

St. Lawrence Waterway System

tolls, which are the main source of income of the seaway, enough money to pay the cost of that development.

There are members of the House of Commons who had the opportunity to take an active part in the development of that gigantic joint undertaking, although it was mainly Canadian, and as far as I could ascertain from these people, it was never envisaged that this undertaking should rapidly pay the cost of construction thereof out of its income.

However, I think that we should try to get, as much as possible, an adequate revenue to meet the normal administration expenses of that agency. Government agencies which cannot make ends meet are not an exception, and considering the scope of the project, which cost almost \$1 billion, I would not say that the annual deficits shown by that undertaking seem disgraceful. I do not want to mention any agency in particular but I do not know of any which shows a profit or which even makes ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, I shall not labour the subject of navigation accidents and insurance rates. It is a fact that if aids to navigation are not adequate for winter navigation, on the St. Lawrence river, risks of accident are greater.

A decision will have to be made some day whether or not to mark out the channel with buoys, to take security measures on the river so as to make year around navigation possible. Obviously, without buoys, without beacons in winter time, in fact without the whole regular security system, accidents will multiply as navigation increases and insurance rates will go up too.

Now, I should like to come back to the flood hazard in the St. Lawrence area and its connection with icebreakers.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that, in Montreal, the water level problem is of immediate interest. On the other hand, we must admit that nature has provided all kinds of ways to lower the water level: temperature, precipitation, evaporation. Those are the natural factors which affect the water level. Human factors are also involved, such as consumption and deviation for the normal needs of the population, the economy and business firms.

● (6:40 p.m.)

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, scientific methods should be used to forecast atmospheric conditions more accurately, so that we might take the necessary steps to conserve water.

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The government should give particular consideration to these problems, because of the increasing traffic on our waterways. Traffic on the St. Lawrence is creating many problems.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired.

[English]

Mr. C. F. Kennedy (Colchester-Hants): Mr. Speaker, I am motivated to enter this debate by the excellent and reasonable wording of the notice of motion which has been put forward by the hon. member for Saint John-Albert (Mr. Bell). The hon. member made a reasonable appeal to the house for the government to give consideration to setting up a committee to study the matter outlined in the resolution.

Basically the resolution covers something that has plagued us in the Atlantic provinces for 100 years, since confederation, the matter of transportation. We recall vividly, particularly during this year, that one inducement held out to our people to join with other parts of the country was the undertaking that coast to coast rail transport facilities would be completed. Those facilities were completed, and that part of the obligation was fulfilled.

Over the years much has been done to eliminate the disadvantages of distance. Confederation perhaps eliminated our trading with other portions of the world, such as the West Indies, which we could reach with water transport. Modern technology has made transportation more efficient, though nothing has shortened distances. Travel time has been shortened, but cost, which is another element of transportation, has not been reduced. We are still in an awkward position in trading with the rest of Canada.

Since confederation many small factories in the Atlantic provinces have been bought by larger interests in central Canada, and our problem is that we have had to import manufactured goods from central Canada over long distances of rail lines. The products which we harvested from the sea and the forest, the raw products or semi-manufactured goods, also had to be transported vast distances to our favoured market of central Canada.

Goods manufactured in central Canada are sold all over the country. Cameras, for example, carry the same retail tag in all parts of the country. Yet when one buys an automobile in the Atlantic provinces he has to pay between \$150 to \$200 extra for freight