

INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

INTERIM REPORT

TO THE

GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

ON THE

WATER RESOURCES OF THE SAINT JOHN RIVER BASIN,

QUEBEC, MAINE AND NEW BRUNSWICK

27 JANUARY, 1954

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This interim report to the Governments of the United States and Canada on the water resources of the Saint John River Basin, Quebec-Maine-New Brunswick, is submitted by the International Joint Commission pursuant to a Reference from the two Governments dated 28 September 1950 as amended on 7 July 1952. The text of the amended Reference is as follows:

"1. In order to determine whether waters of the Saint John River system could be more beneficially conserved and regulated, the Governments of the United States and Canada have agreed to refer the matter to the International Joint Commission for investigation and report pursuant to Article IX of the Treaty concerning Boundary Waters between the United States and Canada, signed January 11, 1909.

"2. It is desired that the Commission shall determine and recommend, in its judgment, what projects for the conservation and regulation of the waters in the Saint John River system above tidewater near Fredericton, New Brunswick, would be practical in the public interest.

"3. In making its recommendations, the Commission should indicate how the interests on either side of the boundary would be benefited or adversely affected thereby, and should estimate the costs of such works or projects, including remedial works that may be found to be necessary as well as indemnification for damage to public and private property, and should indicate how these costs should be apportioned between the two Governments.

"4. In the conduct of its investigation and otherwise in the performance of its duties under this reference, the Commission may utilize the services of engineers and other specially qualified personnel of the technical agencies of Canada and the United States and will so far as possible make use of information and technical data heretofore acquired or which may become available during the course of the investigation, thus avoiding duplication of effort and unnecessary expense."

To initiate the engineering studies necessary under the Reference, the Commission appointed the International Saint John River Engineering Board composed of representatives of the Geological Survey, Department of the Interior, and Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army, for the United States, and representatives of the Department of Resources and Development (now Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources) and Department of Public Works for Canada. This Board, in turn, designated an Engineering Work Group, which through several subcommittees composed of representatives of the Federal Governments, the State of Maine, the Provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick and power companies and industries on both sides of the boundary, carried out the necessary detailed surveys and studies. Under date of 6 April, 1953, the Board filed with the Commission a comprehensive interim report entitled "Water Resources of the Saint John River Basin - Quebec-Maine-New Brunswick."

During the investigation, the Commission has maintained touch with the Board activities through progress reports presented to it at its regular semi-annual meetings, and in 1952 it made a reconnaissance of the Saint John River basin and inspected the sites available for development of water resources projects and

the areas that would be affected by such development. In April 1953, the Commission issued a press release stating that its studies showed that the Beechwood power project on the lower Saint John River in New Brunswick, under consideration for development by the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission, is consistent with the comprehensive plans for the development of the basin.

Careful review of the study conducted by the Engineering Board and assessment of its findings in the light of the Commission's other approaches to the problem permit several conclusions to be drawn with respect to the broader aspects of the investigation and warrant, at this time, the presentation of the interim recommendations contained herein. The engineering report presented herewith as a summary of pertinent factual data points to alternative components and possibilities in a large scale development program. Some of these steps are entirely national in character, some are definitely international, some are physically national and economically international, and all could form integral parts of a power system offering benefits to the local areas of both countries.

While the Board has analysed the physical and economic merits of specific projects for the purpose of assessing some of the major possibilities; determining principles which may be involved in actual developments and offering a solution to the near future power shortage of the area, it appears untimely for the Commission to offer precise recommendations on a development program involving

specific international projects pending receipt of clear cut proposals from Governmental or private interests which are prepared to undertake the financing and construction of those integral parts having international aspects. When such definite proposals are presented, their merits may be further assessed with respect to the then available data and through public hearings when desired by interested or affected parties.

It is desired to emphasize that submission of this interim report of the Commission and transmission of the interim report of the Board are not intended to constitute a proposal for accomplishment of any of the development possibilities outlined in the Board's report.

CONCLUSIONS

In order that this interim report may be of maximum usefulness to the various governmental and private interests that may be considering development of water resources in the Saint John River basin, the Commission has formulated a number of conclusions pertinent to the international aspects of the problem. The Commission concludes:

(1) There will be a substantial demand for electric power in the market area of the Saint John River basin during the next few years, in excess of the capacity of existing power installations to supply.

(2) There are a number of storage and hydro power sites which could be developed to meet the demand more economically than alternative thermal power.

(3) Among the more favourable possibilities for meeting prospective increased power demands are:

(a) Interconnection of existing and future transmission systems on both sides of the boundary;

(b) Construction of the Beechwood power project on the main stem of the Saint John River in New Brunswick, and,

(c) Provision of from 500,000 to 600,000 acre feet of reservoir storage at sites upstream from Grand Falls, New Brunswick.

(4) If the foregoing developments were accomplished the prospective increase in normal demand for power through 1961 could be met but possible extraordinary demands due to additional mineral developments may require still more power.

(5) A number of the storage and power development possibilities in the basin have international aspects which may require consideration by this commission if and when definite proposals are made for construction and operation.

(6) In the matter of headwater storage reservoirs beneficial to downstream hydro-electric plants in the Saint John River basin the Governments of the United States and Canada should, when both are concerned, consider each case de novo and separately on its merits, recognizing that a settlement basis adjudged satisfactory in one case might be inequitable

in other cases even in the same basin, and more particularly in cases arising in other river basins along the common frontier; hence, there should be an understanding between the two Governments to the effect that decisions with respect to cases of this type in the Saint John River basin should not necessarily be regarded as precedents in the consideration and disposition of other headwater-benefits situations in that basin or in other river basins lying partly in Canada and partly in the United States along the international boundary. This statement relates only to headwater storage reservoirs located entirely within one Country or the other and to situations covered under Article III of the Treaty but not to situations which would arise under Article IV of the Treaty, this latter aspect not having been considered by the Commission in formulating this conclusion.

(7) It does not appear that there is need or prospect of significant development of the water resources of the Saint John River for purposes other than power at this time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends that:

(1) This interim report be approved by the Governments of Canada and the United States as a basis for continuing study by the Commission and parties in both countries directly interested in water resource development;

(2) The interim reports of the Commission and its Board be made public;

(3) Proposals for specific projects having international aspects be brought to the attention of the Commission for analysis and comment within the framework of the Reference of 28 September 1950, as amended or for action under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 when required; and that,

(4) Studies under the Reference be continued by the Commission as may be warranted by the need for water resource development in the Saint John River basin and that further reports or a final report be submitted by the Commission when studies commensurate with the need for development have been completed.

Dated at Boston, Massachusetts

27 January, 1954

Signed: A.O. Stanley
 A.G.L. McNaughton
 Roger B. McWhorter
 Geo. Spence
 Eugene W. Weber
 J. Lucien Dansereau