

Supply—Public Works

Mr. Green: The question of power policy has nothing whatever to do with this department. We have no jurisdiction to set power policy. That is the point I have been trying to make from the start. The hon. member can make his speech; he is not going to get any reaction from us because it is not our responsibility.

Mr. Chevrier: I think the minister has ruled himself out of court when he says that a committee of junior officials was set up in his department—

Mr. Green: No, I did not say that.

Mr. Chevrier:—some years ago to deal—

Mr. Green: On a question of privilege, I did not say that.

Mr. Chevrier:—with this very matter.

Mr. Green: I did not say a committee was set up in my department. I said there had been discussions between various government officials of different departments at a very junior level, including officials of the St. Lawrence seaway.

Mr. Chevrier: That indicates at once that there must have been some people on the committee from the minister's department. If there were, then I am in order in discussing the matter because the application for the development could be made to only one department and that is the Department of Public Works.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The Chair faces a very difficult situation. I am wondering whether it is not a question of interpreting a statute. The Chair, of course, is not in a position to do that. We realize that everyone is entitled to the right to speak and to bring up anything he wishes at certain times. It may be that there is a statute but the Chair feels he has no right to interpret it. The Chair will take the position that as there is no application before the Department of Public Works, the discussion is out of order at the moment.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, I think your ruling is erroneous because it puts me in the position of not being able to discuss this. However, I shall not discuss your ruling; I accept it. I should now like to go on and discuss improvements of harbour and river works along the St. Lawrence seaway. This morning the minister attempted to read out at some length some of the developments that were taking place in the various harbours from the head of the lakes to the lower St. Lawrence. My purpose in rising now is to bring to his attention the fact that the development of rivers and harbours arising out of the seaway should be an orderly one, and

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

I doubt very much whether it will be unless there is an economic survey made of those ports along the seaway route.

During an earlier discussion I had occasion to suggest to the government the establishment of an economic survey of the seaway and the effects it would have on the various regions of Canada. I ventured to suggest that if such a survey were established it would be possible to ascertain what effect the seaway might have on the Atlantic regions, on the regions of Ontario and Quebec, on the prairie regions and on the Pacific coast province; also I did suggest that particular attention might well be paid to the metropolitan areas of Montreal and Toronto-Hamilton because I think it would be a mistake if the government were to go about the development of harbours in the great lakes-St. Lawrence seaway area without a well conceived plan.

There is no doubt that the legislation which has already been brought down in this house, having to do with the development of the port of Hamilton and the improvements for Toronto, as well as the establishment of a harbour commission at the lakehead, are all to the good. I think, too, that consideration should be given not only to lake ports but to ports in the lower area of the St. Lawrence. It is true that the national harbours board, over which the minister has no jurisdiction, should look after the interests of harbours such as Montreal, Quebec and Three Rivers, but there are any number of other harbours in the province of Quebec which to my mind are not being given the attention they should. When I look at the amounts that are contained in these estimates for lower St. Lawrence ports I find they are only paltry; when I look at the amounts that are contained here for port developments east of the city of Montreal I find that they do not compare with items elsewhere.

It has been said in this house that upon the opening of the seaway a certain volume of traffic will by-pass the city of Montreal and that the seaway might well be detrimental to that city. I do not believe those statements. There is no doubt that a certain amount of traffic will, as it is bound to, go beyond the city but there is a large amount of new traffic, which has never come to Montreal namely the lake carriers, which will come down to Montreal for the first time and which I think will bring a volume of traffic that did not exist before.

A very recent study has been prepared by the University of Indiana, in conjunction with the Chicago board of trade, on grain movements on the great lakes and the St. Lawrence in which there are extremely interesting conclusions. One of the conclusions is