

I know that last year all the local newspapers gave me a fairly good dressing down for opposing the vote. They should not do that. I do not talk in this house from any motive whatever other than to do the best I can for this country. If the government can say that any real service will be rendered or any worth while improvements made in that area through the erection of this dam, I will not oppose it. I do not see that it is going to be of any particular value, however, and certainly if the time comes when that magnificent river is canalized so that large ships can go up and down it, a dam of this kind will not be worth a fig anyway; a much larger dam will be required, and this money will be wasted. I do not want the minister to think I am opposing this for any other reason than what I believe to be right.

Mr. CARDIN: I do not propose in any shape or form to object to the criticism and fair observations made by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol). I recognize that it is his absolute right to inquire about these things and inform himself as to the conditions existing, and I would be the last person in the world to criticize him for doing so.

When the matter was placed before the International Joint Commission it was not formally the question referred to in this vote. At the same time, as my hon. friend stated last year and mentioned again this year, the commission had under consideration three proposals that were made more particularly by United States interests. One of the proposals was to have a canal from lake Champlain right up to Montreal through United States territory, reaching lake St. Francis.

Mr. BENNETT: Not up to Montreal through United States territory, but from the Hudson river to one of their lakes, then connecting with the Richelieu.

Mr. CARDIN: No, lake St. Francis. They offered another proposal also, to build a canal across Canadian territory from the town of St. Johns on the Richelieu river to Laprairie, in front of Montreal, on the south side of the St. Lawrence. Then their third proposal was to have a canal built from the foot of the present Chambly canal, at Chambly, going right up to Montreal on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, somewhere near St. Lambert. The fourth proposal, which they studied at the same time, was the canalization of the Richelieu river from lake Champlain down to the St. Lawrence. But the idea of the United States people interested in the proposals was to have a deep canal, capable of

[Mr. MacNicol.]

being navigated by vessels of the type that would navigate the proposed St. Lawrence waterway.

Mr. BENNETT: Up the Hudson river to Albany.

Mr. CARDIN: Yes. They wanted to have the same depth of water in the Richelieu river, if it was canalized, that would exist in the proposed canal for the St. Lawrence. They expressed the view, I admit, that a depth of about twenty-seven feet was the only thing in which they were interested. The Canadian interests were satisfied with a depth of twelve feet, which is the present depth of the United States canals from Lake Champlain to the Hudson river. Part of the Richelieu river has a depth of twelve feet at the present time.

Mr. BENNETT: It is eight feet for the most part, is it not?

Mr. CARDIN: Yes, and less. The Chambly canal has not more than five and a half or six feet. We would have been satisfied if the canalization of the Richelieu river had been carried out to provide a depth of twelve feet, but, as I have said, the Americans concerned were not interested in such a shallow depth.

In addition to the suggestions I have just indicated, the present proposal was submitted to the International Joint Commission to build a regulating dam between St. Johns and Chambly.

Mr. BENNETT: On the Richelieu river.

Mr. CARDIN: Yes, bringing forward an old proposal that had been submitted to the international commission as far back as 1907. At that time parliament voted a certain amount of money to dredge the Richelieu river from the city of St. Johns up to the boundary. There are natural obstacles in that river,—a natural dam, we might call it. There is little water at that particular place, the shores of the river are very low. But when the Canadian government started the work of dredging between St. Johns and the boundary, the United States intervened and claimed that by doing away with the natural obstacles existing in the river we would cause the flow of the water to become very rapid, and as a consequence would lower the level of the water in lake Champlain. As a result of the objection raised by the United States the work which had been under contract for some time was stopped, and the representatives of the two countries discussed the possibility of building remedial works.

At that time the International Joint Commission, or the board which preceded the formation of that commission, approved of a