

*St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act*

Dock Company Limited and McNamara Construction Company Limited. It was for dredging from station 1231 to station 1460 and was for the total sum of \$11,623,000. My understanding is that this covers from the guard lock at Port Colborne to lake Erie, a distance of about 2½ miles, and on the summit level from the guard lock a distance of about 1½ miles.

Then, on November 15, 1956, a contract was awarded to Russell Construction Limited for dredging from the guard gate to station 710 + 00. I understand this is a distance of about four miles. The amount was \$7,280,575.

The sixth contract was awarded on December 28, 1956, to J. P. Porter Company Limited for suction dredging at the lake Ontario entrance to lock No. 1 for \$642,600. Thus, in 1956 alone, contracts were awarded totalling \$19,546,375, and this for a project originally estimated at \$1,157,000. Was this pointed up to parliament? Not so far as I can discover. But this is not the end. The contract for suction dredging at the lake Ontario entrance was supplemented by one for rock dredging to J. P. Porter Company Limited on September 26, 1957, for \$1,283,900. And an eighth contract was awarded to the same company for supply and operation of a dredging plant totalling \$351,000.

These eight contracts of which I have record total \$22,343,290, or a mere 19 times the original estimate of \$1,157,000, or a mere 17 times the estimate when the seaway was approved, or a mere 11¼ times the latest estimate made on February 15, 1955, by the hon. member for Laurier. But, this is not the end. These eight contracts do not, as I understand the geography of the area, provide for the completion of the work of dredging the summit level. In any event, my information is that the latest budget of the authority shows an estimated total cost of \$25,655,775.

Then, if one turns to the report of the tolls committee, which is dated June 12, 1958, at page 3, he finds a further estimate:

Welland canal, lake Ontario to lake Erie, cost of deepening and other improvements, \$27,500,000; interest during construction \$1,500,000.

Or a total of \$29 million and, this is the figure upon which the tolls will be based. This is the amount which must be amortized by those who pay the tolls on the ship canal. For any statistically minded members of the house may I say that the figure is 25 times the original estimate, 22 times the estimate when the seaway was approved and 14½ times the estimate made by the hon. member for Laurier and confirmed by his successor as minister of transport, the Hon. George C. Marler.

In the minister's statement of yesterday, at page 1162 of *Hansard*, the increase in the

Welland canal is shown as \$23 million. The reason given is the increase involved in deepening to specifications determined in the autumn of 1956.

I have searched the annual report of the St. Lawrence seaway authority for the fiscal year ended December 31, 1956, signed by Lionel Chevrier, and I fail to find a single sentence to draw to the attention of parliament that there was any change in specifications. It is true there is mention of two dredging contracts, each exceeding the original estimate, but not a whisper to suggest that they involve any change in the specifications. And I have examined the seven volumes of *Hansard* of 1956 and I have been unable to find that the then minister of transport ever communicated to parliament in that very lengthy session any changes in specifications which are now said to involve \$23,600,000.

The hon. gentleman said this afternoon, and I have heard it said before, that the reason for additional cost was that rock was encountered and that safety precautions required additional depth. But, surely, it did not require engineers, let alone a former cabinet minister, to discover that the Niagara escarpment was composed of rock. Surely, any pre-school child would have known that the Niagara escarpment was not made of sand. The Welland canal is only 25 years old. The records must surely be available. But if that is the case, that it was because of rock, my problem is this. When was parliament informed? At what stage were these mistakes, these fantastic miscalculations, disclosed by the previous government? I believe that on their part there was a conspiracy of silence, a desire to let sleeping dogs lie. After a contract for over \$11 million was awarded in July, 1956, did Mr. Marler come to this house and point out the unbelievable discrepancy between estimate and performance? Did he or the president of the seaway authority breathe any hint of a change in plans? The fact is that these bare, blunt facts reveal the most outrageous miscalculations in the annals of parliament, and that is all I have spoken of this afternoon.

Were these expenditures necessary? Were they wise? Who can say now? Parliament was kept in the dark at the time when an effective decision could be taken by the people's representatives. Parliament was expected to abdicate its control of the public purse; parliament was expected to surrender docilely to an apparition of an agency of government expending 14, 22, 25 times what