

*St. Lawrence Waterway*

fortunate that a great scheme of this kind could not be considered on its merits, first, as an engineering project, and next as a commercial possibility. So far as any political question is involved, I for one would have no hesitation in putting aside any objections that might be raised from the standpoint of the relations between Canada and the United States. I am glad the hon. member for Fort William has also put himself on record on that point. I am not so sure that some of the friends with whom he is associated will feel on that point as he does himself, remembering as some of us from the West do, the attitude they took in regard to the great question of reciprocity with the United States. I am rather inclined to the opinion that the hon. gentleman will not find himself in very congenial company if that question should come up again.

Mr. MANION: I supported reciprocity.

Mr. BROWN: I know he did, and I am very sorry that he is in the company in which he finds himself to-day.

Mr. MANION: I find it very good company.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Of course, of course.

Mr. BROWN: Some of us who represent farmers' organizations in the West had the privilege of attending a conference called in Winnipeg by the Great Waterways' Association a few years ago, and we listened with a great deal of interest to this project as it was placed before us by that association. Two stipulations were laid down in regard to the matter: One was that we should not accept it as an alternative to the Hudson Bay railway, and if there is any seeming indifference on the part of this section of the House towards this project I think it will be explained in large measure by the fact that we still pin our faith to the Hudson Bay railway as affording us an outlet for our products. It will be interesting when that matter is again under consideration by this House to find just how far a sectional interest will dominate in the discussion of this great project.

There was another difficulty that we saw in our way and it was this: We could not see that it was advisable to spend large sums of the money of the Canadian people in the development of canals and great waterways unless we could see very clearly that these waterways would accrue to the benefit of the people, and also, as shippers of grain, to ourselves. That is, we do not

[Mr. Brown.]

propose to spend large sums of money in the development of canals and harbours and then let all the benefits be absorbed by such interests as the combine of lake shippers that exist to-day.

Now, as to being indifferent to this matter, it is only fair to say that there is no indifference among those who occupy this corner of the Chamber. We recognize, as all of us recognize, that the transportation problem is the big problem of the day. There are no people more interested in the question of transportation than the farmers of the West, and I was glad to get such a very candid admission from the hon. member for Fort William and Rainy River—one we shall remember on all occasions—that the price is set at Liverpool and that we take that price less the cost of transportation. We shall remember that statement and we shall have occasion to remember on more occasions than the present.

I have some vision in regard to this matter, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that at some time this project will be realized and become an actual factor in the development of our commercial and national life. At the present time, however, it is simply not possible for us to consider it. Whether the canal could be constructed for the amount of \$252,000,000 that has been mentioned is certainly open to question—we know that estimates have always been exceeded. But even if it could be carried out for that amount we recognize that it is not an immediate possibility, and I for one would like to echo the sentiment that was expressed by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Millar) that since the project is, for the time being, outside the range of practical possibilities, it is very questionable whether this House can afford to take time at this session to discuss it in view of the fact that we have so many other great problems demanding our immediate attention. I hope that this enterprise may become a practical reality some day and, of course, we must remember that if we have no vision we will never accomplish anything. In the meantime I think we can well afford to look upon this as a vision of one of the things we are going to do in the future, and turn our attention to some very practical things that demand our consideration.

Mr. F. S. CAHILL (Pontiac): I had not intended to take part in this debate until the hon. member for Fort William and Rainy River (Mr. Manion) referred to me as having supported this resolution,