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THE GREAT LAKES - ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY:
THE CANADIAN POINT OF VIEW

Text of an address by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Lionel Chevrier, at a meeting of the Economic Club of Detroit, Michigan, made on March 24, 1952.

The invitation to address the Economic Club of Detroit has given me a great deal of pleasure. I have been looking forward to meeting the members and I am happy to be here today enjoying your kind hospitality.

I find that the object of this club is to promote an interest in important national and international issues, bringing the facts before its members but without endorsing any cause. In your 18 years I see that you have heard addresses on a wide variety of topics, given by experts in their field, many of whom are of international repute. I therefore deem it an honour to be asked to address you, particularly since I gather that you have heard more than one talk on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway.

It will be my endeavour to bring you the Canadian point of view with respect to this long delayed project. In the time at my disposal I will not be able to deal with all the points that have been raised and that remain topical today, but I will try to deal with those that seem to me the most important.

The proposal to develop the St. Lawrence River has been agitating public opinion for over one hundred years. It has been the subject of negotiation between Canada and the United States since before the turn of the century. Early in the negotiations the project became one for the development of both power and navigation. The proposals were formalized in the St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty, signed in 1932, and in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin Agreement, signed in 1941. The 1932 Treaty was defeated in the Senate of the United States. The 1941 Agreement, after eleven years, has yet to be disposed of by Congress. It has not been rejected, but neither has it been approved.

Meanwhile, from being highly desirable, the Seaway has become extremely urgent for both countries. The urgency relates both to economic development and to national defence. It applies to both the power and the navigation aspects of the project. These facts are clearly recognized by the administration in Washington and by many Congressmen of both parties. But in Congress the issue has been side-tracked repeatedly as a result of pressure from powerful minority interests. Resolutions approving the 1941 Agreement have been bottled up to die in committee, and have never come to a vote on the floor of either chamber.