

Mr. EMMANUEL B. DEVLIN (Wright): I desire to offer my congratulations to the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Harrison) for having brought this question before the House. What I have to say to-day upon the question of the construction of the Georgian Bay canal I have said upon other occasions, and I would not wish to amplify the remarks I then made because I might weary the House. I listened with great pleasure to the speech of the hon. member for Port Arthur and Kenora (Mr. Keefer), who placed before the House succinctly and in a manner that was extremely clear, the main advantages of the Georgian Bay canal scheme, not as a local scheme, but as a general scheme for transportation and for the general advantage of Canada. The Minister of Public Works (Mr. Carvell) seems to look upon this matter principally as one in which we have to consider simply electrical purposes, although he did incidentally mention the matter of transportation and the exportation of lumber. It has been the habit of the House in years gone by to consider the electrical part of the question as an incidental and the transportation as the main feature of the proposition.

One point which I would like to bring to the attention of the House, and which I do not think the hon. member for Port Arthur and Kenora mentioned, is that the Georgian Bay canal is already built; it is only a matter of putting in a few locks here and there.

Mr. CARVELL: What would it cost to put them in?

Mr. DEVLIN: Costs are running so high nowadays that it is practically impossible to make an estimate, but it certainly will not cost any more money to this country than is being spent on the Welland canal scheme and the other proposition of bringing all the western traffic through the Welland canal via the St. Lawrence to Montreal, and in my opinion it will cost a great deal less. The Minister of Public Works said that three railways go through North Bay. One railway belongs to the Government and one is on the point of belonging to the Government. These are the arguments that we heard in this House some twelve or thirteen years ago and that have been brought forward ever since. The railways have been against this project, and the members whose constituencies were not immediately concerned were perhaps indifferent or violently opposed to it. I am glad to see now that we have one

[Mr. Keefer.]

hon. gentleman from Toronto (Mr. Mowat) in favour of this project, and I must attribute to the hon. member for Nipissing the achievement of having made from amongst the members for Toronto, a convert to the Georgian Bay canal scheme.

The hon. minister spoke of the electrical power, but I have no doubt that he understands that electrical power is simply an incidental; that nobody would advocate the building of this canal at the present time solely for the purpose of developing electrical power. The idea we have always had in mind is that you get from water-power cheaper transportation. You have no competing lines from the great lakes to the ocean; you save transshipment and elevator charges, and you lessen the charges all along of haulage. On the other hand your ships do not go back empty; they go back loaded with coal from the lower provinces. The Maritime Provinces would, therefore, benefit by the scheme, and if the ships go back loaded with coal, the western country that needs coal would get it at a cheaper rate than by bringing it in from the United States, and a much cheaper rate than by bringing it in by rail. I have not the figures for the last year or two, but up to last year or the year before I know that practically no soft coal was hauled west of Montreal by the railways. By water transportation Ontario would be supplied right along with soft coal, and it would be a great advantage to Ontario, not only to the constituencies that would help to feed the road, but to other constituencies, to receive coal at cheaper rates.

I am glad to see that the Georgian Bay canal scheme is still alive; that it has not been turned down by the Government. I appreciate the fact that the Minister of Public Works wants to receive value for every dollar spent by the Government, and in many ways savings could be made which could be put into a scheme that would be for the general advantage of Canada. If it were stated to those who advocate the Georgian Bay canal scheme that millions more are not going to be spent on the Welland canal scheme, we might say: Well, we can wait. But the more millions you put into the Welland canal scheme, the more millions you put into the coffin of the Georgian Bay Canal scheme, and then the argument will be adduced in the future: What do we need the Georgian Bay canal for? We have spent so much money on the Welland canal scheme that it would be useless now to have two great water transportation schemes in Canada.