

Seaway and Canal Tolls

(Mr. Cantelon). I am not criticizing the merits of the motion but I am suggesting to him—and I do not in any way wish to comment on your decision, Mr. Speaker—that an adequate opportunity would have been given him, and indeed will be given him and other hon. members, before the standing committee on transport and communications when it discusses the estimates of the Minister of Transport.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): You should not reflect on the Chair.

Mr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, I made it quite clear that I was in no way casting any reflection on your judgment, which I accept with all the grace I have at my command; but I do suggest to hon. members that under item F, which deals with the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, there will be ample opportunity for members to make their case before the committee.

Mr. Winkler: But after the tolls are raised.

Mr. Turner: I will get to that in a moment too, Mr. Speaker. We had hoped that this debate, with the greatest of respect, could have taken place before that committee. I understand that one of the reasons for extending the committee system was to allow matters like this of great technical import and complication to be discussed by a committee where the facts could be brought before members in more detail. Members from all sections of the house could then question and comment on the basis of more facts than they would necessarily have before them in the House of Commons.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, as we are having a debate let me outline what I understand the state of the proceedings to be. It is my understanding that the two governing authorities with jurisdiction over tolls on the seaway, namely the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority of Canada and the Seaway Development Corporation of the United States, are jointly conducting hearings as to the state of tolls on the seaway system. The Canadian hearings were concluded today shortly before noon. At the Canadian hearings there was a representative of the U.S. Seaway Development Corporation in attendance. The hearings in Chicago before the Seaway Development Corporation of the United States will take place on June 8, 9 and 10. This, I might say, is fully in accord with the provisions of the international treaty of 1959 which sets out, among other things, the authority for the

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imposition and collection of tolls on the seaway.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Following the hearings and following a study by the two entities having authority over the seaway, a report must be made by July 1 of this year to the governments of the United States and Canada. Each of those governments will then make its own decision either to implement the recommendation of its own representative body, to rescind the recommendation, or to modify it in any way that that government sees fit. If, as a result of governmental decisions on each side of the border, the toll rates are changed, that fact would be confirmed by an exchange of notes. The changed rates would go into effect at the opening of the navigation season in 1967, so that from the point of view of time there cannot be any immediate or urgent problem because this matter will be amply—

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member refers to the fact that there is no emergency. He is putting forward that argument despite the ruling made by the Chair that there is an emergency and that this debate is to be considered an emergency debate. With all due deference, I submit that this argument is a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. Turner: With the greatest of respect, I am not commenting on the Chair's decision. I am merely replying to the question raised by the hon. member for Grey-Bruce (Mr. Winkler) a short time ago and by other hon. members with respect to whether there would be an opportunity when the estimates are being discussed before the standing committee on transport and communications to bring up this problem before a decision is finally made.

I am trying to show, on the basis of the timetable set out by the two government bodies, that there should be in the normal course of business ample opportunity for the matter to be raised before that standing committee.

Mr. Cantelon: Would the hon. member permit a question? Would he agree that until the minister made his statement this afternoon no statement was made to the house that this would be done?

Mr. Turner: I suggest to the hon. member for Kindersley that the facts are as I have