

*St. Lawrence Seaway*

been there for 100 years. They are part of a canal system connecting the ocean with the head of the lakes. In the past there have been canals in the St. Lawrence, across the Niagara peninsula and at Sault Ste. Marie. With the constant dredging of the St. Lawrence river, in the past we have been able to maintain an even depth for all navigation right to the head of the lakes.

In more recent years there has been great construction at different times in what is known as the Welland canal; there has been a deepening of the canals at the Soo, and there has been a deepening of the river depth in the St. Clair river; but we are long years behind in bringing the St. Lawrence up to the standard of the whole system that was established 100 years ago. If this project goes ahead, as I hope it now will, we will simply be bringing to a uniform pattern a navigation system stretching from the Atlantic ocean to the head of the lakes, which, at all times, should be regarded as an integrated navigation scheme. Perhaps it would remove some of the resistance that has from time to time been raised against this undertaking if that thought were borne in mind.

So far as this navigation project is concerned, the importance of it is that it has become associated so closely with the power development. The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has indicated that the government of Canada has expressed its support of the program for the development of the power. The development of these power sites on the St. Lawrence is now long overdue. I would point out that it is not only the government of Canada that has been dealing with this subject. In 1946 the government of Ontario entered into negotiations with the government of the state of New York, both governments recognizing it was possible for them to construct joint power plants along the St. Lawrence.

The problem that arose, however, was the necessity for obtaining permission to use water that was part of an international system of navigation. It is only for that reason there has been any delay in the construction of power sites on the St. Lawrence. As hon. members know, I am able to speak on this subject with a personal knowledge of what took place. The government of Ontario and the government of the state of New York were ready to proceed with the construction of these tremendously important power plants on the St. Lawrence in 1946. The use of the water for navigation has constantly presented a problem. It is important we bear that in mind. I think, therefore, it is important that the government of Canada not only

[Mr. Drew.]

welcome what is now taking place, but indicate and express the hope, which in fact has been expressed by the Prime Minister tonight, that these proceedings will move forward rapidly to a conclusion.

I believe there is another reason why we should hope the power development, which is so important to Ontario, as it is to New York, Canada and the United States as well, should proceed as rapidly as possible and also that this development take place as a joint development. These two nations stand today as a unique example of the way nations, with an intense pride in their own authority and their own strength, can co-operate for their common good. Surely, at this particular time, with all the uncertainty and all the antagonism that is being developed in other parts of the world, it would be a very happy augury for the future if these two nations were to develop joint power production on the river which, shall we say, does not divide them but keeps them together. May it be shown also that we have found the way in which, to our mutual advantage, we can use that waterway for the carriage of important trade to the inland waters of this continent. I believe that, for us and for the world, that would be a bright and shining example of the kind of international co-operation out of which will grow real hope and peace.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether I might ask the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) a question? Before I do so, I would like to say that throughout this house generally members will welcome the statement the Prime Minister has made tonight. We also welcome the fact that he has made it here in the house at the earliest opportunity. I feel, too, that members generally will support the position taken by the government that, if necessary, Canada is still prepared to go it alone, but that Canada is equally prepared to enter with the United States into a joint development of the seaway project.

My question is this. Is the Prime Minister in a position to say whether the possibility of a joint project, as a result of the passing of the bill in Washington, is likely to alter the time schedule? Will it make any change in the time that the undertaking of the seaway project can begin?

**Mr. St. Laurent:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it is not always easy to try to peer into the future. I see no reason to believe it would in any way lengthen or delay the time when an