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THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

An address by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Lionel Chevrier, delivered to the Canadian Association of Real Estate Boards, at Toronto, October 6, 1952.

... The question of deepening the St. Lawrence is not a new one. It has been agitating public opinion for at least a century. During the last fifty years, it has been the subject of negotiations between Canada and the United States. These negotiations culminated in the signing of an Agreement between our two countries in 1941.

The boundary line between Canada and the United States follows the 45th parallel of latitude until it strikes the St. Lawrence River at the point where the boundary of the Province of Quebec meets the boundary of the Province of Ontario, a few miles east of the City of Cornwall; thence, for a distance of 115 miles, it runs westerly through the middle of the river in what is known as the International Rapids Section. Hence, in order to develop the St. Lawrence, it is necessary to seek the concurrence of the United States.

What is the proposed Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway?

It is a 1,200-mile channel 27 feet or more in depth, extending from Montreal to the head of the Great Lakes. Together with the St. Lawrence Ship Channel, already provided by Canada, it will create a 2,000-mile route from the Atlantic Ocean to the heart of the North American continent. Its proponents seek the deepening of the present channel in order to allow 25-foot craft to carry their cargoes through the St. Lawrence River up to the Great Lakes and, conversely, to permit large Great Lakes freighters to reach Montreal. Coupled with this is the development, on a joint basis, of 2,200,000 h.p. in the International Section of the St. Lawrence River, with the power equally divided between the two countries.

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway should be distinguished from the St. Lawrence Ship Channel, which is a channel extending from Montreal easterly to a point 30 miles below Quebec. This channel was deepened by the Federal Government for the purpose of providing safe navigation for ocean-going vessels from deep water to Montreal. It has a depth of 32.5 feet at extreme low water and it will provide a link with the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway when the latter is completed.

The Great-Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway is but a small part of what is known as the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin. This is a vast drainage system covering an area of 678,000 square miles, 493,000 of which are in Canada and 185,000 in the United States. It includes Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, together