

Office of
The Under Secretary of State
for External Affairs



Cabinet du
Sous-Secrétaire d'Etat
aux Affaires extérieures

Ottawa, K1A 0G2
April 21, 1971

Dear Mr. Chance,

I have the honour to inform you that the Governments of the United States and Canada, pursuant to Article IX of the Boundary Waters Treaty of January 11, 1909, have agreed to request the International Joint Commission to investigate and recommend measures to alleviate certain conditions of the life of residents of Point Roberts, in the State of Washington, existing by reason of the fact that the only connection by land between Point Roberts and other territory of the United States is through Canada.

Point Roberts consists of five square miles of land at the southern extremity of the Peninsula which projects south from Vancouver, B.C., separating the Strait of Georgia from Boundary Bay. Although not physically connected to any point within the United States, it is United States territory located south of the 49th parallel. Approximately 300 persons reside permanently at Point Roberts, although the summer population, due to recreational advantages of the Point, is approximately 3,500. Of the approximate 1,600 owners of real property at the Point, over 85% are citizens of Canada.

The residents of Point Roberts and others are confronted with a variety of problems resulting from the isolation of Point Roberts from the rest of the United States by the international boundary. The International Joint Commission is requested to make a study of those problems created or magnified by the presence and location of the international boundary at Point Roberts, and to make

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recommendations for the alleviation of such problems, which include:

- (1) the application of the customs' laws and regulations of the United States and Canada with respect to the transportation of goods, particularly perishable foodstuffs and tools and equipment used in connection with the trade or business of the person transporting the same into and out of Point Roberts;
- (2) the regulations governing employment in Canada of residents of Point Roberts and in Point Roberts of Canadian citizens resident in and around Point Roberts;
- (3) problems of health and medical services, including the following:
 - (a) limitations in governmental health insurance programmes which operate to deny compensation to residents of Point Roberts;
 - (b) restrictions on the practice of medicine in the State of Washington which forbid Canadian physicians from practising in Point Roberts;
- (4) the existing arrangement for supply of electric power and phone service to Point Roberts by Canadian utilities, subject to United States' laws and regulations;
- (5) present and potential problems related to law enforcement in Point Roberts, including transportation of accused persons from Point Roberts to detention facilities in the United States by way of Canada;
- (6) any other problems found to exist on account of the unique situation of Point Roberts.

The Commission may recommend alternative solutions of such problems and other ways of improving the general situation. In the conduct of its investigation and otherwise in the performance of its duties under this Reference, the Commission may utilize the services of specially qualified personnel of the agencies of the United States and of Canada, 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.

A similar request is being transmitted to the United States Section of the International Joint Commission by the United States Government.

Yours sincerely,


Under-Secretary