

Seaway and Canal Tolls

speech brought down by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) only a few weeks ago he claimed he was concerned about rising costs. In fact, in several places he mentioned that his paramount concern in drawing up the budget was to hold down rising prices. He claimed that the economy was going at such a rate that it was prudent at least to take our foot off the gas, if not necessarily to step on the brake. He suggested that the end result of failure to do this would simply be higher prices, a higher cost of living and more inflationary pressure.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that allowing action at this time that will result in higher prices for almost everything in Canada is certainly going to set off something that is undesirable. In conclusion I say again that this is no time to allow changes that will add to the cost of almost every item in Canada. It is not the time to allow changes that will further aggravate the cost-price squeeze on the farmers of Canada. I suggest that the government should carefully consider this situation if they are serious about trying to hold down the rising cost of living.

Mr. Joseph Macaluso (Hamilton West): I am pleased to be able to take part in this debate, Mr. Speaker. In April, 1965, during the throne speech debate I devoted a whole speech to the St. Lawrence seaway, the Welland ship canal and tolls on the seaway and canal. Since that time I have not changed the views I expressed in that speech, namely, that I am opposed to an increase in tolls and, furthermore, opposed to tolls on the St. Lawrence seaway and Welland ship canal. I for one would like to see not only this increase disallowed but the eventual abolition of tolls on the seaway.

Mr. Woolliams: Will the hon. member permit a question at this point?

Mr. Macaluso: Yes.

Mr. Woolliams: I was quite interested in the introductory remarks of the hon. member and his reference to his opposition. Can he tell us how many of his party take the same position, because if the majority take that position the government will veto any increase?

Mr. Macaluso: I do not understand the hon. member's question. Did he refer to the opposition or my opposition?

Mr. Woolliams: Your opposition. You are opposing an increase in tolls; at least, that is what I understood you to say.

[Mr. Olson.]

Mr. Macaluso: That is correct. I am.

Mr. Woolliams: I am asking the hon. member through you, Mr. Speaker, how many members of your party agree with you and if the majority agree with you will the government veto the increase?

Mr. Macaluso: I like to see the hon. member for Bow River in his seat. The question really is one that I am sure he knows has no sense to it. I am speaking for myself as a member of this party. I am sure that members on this side who agree with my view will take part in the debate if they wish to express their own personal views. I am not free to state what is in the mind of each individual in this house. So far as I personally am concerned, I oppose the increase and also oppose any tolls on the St. Lawrence seaway.

The hon. member for Kindersley (Mr. Cantelon) mentioned in his remarks the strong pressures from powerful lobbyists in the United States who are not only opposed to any tolls but were opposed to the construction of the St. Lawrence seaway from the beginning. In my speech in April, 1965, I named the people I knew were opposed to the construction of the seaway and I have no hesitation in renaming them. They have some very interesting names. The major opposition to a toll free St. Lawrence seaway from Montreal to lake Ontario was based on the premise that exemption from tolls was equivalent to a subsidy. The leaders of the opposition in the United States are bodies, as I suggested, that bear some very revealing names. They are the National Association for a Non-Subsidized Seaway, which is still in existence; the Maryland Committee for a Non-Subsidized seaway, which is still in existence; the New York and New Jersey Committee for a Self-Supporting Seaway, which is still in existence; also the United States North Atlantic, Gulf and Caribbean Ports Association as well as the Association of American Railroads. They have been long standing opponents of the seaway.

In its submissions to the government of Canada in 1963 and in its annual submissions since the national legislative committee of the International Railway Brotherhood has opposed any reduction in tolls on the St. Lawrence seaway. In fact, on occasion they have asked for an increase, which is surprising when you consider the extent to which the railways of this country have been subsidized.