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Dr. Murray Clamen  
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Dear Murray,

<b>IJC</b> <b>OTTAWA</b>
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I noticed in the Globe and Mail this morning an editorial article "Don't water down Canada's deal" which made me curious, so I read it. It has been almost a half-century since I have heard of any Canada-United States water problems in the Alberta-Montana region of the international boundary. However, I had thought that the United States would be raising this subject before this.

When I was brought to Ottawa in 1953 by the Department of Northern Affairs & Natural Resources, I was appointed a member of the International Waterton-Belly Engineering Board which had been set up by the IJC in 1948 to apportion the waters of these trans-boundary rivers. However, the Canadian and U.S. sections of the Board had already submitted separate reports on the reference and were not to meet again. Canada was considering diversion from the Waterton and Belly rivers to its St. Mary project and the U.S. wished to stake a claim to the waters of U.S. origin. Apparently, one proposal was to exchange some of the U.S. share for an increased share of the St. Mary River water but this was unacceptable to Canada. An alternative U.S. proposal involved a very expensive diversion project to use the waters in the Missouri River basin by means of an 'all-American tunnel and canal' through a mountain at a very high cost and under almost insuperable technical difficulties. The Canadian section of the Board considered that the proposed project was uneconomic, impracticable and not feasible and so reported to the IJC. The U.S. section of the Board said, in effect, that it was none of Canada's business to decide what was practical in the United States. The IJC received these disagreeing reports and could not reach a decision. The Canadian section of the Commission reported to the Canadian Government but, at that time, the U.S. section did not report to the U.S. Government. The Waterton Dam, which is the final component in the series of diversions and storage dams required to control the St. Mary and Waterton rivers for irrigation purposes, was completed in 1964.

With reference to Article II of the Treaty, it would be very difficult now for the United States to claim any of these waters without compensation to Canadian users not only in southern Alberta but also in the Saskatchewan developments and even on the power developments on the Saskatchewan River and the Nelson River.

Because of their proximity to the Waterton and Belly rivers and the value of water in this region, I have also been very interested in the St. Mary and Milk rivers. Article VI treats these two streams as one even though the St. Mary River is in the Arctic drainage basin and the Milk River is in the Missouri/Mississippi basins. By this article, the waters are to be apportioned equally between the two countries and that the channel of the Milk River in Canada may be used at the convenience of the United States for conveyance, through Canada, of waters diverted from the St. Mary River. Very little mention has been made of the southern tributaries of the Milk River which have reaches in Canada, such as the Deer, Miners and Bear creeks. Potential problems exist as the development of this area uses more of these waters which would reduce the Milk River flow into the United States and ultimately require a more intensive measurement of the flow in the Canadian reach of the river. Also, Canada's share of the Milk River could be used in the St. Mary Irrigation Project by a diversion just upstream of the town of Milk River through Verdigris Coulee. It is noted that Art. VI of the Treaty refers to Art. II with respect to any injury resulting to property in Canada from the conveyance of water from the St. Mary River through the Milk River. I was informed that Alberta has, in the past, complained that erosion of the river channel is being increased as a result of this conveyance of additional water although I am not aware of any conclusive evidence that such conveyance has indeed caused a measurable increase in the erosion of the Milk River channel.

Murray Thompson's article "International Water Problems on the Prairies", which appeared in the Engineering Journal of September 1964, provides a good summary of the situation up to that time. I hope I haven't bored you with my foregoing recollections of transboundary problems in this semi-arid region of Canada. If you have any questions concerning the foregoing, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Also, please note that my e-mail address has been changed to [rhclarkeng@sympatico.ca](mailto:rhclarkeng@sympatico.ca)

Yours sincerely,



R. H. Clark