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THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

An address by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Lionel Chevrier, delivered at the Second Heartland Conference, sponsored by the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Association, at Washington, D.C., April 30, 1953.

....The peoples of the United States and Canada have enjoyed harmonious relations over a long period of time. Our relations are unmatched by any other two countries. More than once has this cordial association been impressed upon me, and coming into your country last night I could not but again think that never as a barrier do any of us regard our boundary. That boundary is crossed by more trade, more tourists, more trains, more cars, more newspapers, more radio, more television, more money, more sports, than any other in the world

Indeed, we are good neighbours. We speak the same languages. We have common ideals and a common trust in each other. We have common interests and concern. On many problems we think alike, both in peace and war. At times we do the same things, and frequently we do them together. Such was the case at Ogdensburg, at Hyde Park, on the Alaska Highway, on the Permanent Joint Defence Board, and more recently in our Trans-Border Air Agreements.

The unfortunate events of two world wars have brought us even closer together. We are now jointly engaged in a very extensive defence programme designed to protect the North American continent from aggression. Incidentally, the Canadian defence programme bears comparison with that of any other country of comparable size and wealth.

For many years Canada was taken for granted as a country of fields and forests by all but a handful of Americans. That has changed today. At the moment Canada is gathering strength and making great strides forward in wealth and power. The turning point came with the discovery, after many years of disappointment, of a major oil field on the Prairies. Since then we have been forging rapidly ahead with the development of our natural resources. In this atomic age the production of uranium is of the greatest importance to any nation. In northern Alberta, important deposits of uranium are being uncovered. With the mine at Beaver Lodge in Saskatchewan in production, our deposits of uranium will be among the most important in the world. In northern Manitoba we are moving a townsite 132 miles from Sherridon to Lynn Lake, and building a railway which, together with important discoveries and developments being made in the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec, will increase our base metal production of copper and zinc. On the West Coast of British Columbia a vast expansion of our aluminum production is taking place at Kitimat; while at the other extremity of our country we have uncovered vast resources of iron ore in Quebec-Labrador. Thus, almost overnight, Canada has made good her two most serious deficiencies as an industrial power--oil and iron.

The development of these resources and the accompanying industrial expansion requires ever increasing amounts of hydro-electric power. Quebec-Labrador iron provided the final and convincing reason why the building of the St. Lawrence Seaway without further delay is necessary to provide transportation for our expanding commerce.

All of these developments will unquestionably assist the industrial growth of the United States. Many have been made possible by American capital that is invested in our country; but let me say that, on a per capita basis, there is far more Canadian capital invested in the United States. It would seem to me that the rapid economic progress of Canada should be in the best interests of the United States. Taking the long view, this would tend to make Canada a more important ally, increasing continually in strength and standing shoulder to shoulder with the United States in the interests of human liberty which we both hold so dear.

I said that the St. Lawrence Seaway was urgently required for our expanding economy. This natural waterway is in the heartland of the North American Continent. It is in the centre of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Basin.