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J. Michael Robinson

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SESSION 9: CANADA AND U.S. APPROACHES TO THE GREAT LAKES – ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS.

INTRODUCTION

J. Michael Robinson

Okay. I am going to start. Thank you – thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for coming down so promptly. As was mentioned, Herb Gray has a plane to catch this afternoon, the connections being lousy now between Cleveland and Ottawa and Toronto, thanks, I guess, to Mr. Milton and Air Canada, but Mr. Gray did want to leave time for questions, so I am going to truncate the introduction and let him get right to it.

It really is a privilege to be asked to introduced the Right Honorable Herb Gray, who is fast approaching legendary status in Canadian politics, thirty-nine and a half years in the Canadian House of Commons, and it should be noted that the “Right Honorable” title is usually only given to prime ministers and a few others. Mr. Gray was Deputy Prime Minister, but this honor was bestowed on him when he retired from the House. There are only sixteen living Canadians that are Right Honorable, not just plain Honorable.

When he retired, he was still full of energy as well as wisdom, and everybody assumed that he could have had any one of those nice cushy appointments like Quarter St. James, where he could put on a little sword and breeches and go appear before the Queen and all that fun stuff. Distinguished veterans get that sort of appointment, and he instead chose to work, and has taken challenging and difficult jobs as Joint Chair, the Canadian Chair, of the International Joint Commission (IJC), and he will explain how that works. He must have known that this job would become more and more essential and critical to Canada and U.S. interests as the next North American shortage – we heard about – of energy becomes more urgent, and that’s water. You’ve heard various suggestions this morning and yesterday that Canada may have to play hardball on certain assets that we have in order to get certain relief from problems that we may have from the U.S. And now that the U.S. has identified that secure sources of oil and gas are critical to the future of the U.S., I think the U.S. is going to recognize more and more – especially from people speaking from the Southwest, now almost into a decade in drought – that secure sources of water have even a bigger need for the future. Gas can come to the U.S. as LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas), concentrated by freezing, from anywhere in the world, but water has to come from Canada. Mexico

certainly doesn't have a surplus, and when water is frozen, it is ice and not compacted like LNG.

I also discussed briefly with Mr. Gray over lunch, and he said he will try and deal with a question that has confused me, perhaps because I am not well enough informed, namely: Why does the federal government of Canada and, indeed, of the U.S., allow these uppity states and provinces on the Great Lakes to negotiate and run around and sign agreements, when the ultimate decider is supposed to be the federal governments of Canada and the U.S. on these Boundary Waters under the Treaty, which has existed since 1909, and which has established the International Joint Commission? So he may deal with that in his remarks. If not, I will ask him again. So without further ado, Mr. Gray, the floor is yours.

(Applause.)