewan and Montana, met in Regina on April 15, 1975, to exchange information and views with regard to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation's proposal to construct a thermal generating station near Coronach, Saskatchewan. The meeting was further to a recent exchange of Notes between the Canadian and United States Governments, wherein the U.S.A. expressed concern about the possible effects of the project on the United States, and Canada gave assurances that its obligations under the Boundary Water Treaty would be honoured and agreed to a U.S.A. request that a meeting take place to examine the transboundary implications of the project. During the meeting, Canadian officials reiterated the assurances contained in the Canadian Note of February 13, 1975, and outlined in some detail the origin, scope and anticipated impact of the project. The Canadian side indicated, on the basis of its analysis of the project, that it will be consistent with Canada's obligations under the Boundary Waters Treaty. The Canadian side further described the licencing procedure to be followed in Canada under the International River Improvements Act. It described conditions that have been included in the Saskatchewan government licence and characterized conditions that would be included in a federal licence to ensure that Canada's obligations under the Treaty are met.

The U.S. side expressed its concern about the project's potential transboundary effects and the fact that the project was continuing prior to completion of all environmental studies. The U.S. side indicated that its concern is based on the project's potential for air pollution, water pollution, the consumptive use of the waters of the Poplar River, and the need to protect the River's ecology. The U.S. side expressed its appreciation for the exchange of information and noted with satisfaction the licencing requirements that will be required by the Government of Canada to preserve water quality. The U.S. side also noted with satisfaction the willingness of the Province of Saskatchewan to consider further measures, if necessary, to ensure that adverse transboundary air pollution will not occur.

It was noted that the IJC under references previously issued by the two Governments is studying the potential air pollution and water apportionment aspects related to the project. It is expected that the Commission will be providing its recommendations to Governments shortly. Both sides indicated that they would take full account of these recommendations.

The Saskatchewan authorities agreed that the acquisition of air pollution abatement equipment for the project would not take place within the next six months. In this context, it was also agreed that, within the next three months, following completion of studies which currently are being conducted by the IJC and by Canadian and Saskatchewan government agencies, a further meeting would be held at the technical level to review the transboundary implications of the project's possible effects on air quality.

Both sides welcomed the recent IJC decision instructing its International Souris-Red Rivers Engineering Board to carry out an apportionment study of the waters in the Poplar River Basin, recognizing that this would allow governments on both sides to plan appropriately for the further development of this shared resource.

The Saskatchewan authorities described the need to have the dam closed by spring 1976 in time for the spring runoff. In this regard, the Canadian side took note of the U.S. concern that, on the basis of this timetable, the reservoir would likely be in place prior to the completion of the IJC water apportionment study of the Poplar River Basin. It was agreed that additional steps be taken to address the relevant aspects of the water apportionment problem prior to the completion of the IJC study.

The transboundary implications of the project for water quality in the Poplar River Basin were discussed. Both sides recognized that further studies in this area were required and agreed to a mutual exchange of water quality data from both sides of the border.

The meeting was opened by the Honourable Neil Byers, Saskatchewan Minister of the Environment. The Canadian delegation included representatives from the Department of External Affairs, Environment Canada, the Saskatchewan Department of the Environment, the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and other officials in the Saskatchewan Government. The United States delegation included Montana Lieutenant-Governor, William Christiansen, representatives of the State Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences.