

## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER IN THE CANADIAN ECONOMY.

An address by Mr. Lionel Chevrier, Minister of Transport, delivered to the Joint Annual Meeting of the Association of Municipal Electrical Utilities and the Ontario Municipal Electric Association, in Toronto, on February 27, 1951.

...We in Canada have been singularly fortunate in the variety and abundance of our natural resources. Not only has nature given us great wealth of minerals, forests, and other resources, but most thoughtfully, she so fashioned the contours of our country as to produce one of the world's greatest hydro-electric potentialities. The fast-flowing rivers of the Canadian Shield and Cordilleran regions, together with the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence System, offer an estimated maximum capacity of fifty-five million horsepower.

Our forefathers, as early as 1607, sought to harness this gift of nature. The many water-wheels used in the operation of grist mills and saw-mills were testimony to their efforts. True, by our present day standards they represent an elementary application of water power - the theory of direct application was the rule, that of "roundaboutness" (which is the basis of our modern technology) was yet to be realized. In such humble beginnings there was little intimation of the role hydro-electric power would some day play on the Canadian scene. Nearly three hundred years were to pass before the invention of the incandescent lamp, the subsequent development of the water-driven turbine dynamo, and successful transmission of electric power were to make our potentiality realizeable. Man's inventiveness and nature's gift constituted the cornerstone of a great new industry. On this industry, in large measure, has been built many of the industries on which the prosperity and progress of our country is so dependent.

It is readily apparent that in the course of a relatively short time great strides have been made in the production of hydro-electric power. It is not so readily apparent however, just how great these strides have been. At the turn of the century the total turbine installation in Canada was somewhat less than 200,000 horsepower. Fifteen years later it had increased twelve-fold; thirty years later, thirty-five fold. In spite of the depression conditions of the thirties, and in spite of the necessary restrictions imposed by the War, hydro-electric development continued apace. Canada emerged from the War with an installed hydro-electric capacity in excess of 10,000,000 horsepower: total generated electricity exceeded 42 billion kilowatt hours, of which some 40 billion originated at water-power establishments. On a per capita basis Canada's daily kilowatt hour output is exceeded only by Norway - it is 175 per cent of the United States output.