

PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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The Department of External Affairs today made public the text of an Exchange of Notes with the United States modifying the existing arrangements on development of the St. Lawrence Seaway that had been concluded by an Exchange of Notes of June 30, 1952.

The main works required to complete deep-water navigation from Lake Erie to Montreal may be described briefly as follows:

1. In Canadian territory

- (a) Deepening of Welland Canal from 25 feet to 27 feet;
- (b) Dredging in Lake St. Francis;
- (c) Construction of locks in the Soulanges area to pass vessels from the Beauharnois power canal into Lake St. Louis;
- (d) Construction of canal and locks and channel enlargements at Lachine.

2. In the international section

- (a) Dredging in the Thousand Islands section;
- (b) Canal and lock at Iroquois;
- (c) Canal and locks in the vicinity of Barnhart Island.

It will be recalled that in December 1951, the Parliament of Canada enacted legislation establishing the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and authorizing it to carry out all of the above-mentioned navigation works.

It was also agreed, in an Exchange of Notes of June 30, 1952, between Canada and the United States, that Canada should carry out these works.

This agreement was based on the necessity of making provision for navigation as a pre-requisite for the development of the power phase of the St. Lawrence project, and on the assumption - which proved to be correct - that it would not be possible to do this by obtaining the approval of the United States Congress to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin Agreement of 1941.

On the other hand, in May 1954, the United States Congress passed, and the President signed, Public Law 358 (known as the Wiley-Dondero Act) which authorized and directed the United States to construct the canals and locks at Iroquois and Barnhart Island on the United States side and to do dredging in the Thousand Islands section of the St. Lawrence River.

In its new Note, dated August 17, 1954, the Canadian Government informed the United States Government that it was prepared to modify the June 30, 1952 arrangements to the extent that Canada would be relieved of one obligation, namely to provide forthwith the navigation works in the vicinity of Barnhart Island on Canadian territory and to carry out the dredging in the Thousand Islands section.