

reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is always a pleasure to hear his felicitous language, and naturally one regrets not to have such a perfect knowledge of the French tongue as would permit the fullest appreciation of his eloquent periods. I also congratulate my fellow member from Richmond—West Cape Breton (Hon. Mr. Macdonald), who seconded the Address. It will give me warm personal pleasure if he becomes the useful member of this House that those who have known him in the past feel confident he will become.

I have no intention of discussing in detail the various subjects contained in the Speech from the Throne, particularly those which have been so adequately and so exhaustively treated in the two speeches with which we have been favoured this afternoon. But I do desire to bring to the attention of this House the St. Lawrence Waterway in its possible relation to and effect on the Maritime Provinces. It is generally admitted that the inclusion of the Maritime Provinces was essential to the success of Confederation. One can scarcely believe the present commercial and industrial development of this Dominion would have been possible had we been deprived of ice-free ports on the Atlantic coast. These were provided by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. But the economic forces which came into play about that time very seriously affected those provinces; their merchants were hampered by the competition of the merchants of the older and richer and more highly developed provinces, and their great shipping industry sadly declined. In spite of those adverse conditions the Maritimes did their full share in providing money to develop the West, to develop the canal system of the Dominion and to build the railways, which finally reached British Columbia and so consolidated Confederation. The Maritimes also helped to bring about that amazing development which has made Canada the preponderating factor among the wheat-producing countries of the world. I am not passing any opinion on whether this is the right time to undertake completion of the St. Lawrence Waterway, but I do desire to bring to the attention of honourable senators the feeling very generally held in the Maritime Provinces that this development will be disadvantageous to their coal mining industry, which is the great ganglion of the economic life of those provinces. They fear that a waterway which will carry the products of the world to the head of the lakes will prejudicially affect the coal trade of Nova Scotia. I am not saying that that fear is well founded, but if there is

Hon. Mr. McLENNAN.

even danger that the development of the St. Lawrence Waterway for navigation and power purposes may intensify competition in their coal trade with the great central industrial and manufacturing provinces, I hope that the representatives of the other parts of the Dominion will see to it that the interests of one of the original and most important sections of this great country are adequately safeguarded.

Those who have sat in this House for a certain number of years are aware that on more than one occasion we have had to make momentous decisions. The right honourable leader of the House, in the course of his speech this afternoon, recalled one such momentous decision with respect to what is now known as the Canadian National Railways. At that time some of us regretted to find ourselves in opposition to the policy of the Government, but I venture to say that had our views prevailed then the Duff report would be somewhat less unpleasant reading to our people to-day and Parliament would not be called upon to find a remedy for the present desperate situation. In view of these circumstances I feel that the St. Lawrence Waterway project should receive very careful consideration. I would recall to honourable members the report of the Tanner Committee on this subject, particularly the evidence given by Col. Dubuc, Chief Engineer of the Department of Railways and Canals. It seems to me to point to the great advantages of the deep waterway and the necessity of some enlargement year by year of our waterways system. Mr. Dubuc had been speaking about the tonnage the canals will carry and the number of lockages that can be made day by day, and the question was put to him:

Are those figures illuminating? Do they help the present and future problem?

Col. Dubuc: They help in this way. If it has been proven to your satisfaction, from official records, what the present capacity of the main canal system is at the weak points, and you assume future increases from what has actually happened in the past, you may reasonably deduct when the ultimate capacity of those canals will probably be reached.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: It was never reached.

Hon. Mr. McLENNAN: No, but we are getting nearer and nearer to that point. I am quoting an expert; I am not giving my own opinion.

You must equally not lose sight of the fact that the deep waterway will not be utilizable until eight to ten years after its construction is started.

With the last six or seven years as a guide, it seems clear that even if you started the construction of the deep waterway to-day, long