

Water Project Chills Canada on U.S.

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

Government documents, intended for official eyes only, describe how a \$419 million irrigation project has brought a chill to the once warm friendship between the United States and Canada.

The project, known as the Garrison Diversion, is located on the border between Canada and North Dakota. Designed as a multipurpose water system, it will irrigate 250,000 acres when it is completed in 1990.

Canadian officials and congressional critics charge the Garrison project will route dirty water into Canada. This would violate a 1909 treaty, which prohibits the United States and Canada from polluting each other's waterways.

The main support for the project comes from North Dakota farmers, who are thirsty for needed, new water sources. But Canadian farmers and conservationists fear that both crops and wildlife will be endangered by the project's extensive irrigation system.

To soothe Canadian fears, the United States agreed in 1974 to hold up construction on sections of the Garrison project that might affect Canada's waterways.

The issue has been referred to the International Joint Commission, the body charged with settling border disputes between the United States and Canada.

Government documents indicate that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is violating the moratorium even while the commission is still studying the problem.

The bureau has already acquired land and started construction on the

McClusky Canal and Lonetree reservoir, two components of the Garrison project.

The canal and reservoir will link up with a shared Canadian-American river, which will route the polluted water into Canada.

The United States has conceded privately that the link-up could cause a "potentially serious and costly dispute" with Canada. The State Department has delivered a memo to President Ford's national security affairs adviser, Maj. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, warning:

"Data provided by the Bureau of Reclamation indicates that irrigation return flows from the (Garrison) project will adversely affect the Souris and Red rivers.

"These adverse effects, if not mitigated, are likely to violate our obligations . . . of the Boundary Waters Treaty not to pollute waters flowing into Canada."

Despite this blunt warning, work is continuing on the controversial link-up. This has brought a hot, private letter from Rep. William S. Moorhead (D-Pa.), whose subcommittee oversees the Garrison project

"It is difficult to understand," he wrote to Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, "how the United States can justify construction of a project which is certain to result in a treaty violation."

A State Department spokesman acknowledged that the McClusky and Lonetree construction is proceeding but claimed these features could be used for "purely domestic purposes."

However, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Richard Vine, who is responsible for Canadian affairs, conceded to our reporter Julia Rose that he had not seen

any plans for purely domestic uses but was relying upon the "assurances" of the Bureau of Reclamation. He insisted that the United States won't violate its treaty with Canada.

Therefore, if the commission should report that the Garrison project will pollute Canadian waterways, much of the costly construction will have to be scrapped.

Washington Whirl — Not only former President Nixon but his wife, Pat, were under extreme emotional stress during their last weeks in the White House. Secret Service sources tell us the former First Lady took medication to sleep, wake up and keep going. . . .

Some political pros held a private discussion with President Ford the other day and reported to us afterward that he seemed "lackadaisical" about the Ronald Reagan challenge. The President impressed them "as a fellow unaware of the polls" The door to President Ford's Oval Office is open to more staff members since Kissinger and Donald H. Rumsfeld left the White House. . . .

Georgia officials tell us that Jimmy Carter, their erstwhile governor who is now the hottest Democratic presidential prospect, was a "fair and honest governor" whose political ambitions always went beyond the statehouse. He was a personal campaigner who stressed his charisma more than his platform, they recall A few days ago, five record and broadcast industry personalities pleaded guilty to income tax charges connected with the payola-ridden record industry. The investigation by grand juries in four cities began after we revealed the widespread payola scandal in March, 1972.