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1. REPORT OF THE CANADIAN NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, JANUARY, 1928

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, ST. LAWRENCE WATERWAY

OTTAWA, ONT., January 11, 1928.

The Right Honourable

W. L. MACKENZIE KING, C.M.G., M.A., LL.B., LL.D.,
Prime Minister,
Ottawa, Ont.

SIR,—The Committee appointed by Order in Council on May 7, 1924, to advise the Government on the broad aspects of the question of improving the St. Lawrence waterway, so as to provide increased facilities of navigation between the Great Lakes and the sea, has given careful consideration and much thought to the problem, and has the honour to submit the following general conclusions:

(1) We concur in the finding of the Joint Board of Engineers that the project is feasible, but we feel that, should the work be undertaken, proper allowance should be made for future requirements, and, inasmuch as the depth contemplated for the locks of the proposed scheme is 30 feet on the sills, we would recommend that the navigable depth of the reaches and connecting channels throughout should not be restricted to 25 feet, as contemplated by the engineering report. In the language of the report itself, we feel that any improvement of the St. Lawrence waterway should "provide to the best advantage, at this time and ultimately, for the development of the capacities and possibilities of the waterway." With this in mind, we have considered whether the depth should not be a uniform one of 30 feet, but, having regard to the statement in paragraph 111 of the report of the Joint Board of Engineers that the majority of the Canadian section favour initial excavation to a depth of 27 feet (accommodating vessels of 25-foot draft), we are of opinion that a depth of 27 feet should be sought. We are strengthened in that view by the recommendation of the United States St. Lawrence Commission of a 25-foot draft, which means a 27-foot navigation. This United States recommendation is based on the conclusions reached, after elaborate study by the United States Department of Commerce, to the effect that

"In order to assure proper ocean connection, the minimum depth of channels should be 27 feet, thus accommodating vessels of 25-foot draft; such draft would include 54 per cent of American cargo vessels and 88 per cent of all our entrances and clearances. It is felt that restricting operation to any less percentage of ocean-going vessels would materially detract from the usefulness of the proposed waterways."

An important consideration in this connection is the fact that it is much less costly to provide a proper depth at the outset of such an undertaking than to go over the work at a later date and deepen it.

(2) We have stated our belief that the project is feasible; whether it is desirable at this time is a question that has engaged our earnest consideration. The Order in Council appointing us, in addition to directing attention to the technical aspects of the problem, referred as well to its economic, financial and international phases. The economic aspects of the proposal were fully investi-