

In a general way I am familiar with this proposition. It has been considered previously, and was under consideration when revenues were more buoyant than they are at present. I do not think the minister can contend for a moment that prospective traffic on this canal justifies this expenditure. However he has now said that this will have the effect of reclaiming a large area of land. If the expenditure is made for that purpose only and is not to be regarded as a commitment for the larger expenditure to which we have referred, the matter is placed in a more favourable light. But I wish to point out to the committee that if the expenditure is for the reclamation of land the general policy has been that the provincial government should make a contribution towards the cost. If that is the reason for the expenditure, then I would urge that this practice should be followed and that the minister should secure from the provincial government a contribution of, say fifty per cent of the cost of the work. If the effect is to reclaim a large area of land, undoubtedly this is more a provincial than a federal matter. Since the minister says that this work to some extent will improve navigation in the river and at the same time benefit a large area of land, it seems to me that it is a work which, under the general policy, might be fairly considered a joint undertaking as between the province and the dominion. I can only ask the minister again, as I did before, to review the whole situation in the light of all the circumstances and not to regard this as a final commitment on the part of the dominion to this expenditure at this time. Particularly do I ask him not to regard this as a commitment to an expenditure of eight, ten or twelve million dollars in this connection.

Mr. BENNETT: I have just one word to add. The committee should keep in mind that an expenditure of half a million dollars is provided for on the preceding page in connection with this very matter. The words to which I directed attention previously—and I do so again—is that this provides for a waterway which will enable freight to be shipped out through the Hudson river by way of Albany rather than through Canadian ports. The words, "through lake Champlain to the Hudson river" are the governing words about which I raised objection the other day. I am not going to take more time than to say that, having regard to the fact that this matter has been before the department for many years, in days of, shall I say, great buoyancy of revenue, and the application has been refused, I am of opinion it is undesirable to make this ex-

[Mr. Stewart.]

penditure now. The minister has given the explanation, so I am content to let the matter rest there.

Mr. SPENCE: It is not often that I object to any development in any part of Canada, particularly in connection with the main arteries of traffic, but it seems to me that this development is absolutely unnecessary. If it is carried on, however, I think the province of Quebec should contribute some part of the cost, as the ex-Minister of Public Works (Mr. Stewart) suggested. To-day people are astounded at the amounts in the estimates for the interior parts of the province of Quebec. In this case it is proposed to spend \$500,000, and if that money is spent it will be absolutely wasted unless you go on with the full development which, as the minister says, will mean anywhere from eight to twelve million dollars. I do not think any engineer can estimate how much it will cost to develop the Richelieu river, which is about eighty-five miles long. It may be stone or quicksand in the bottom; nobody knows.

Another point is that this project will employ very little labour as compared with other jobs that might be done. Take, for instance, the tunnel job in Toronto that was turned down, a million dollar job; it would have given \$750,000 to the unemployed, but in this case there will just be dredges and cement mixers which very few men can operate, and most of the money will be spent and the unemployed will get very little out of it. Furthermore, this development is more in the interests of the United States than of Canada, because this Richelieu river empties into the St. Lawrence at Sorel which is immediately east of Montreal, and there are the new locks built some time ago, which should never have been built, because all the other locks on this Richelieu river take only boats with a draft of six feet. Why is there any necessity for more than six feet to float logs and flat-bottomed scows to accommodate a pulp and paper factory? There is no need for developing this lock to a depth of twelve feet and a length of 339 feet. This means that after a while much of the traffic which would go down the St. Lawrence will go by the Richelieu river to lake Champlain and by the Hudson to Albany, for the United States are trying to get everything they can and take everything they can from Canada. This work will be in the interests of the United States and their transportation systems rather than in the interests of Canada. The first thing we know grain boats will be going by this route to the big elevators in Albany and taking the business from our maritime