

St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act

What better proof of that could the committee want than the example of the inter-parliamentary United States-Canada group which went down to the United States to consider certain problems affecting our two countries. Here are two reports which we were given dealing with the problems concerning Canada and the United States, each prepared by two United States congressmen—Hon. Brooks Hays of Arkansas and Hon. Frank Coffin of Maine—one of them a general report and the other a special study of questions affecting Canada.

Why is it that we went to the United States with no detailed study prepared by Canada of the problems with which we had to deal, and why did we have to rely on information given to us by the United States? I do not make any apologies for this. It is because the facilities provided for members of the congress of the United States are far greater than they are in Canada. That is the answer to the hon. gentleman when he states that there is far more information available in the United States concerning this project than there is in Canada.

Then the hon. gentleman said that contracts awarded up to 1956 on the Welland ship canal amounted to \$19,546,000.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): In 1956, not up to 1956.

Mr. Chevrier: I accept the amendment which has been made and I say that the contracts awarded in 1956 for the Welland ship canal, amounted, therefore, to \$19,546,000. Why was this not pointed out to parliament, he stated? I have referred to the budgets tabled in the house. I have referred to the progress reports made by the seaway authority. I have referred to the press releases made by that authority. But the hon. gentleman goes on to say that in so far as he could discover no information was ever given. If the hon. gentleman wants to continue making statements of that kind when the information is right before him in parliament and when he did not even take the trouble to go and consult the files, I cannot of course, prevent him.

Having said this he went on to state that a contract went to J. P. Porter on the Welland canal on September 26, 1957, for \$1,283,900. The hon. gentleman's friends were in office when this took place and the amount of that contract is almost the same as the \$1,300,000 which I announced as the estimate in 1951 and which he is complaining about. Why did he not investigate when he saw that one contract alone amounted to \$1,283,000? This sole contract, this one contract given while the present administration was

in office, amounted to as much as the estimate. The eighth contract, he stated later, went to a dredging firm for \$351,000. Did the hon. gentleman seek at that time to find out why it was that there was this difference between the estimate of \$1,300,000 and the amount which the minister has expended?

The hon. gentleman went on to say in a trembling voice: I have searched the annual reports of the seaway for the year ending December 31, 1956 and have failed to find a single sentence to indicate anything about these contracts. In the face of what I have put on the record, surely he is not in possession of the facts, and surely he cannot be serious in making this kind of statement. Now then, I come to the crowning achievement of the hon. member for Carleton. Here is what he said: "Any school boy should have known that the Welland escarpment was made of rock".

Mr. Bell (Carleton): Pre-school boy, I said.

Mr. Habel: That is what you look like now.

Mr. Chevrier: I will accept my hon. friend's correction. Let me tell the hon. gentleman and those who sit with him on the government side of the house that the government of the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett in 1932 apparently did not know it. Let us see what happened with respect to a treaty that was signed between Canada and the United States, the deep waterway agreement of 1932. If my hon. friend will take the trouble to look at this treaty he will find that the report that is incorporated in the treaty is the one dealing with the St. Lawrence waterway, the report of the joint board of engineers made in 1926. At page 24 of the report of the joint board he will find a statement to the effect that the cost of a 27-foot channel for the new Welland ship canal in addition to the present project would cost \$1,100,000. That information was incorporated in the treaty signed by the Hon. R. B. Bennett and the then secretary of state for the United States which indicates that at that time the estimate was taken to be \$1,100,000. That is the estimate that was carried forward from 1926 to 1932 and again to 1941 when the great lakes waterway agreement was signed. It was carried still further and incorporated in the application which was made by Canada to the international joint commission in 1951.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): How many years ago is that?

Mr. Chevrier: My hon. friend has been pointing his finger in this direction instead of pointing it in the other direction. Let me