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International Joint Commission
U.S. Section
1250 23rd Street NW, Suite 100
Washington D.C. 20440

International Joint Commission

ACTION:

INFORMATION: LB, JC, FB, MC, CMNS, C1amen

FILE: 9-2-1:3

Subject: Gene Etchart provides comments
to the St. Mary and Milk River
order.

Dear Commissioners:

This letter is being written in response and as a follow up on your recent hearings held in Montana and Canada relative to water allocation problems presently existing on the Milk and St Marys rivers.

I am a retired 87-year-old rancher and farmer who grew up on an irrigated farm located in the Milk River valley 12 miles west of Glasgow, Mt. Except for a short time during WW2 I have continuously operated irrigated farms, as an owner, in this valley for production of small grain crops and livestock forage.

Since my boyhood I have noticed a steady deterioration in the water supply and water quality in the Milk river for the purposes of human use and fish and wildlife needs. From my observations what used to be a dependable water supply, in my youth, has now become a feast or famine situation. The feast reference is mostly tongue in cheek as this stems from early season floods coming at a time too early in the spring for controlled irrigation of crops and sometimes conversely can be destructive. In most years irrigators are not be able to be supplied fully water needed for their crops.

It is my understanding that the 1909 Treaty dealing with the waters of the two rivers is that they would be treated as one system and that the allocations between the two countries be equal. Also the 1921 IJC order recognized a need to follow the intent of the Treaty and they attempted to alleviate what appeared to be shortcomings in the actual use and apportionment of the waters.

The steady deterioration of the Milk Rivers down stream water supply and quality seems me to be a strong indicator that the 1921 IJC Order has also missed its mark in bringing about an equitable division of the waters as mandated by the 1909 Treaty. Accordingly I would ask the review of the 1921 IJC Order be undertaken as a matter of equity for all concerned.

Sincerely,

Gene Etchart



Gene Etchart
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