

INTERNATIONAL JOINT
COMMISSION

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OTTAWA 4, October 15, 1968.

The Honourable Mitchell Sharp,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Ottawa 4, Ontario.

Dear Mr Sharp,

The Columbia River Reference which the Governments of the United States and Canada presented to this Commission under date of March 9, 1944, required extensive investigations and studies in order to ascertain the facts upon which conclusions and recommendations could be based. These investigations were undertaken at once and were pursued with vigour by the Commission and by the International Columbia River Engineering Board which it established in May of 1944. As its studies progressed, the Board submitted a number of reports, dealing with various aspects of the total problem. These included, for example, a "Preliminary Report on the Water Resources of the Columbia River Basin", a "Preliminary Report on Arrow Lakes Storage" and an "Interim Report on the Kootenay River". Copies of these reports were provided to the two Governments from time to time during the period 1945 to 1958, along with the Commission's comments where appropriate. During this same period, the Commission also provided advice to the Governments, at their request, on various development proposals that had been advanced in either country.

At the request of the two Governments early in 1959, the Commission gave urgent attention to the formulation of principles to be applied in determining and apportioning benefits from the cooperative use of storage of water and electrical inter-connection within the Columbia River System. The Commission reported its recommendations regarding principles to the Governments in December of 1959.

Meanwhile, in the middle of 1959, the International Columbia River Engineering Board's Report on the Water Resources of the Columbia River Basin was submitted to the Commission.

This was a very comprehensive document, supported by six detailed Appendices. The Board's report was promptly made available to both Governments and their officials.

With the Engineering Board's Report and the Commission's recommendations regarding principles in their possession, the two Governments, in January 1960, commenced the negotiations which culminated in the signing of the Columbia River Treaty one year later.

Since 1961 the Commission has not been actively concerned or involved in matters relating to development of the water resources of the Columbia River Basin, although international boards of control keep the Commission informed regarding the dams and other works previously approved by the Commission under Article IV of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

After reviewing the current position of this matter at its meeting in Ottawa on October 8, the Commission concluded that there was no purpose to be served in maintaining the Commission's file on this investigation as an active docket. Accordingly, the Commission decided to inform the Governments of Canada and the United States that it is now closing its file on the Columbia River Reference of March 9, 1944 as a completed reference.

This action, of course, does not affect the authority and responsibilities of the International Joint Commission to investigate and render reports or decisions on matters which the Governments may refer to it in accordance with the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 and Article XVI of the Columbia River Treaty of 1961.

A similar letter is being sent to the Secretary of State of the United States by the Secretary of the United States Section of the Commission.

Yours sincerely,



D.G. Chance,
Secretary.