

St. Lawrence Seaway

operation and maintenance of forest conservation and wildlife management in the north. Item 327 is operation and maintenance in the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Macdonnell: These are all separate organizations, separate branches?

Mr. Lesage: Separate functions, not separate organizations.

Item agreed to.

Mr. Harris: Would you rise and report progress, Mr. Chairman?

Progress reported.

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

PASSAGE OF BILL BY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AUTHORIZING UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if I may have the unanimous consent of the house to revert to motions, I should like to make a short statement about the St. Lawrence seaway project.

Mr. Speaker: Has the Prime Minister leave of the house?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. St. Laurent: According to press reports, which have been confirmed to us by the embassy in Washington the Wiley bill which would provide for the establishment of a United States authority to participate in the St. Lawrence seaway project, was passed today by the United States House of Representatives and our own newspapermen in the press gallery have been anxious to have some statement about it from the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) or from me and have been told that any statement should first be made here in the house.

It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the legislative processes in the United States are such that several steps yet remain to be taken before this bill becomes law.

As hon. members well know, the governments of Canada and the United States have for several decades now made every effort to get the St. Lawrence seaway and power project under way. In the past, several agreements have been negotiated by representatives of both countries, but for one reason or another difficulties have cropped up which prevented these agreements from being brought to fruition.

In view of these perennial difficulties and of the very urgent need for additional hydro-electric power in the province of Ontario, the Canadian government, in 1951, undertook to construct, maintain and operate an uninterrupted deep waterway between lake Erie and the port of Montreal provided

arrangements were made for the concurrent development of the power project in the international section of the St. Lawrence river by fully qualified and authorized agencies of Canada and the United States. It was after this undertaking was made by the Canadian government that the governments of Canada and the United States submitted joint applications to the international joint commission for the development of the international rapids power project. This application was considered and approved by the international joint commission, and the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission and the New York state power authority have been designated by the Canadian and United States governments respectively to do this work.

The undertaking of the Canadian government, in 1951, to construct the whole seaway was given parliamentary sanction when the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act was passed. The government's position has not changed since then and we are still prepared to undertake alone the construction of the seaway. However, as I stated in my memorandum of January 9, 1953, to the ambassador of the United States in Canada, the government was and it still is willing to discuss any specific proposal the United States government might wish to put forward once an entity is designated and authorized to proceed with construction of the United States share of the power works and provided that such discussions do not delay either the power or the seaway project.

Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that every hon. member in this house will welcome the decision of the United States House of Representatives today, not only as an indication of the possibility of an early decision in regard to this long-standing question but also as evidence of an understanding of the importance of this as a mutual undertaking between two nations whose friendship today is an example to the whole world. It does seem to me there has been some misunderstanding both in Canada and in the United States, in regard to what is proposed in connection with the navigation canals on the St. Lawrence.

On a number of occasions discussion of this subject has arisen and has created the impression that an entirely new venture is contemplated in the arrangement for a 27-foot depth of the canals on the St. Lawrence. As we consider this subject and express our hope of success, may I point out there is nothing new whatever in this scheme. On the contrary, this is a very old question. The St. Lawrence canals are old canals. They have