

2/4
Canadian Embassy



Ambassade du Canada

No. 70 Feb 15/80

The Embassy of Canada presents its compliments to the Department of State and has the honour to refer to the concern of the Government of Canada about possible consequences to the health or property of Canadians, arising from the present condition of the Niagara Falls, New York, sewage treatment plant. The Embassy wishes to enquire when remedial action can be expected.

In its Diplomatic Note of December 14, 1979, transmitted to the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, the Department of External Affairs referred to the view of the Government of Canada that "the present concern about environmental and public health effects of the proposed direct discharges by SCA is symptomatic of a much larger problem of continuing degraded water quality in the Niagara River". It will also be recalled that, since the first report of the Great Lakes Water Quality Board in April 1973, and in increasing detail in recent years, the International Joint Commission has been told of problems along the length of the Niagara River, associated with municipal sanitary sewage and industrial effluent outfalls in the Niagara Falls, New York and Buffalo areas.

.../2

3/4

With this general situation in mind, the Government of Canada has a particular concern about problems with the carbon filtration system at the Niagara Falls sewage treatment plant. It will be recalled that the plant was designed to treat wastes of several chemical industries in the area, in addition to treating sanitary sewage, and therefore its full operation is critical to the overall effort to control pollution in the Niagara River. At the same time, the Government of Canada is mindful of the considerable efforts of both the Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to improve the general situation in recent years. These efforts have been exemplified in particular by the effluent permitting process for industrial outflows, and the construction of the Niagara Falls sewage treatment plant itself.

Canadian officials recently were informed by New York State officials that the projected time to complete repairs to the Niagara Falls plant would be at least one year following the granting of necessary funds. This time frame is already far longer than that indicated in the Great Lakes Water Quality Board's 1978 Annual Report to the International Joint Commission, and is further dependent upon the granting of the required funds. The Government of Canada therefore is concerned that a continuing risk to the health or property of Canadians may exist.

In light of these circumstances, the Embassy would be grateful if steps could be taken to resolve any administrative or funding difficulties, and the necessary repairs to the sewage treatment plant effected expeditiously.

.../3

4/4
The Embassy also would be grateful for information about when such repairs might be completed and the plant rendered fully operational.

The Embassy of Canada avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Department of State the assurances of its highest consideration.

Washington, February 15, 1980