



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AND MONTREAL

Address by the Hon. George C. Marler,  
Minister of Transport, to the Kiwanis  
Club of Montreal, October 18, 1956.

I thought that on this occasion I would talk to you about "The St. Lawrence Seaway and Montreal". The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, presided over so ably by my predecessor, the Hon. Lionel Chevrier, formerly Minister of Transport, has organized a number of tours of inspection of the work now in progress but there are still a good many people who have not yet had the opportunity of seeing what is being done. With this in mind, I thought that I would try to give you a broad description of the project and a general appreciation of what it means to Montreal.

However, before I come to deal with the present I should like to turn back a few pages of Canadian history. Going back, we find that the first attempt to build a canal in Canada was made by the Sulpicians in the early part of the eighteenth century. They attempted to construct a canal to by-pass the Lachine Rapids but due to a lack of funds the project was never completed. The first successful project was the series of locks and canals built by the Royal Engineers between 1779 and 1783 to provide navigation between Lake St. Louis and Lake St. Francis. These provided a total rise of about fifteen feet, but the available draft barely exceeded two feet.

Only minor works were carried on from time to time until 1821 when the building of the Lachine Canal was undertaken. This canal, designed to overcome the drop of about forty-six feet between Lake St. Louis and the Harbour of Montreal, consisted of seven locks of five foot draft. Before it was finished in 1825 private interests had embarked on the building of the Welland Canal to provide eight foot navigation between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The magnitude of this undertaking may be judged by the fact that the Niagara escarpment is some 327 feet in height, but despite the difficulties of the task the first canal was completed from lake to lake in 1833.