

From time immemorial Canada has assumed complete responsibility for the provision of the navigation facilities from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Lake Erie; and, up until this moment, the United States has assumed almost complete responsibility for through navigation facilities from Lake Erie to the head of the Lakes.

It is quite natural that, in the process of the economic development of the United States, active interest should have been concentrated upon the Upper Section of the St. Lawrence - Great Lakes system, because of certain important factors. These factors were (a) the vast iron ore deposits in the Mesabi Range just west of Lake Superior; (b) the occurrence of limestone near Lake Michigan and (c) the occurrence of the large coal deposits in the areas south of Lake Erie. To keep pace with the industrial expansion of the United States, it became necessary to bring these three natural products together and, as they were all low-grade commodities, cheap transportation was important, and that cheap transportation was made available only by the improvements made in the Upper Lakes Section of this great system.

On the other hand, for well over two hundred years Canada has been actively interested in and exclusively responsible for the progressive development which has taken place in the St. Lawrence River from the Gulf to Lake Erie. The first canals in this area provided 9 foot navigation. This was followed by canals and locks allowing 14 foot draft. Later the waterway above the International Section was improved to 27 foot draft by the construction of the new Welland Canal below Lake Erie. The River below Montreal has been deepened to provide a channel having a minimum width of 600 feet and a depth of 35 feet. The bottleneck in the Seaway - 14 foot navigation in the International Rapids Section - would have been removed long since had your country extended the necessary co-operation.

I submit to you, therefore, that from Lake Erie to the sea the St. Lawrence Seaway has been improved and maintained by Canada. Every important betterment has been carried out and paid for by Canada at a cost in the neighbourhood of 300 million dollars. Nevertheless ships of every nation have used the present seaway without payment of tolls for nearly 50 years. An international treaty provides that when tolls on shipping are imposed they will bear equally on Canadian and U.S. registered ships.

Canada proposes to pay on a self-liquidating basis for improvements in the International Rapids Section. Why then should your country withhold its co-operation and thus delay completion of this vital Canadian transportation outlet? I must confess that I do not know the answer.

It is reported that certain seaport, railway and coal operators are strong opponents of the Seaway. I do not for one moment contest their right to oppose this project, but surely it means something that in my country these same interests are strongly in favour of it.

It is said that it would be a mistake for the United States to allow Canada to build the Seaway alone; but, if this be a mistake, then we made it some time ago. In 1952 the Government of the United States agreed to join with Canada in an application to the International Joint Commission for the development of power on the distinct understanding that Canada would at the same time construct the Seaway. This we have undertaken to do by an Exchange of Notes between our two Governments.

It is said that Canada may not always be a friendly nation. I cannot conceive of our two countries living on other than friendly terms, nor of Canada becoming powerful enough to be able to afford to be unfriendly. However, if it is felt that United States' interests would be safeguarded by the construction of a canal on your side of the International Section, why not go ahead and build and let us do likewise on our side? This might appear foolish at this time but we have done this at the Sault where there are two canals, one on each side of the boundary line, and both are pretty fully used. I am confident this would soon become true here too.

It is said that this would not be a profitable venture and that therefore it would be unwise for the United States to waste funds on the project. But we are not asking for any funds from you. Canada is not seeking financial aid on the St. Lawrence Seaway. On the contrary, Canada is ready, willing and anxious to proceed with the Seaway at her own expense without cost to the American taxpayer. Canada has passed legislation both provincially and federally and could start the project tomorrow. The Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission will develop the power jointly with an American entity and the Federal Government at Ottawa will build the navigational facilities. All that is required is the granting of a licence by the Federal Power Commission and the naming of an entity by the American Government, in accordance with their undertaking, to join with the Canadian entity in the development of power. If it is felt that the Seaway is an uneconomical investment for the United States, and since more than 1,000 miles of the St. Lawrence is wholly within Canadian territory, this appears to me to be a good case for encouraging independent action by Canada.