

St. Lawrence Seaway

to be completed by December 31, 1958, and I think they would be completed with the opening of navigation in 1959 so far as the seaway is concerned. I believe it is the hope and expectation of the power entities that it will be possible to commence production sometime in the summer of 1958.

Mr. Knowles: Could the minister give a corresponding answer regarding the bridge?

Mr. Marler: I think that we must have the bridge finished at that time. One fact I want to emphasize particularly is that it serves both for railway and highway purposes. I do not believe it would be possible to interrupt either the rail traffic or the highway traffic. I think the two must be done so that it would be in operation when navigation commences.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask one or two questions arising out of answers the minister made in reply to my earlier questions. Could the minister tell us whether or not bridges apart from the one the minister specifically mentioned are going to be built, particularly in the international rapids section of the seaway, or anywhere else for that matter, by the St. Lawrence seaway authority; or are they going to be constructed by private companies?

I am just seeking information. The reason I mention that particularly is the Ogdensburg Bridge Company, which was incorporated by parliament in 1952 by chapter 57 of the Revised Statutes of Canada. Section 18 of that act sets out that power to commence the bridge may be sought from the governor in council within five years. No further act would be necessary, because permission could be given by the governor in council to commence the bridge within that period of time. Does the minister know whether the Ogdensburg Bridge Company is going ahead? I believe there is a private bill on the order paper concerning that company, but I do not know what it contains and I am just curious as to what is going to happen.

Mr. Marler: I am not in a position to make any statement with regard to the Ogdensburg bridge. All I can tell the hon. gentleman is that if it had not been for this particular situation at Cornwall island I do not think the seaway authority would be in the bridge building business at all. I would not like the committee to think for a moment that this is a departure from the main purpose of the St. Lawrence seaway authority which, as hon. members know, is to build a deep waterway from Montreal to lake Erie and not to go into the building of a series of bridges across the river, either

in the international rapids section or anywhere else. If it had not been for this particular situation and the fact that the replacement of the bridge across the south channel necessitates an international bridge I do not think it would have been necessary to bring in this legislation.

The hon. member for Oxford perhaps was a bit more specific with regard to the question of bridges. I think I have dealt clearly with the matter of international bridges. As I understand the situation, if another international bridge were necessary because of the seaway I think we would expect to come back to parliament to ask for authority to build a further specific international bridge, but there is no such intention at the present time.

So far as other bridges are concerned, I think I should say that it is a possible development, although I would not like to describe it as being likely, that after the bridge has been built across Pollys Gut it may be necessary to replace the bridge across the north channel. I consider that to be within the realm of possibility. I would not want hon. members to feel that I have not been perfectly frank, that there has been an attempt to conceal that fact from them. There is that possibility, but at the moment I would not describe it as something that is to take place immediately. I do not know if it will take place or when it will take place, but I say it can take place under the legislation which is contemplated.

Mr. Nesbitt: As the minister has indicated, the seaway authority is not in the bridge building business except when a bridge is necessary because of the seaway itself. I think that could be expanded in more general terms. Many new problems are going to be created by the increased flow of traffic from the ocean to the lakes and by the larger ships going through. Many of these could not be foreseen at the present time. If there are to be other international bridges, to be built either by private companies or by some governmental authority, it would seem to me that the seaway authority should be interested in having a great deal of control over such bridges. With the increased traffic and the larger vessels from foreign countries and elsewhere I would think that control over any bridge built across the St. Lawrence river between Kingston and Montreal or even beyond Montreal should be vested in the authority.

There could be all kinds of things that could not be foreseen at the moment. There is some indication that the Ogdensburg bridge may be built. Just what authority